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SECURITY REVIEW: PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER BHAGWANT SINGH MANN CHAIRS HIGH LEVEL MEETING

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

AIR INDIA, INDIGO REROUTE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AFTER PAK SHUTS AIRSPACE **FOR INDIA**



Indian households well positioned to support

6.5 pc growth over 3-5 years: Morgan Stanley

to concerns of over-leverage.

the India Economics team.

AFTER PEHLAGAMN TERROR ATTACK, PAK NATIONALS RUSHED **BACK TO PAKISTAN WHO WERE ON TOURIST VISA TO INDIA**

Punjab Cabinet approves Rs 585 Cr 'Rangla Punjab Vikas Scheme'

to boost grassroots development, the Punjab Cabinet led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Thursday approved the guidelines for the "Rangla Punjab Vikas Scheme, allocating Rs 585 crore for local-level works across districts during the financial year 2025-26.

The decision was taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister at his official residence. A spokesperson from the

Chief Minister's Office stated that the scheme is aimed at addressing everyday development needs within the districts, with funds to be managed by Deputy Commissioners. Project suggestions will be sourced from MLAs, community organizations, citizen groups, and other public-minded individuals, and will be vetted accord-

Identify Pakistani

Chief Ministers

Nationals and Send Them

Back: Home Minister Tells

NEW DELHI: Days after

the Modi government an-

nounced diplomatic mea-

sures against Pakistan over

the gruesome terror attack

in J&K's Pahalgam, Home

Minister Amit Shah on Fri-

day asked all the Chief Min-

take necessary steps for their

deportation. As per reports,

the Home Minister spoke to

all the Chief Ministers, in-

structing them to act against

the Pakistani nationals and

facilitate their return im-

on Wednesday said that the

visas of all Pakistani nationals stand cancelled and

they have been given time

to abide by the directive by

April 27. Notably, the visa

ban on Pak nationals comes close on the heels of a five-

step diplomatic offensive

against Pakistan, following

despicable and deadly terror

attacks in Baisaran meadows

of J&K's Pahalgam, which

led to the brutal killing of

26 tourists. The Ministry of

External Affairs (MEA), in

its official announcement.

said that all valid visas is-

sued by India to Pakistani

nationals will be revoked

starting April 27. However,

it stated that medical visas

granted to Pakistani citizens

will remain valid only until

April 29.

isters to

identify all

Pakistani

nationals

states and



ing to the scheme's guidelines. authorities, with the Deputy a District Level Commit- sanction both administrative tee headed by the Deputy and financial aspects. Timely

Commissioner, with the dis-(appointed by the Chief Minister) providing concurrence. The approved works will be executed by the appropriate the transfer of eight villag-

Each district will have Commissioner empowered to completion and oversight will trict's Minister-in-Charge also fall under their purview. Villages Shifted from Patiala

to SAS Nagar- In a separate

decision, the Cabinet approved

(SAS Nagar), to better serve the administrative and developmental needs of local

es-Manakpura, Khera Gajju, Urna, Changeera, Uccha Khera, Gurditpura, Haripura, and Lehlan—from Sub-Division/Tehsil Rajpura (Patiala) to Sub-Division/Tehsil Banur

holds in India remain well positioned to support 6.5 per cent growth over the next 3-5 years, a Morgan Stanley report said on Friday. Current household debt

level in India is manageable and household debt (core) remains at levels lower than other economies, the report emphasised, adding that even as it rises, it expects the trend to be manageable driven by income growth.

The recent rise in retail loans has led to concerns on rising indebtedness at the household level. This has led to the narrative of higher household leverage, lower net financial saving, and patchy income growth, increasing distress in the household balance sheet.

According to the report, the rise in retail loans has been the key driver of credit growth post the pandemic, leading

peals against the cancellation

The downtrend in net financial savings only paints a partial picture mortgage-led leverage drove the increase in financial liabilities, but, at the same time, also brought about an increase in physical saving. At the aggregate level, total

household saving (financial "To assess household debt, and physical) remains rangewe believe that core housebound at 18.1 per cent of GDP hold debt – which is the sum in FY2024, vs 19 per cent of of personal loans (only to GDP pre-pandemic. "Looking at the trend in asset quality as households) and credit extended by nonbank sources a marker for household stress, only to households – is a betwe see that stressed assets in the ter metric to track, while the personal loan segment rose only RBI follows a wider definition marginally, "the economists for household debt that also said. The report expects houseincludes unincorporated enhold debt growth to continue to terprises," said Bani Gambhir outpace nominal GDP growth as a reflection of improved and Upasana Chachra from credit penetration. "The key 'As such, our definition of to assess sustainability of the household debt pegs it at 23.1 debt dynamics will be income per cent of GDP in F2024. growth, which, in our view, will meaningfully lower than the sustain around nominal GDP RBI's estimate of 42.1 per cent growth," the report noted.

Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht and SGPC president condoles demise of Pope Francis



JAGMOHAN SINGH

The officiating Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht,(the top Sikh religious leader) Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj and SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami today expressed grief over the demise of Pope Francis and expressed their condolences

to the Christian community. Referring to the Gurbani, Destined only to die, he comes into the World", written by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the first Sikh Guru (master), Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj said that the birth and death is in the hands of Akal Purakh (One True Being) and those who have come into this world also have to die.

The Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib prayed to the One True Being to grant peace to the departed soul and to give strength to Pope Francis's lovers and disciples to accept this happening as this is very sad moment for them.

Jathedar said that Pope Francis was a leader of his faith who worked to spread its message and made efforts to guide people on the path of

righteousness. Dhami stated that Pope Francis was a prominent leader of his faith, and his demise is a significant loss to the community. The SGPC President, on behalf of the Sikh community, offered prayers to the Karta Purakh True One Being) for peace to



Calls for justice for victims; incident reminds of Chittisinghpura Sikh massacre – Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj

JAGNOHAN SINGH

The officiating Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj, has strongly condemned the attack in Pa-

halgam, Jammu and Kashmir. Expressing grief over the incident, he extended heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed. He offered prayers before the Akal Purakh (True One Being) to grant eternal peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved families to accept His will. He also that such inhumane acts may never occur anywhere in



harmony prevail across the nation and the globe. Jathedar Gargajj stated that this tragic event deeply pained him and reminded him of the March 2000 massacre in Chittisinghpura, Kashmir, in which 35 Sikhs were killed and the truth has the departed soul. yet to come to light. He emphasized the need for justice in the Pahalgam incident and urged that the truth behind the Chittisinghpura massacre also be revealed so that the affected the world and that peace and families finally receive justice.

study by the Petroleum and

Natural Gas Regulatory Board

(PNGRB) released earlier this

PNGRB has already devel-

oped gas infrastructure across

307 Geographical Areas, cov-

ering the entire country except

islands, it ensures widespread

mestic, commercial, industrial.

and transportation segments.,

(CGD) sector is expected to

with consumption projected to

grow 2.5 to 3.5 times by 2030

and 6 to 7 times" by 2030 from

according to the report.

"The City Gas Distribution

the report points out.

India Strengthens Trade ties with Iran through **Chabahar Port Expansion**



erating the expansion of the Chabahar port and its rail connectivity to Iran's border with Central Asia, aiming to enhance regional trade and counterbalance China's influence in the

hedan railway line, a 750 km project connecting the port to

access to natural gas across dotegically positioned to serve as a gateway for trade between India, Iran, Afghanistan, and

India has invested approximately USD 500 million in the be the primary growth driver, development of this port, which is seen as a critical component of the International North-South a base of 37 mmscmd in FY24,

This corridor aims to facili-

The demand has been contate smoother and more direct sidered for fertiliser, power, retrade routes between India and fineries, petrochemical, other Central Asia, bypassing Pakiindustrial & amp; commercial stan. The development of Chabahar port and its associated establishments, households as well as CNG and LNG as infrastructure is also viewed as transport fuel in the energy a strategic counter to China's influence in the region, particubasket through 2030 and 2040. There are reasonable larly in light of China's signifitime periods to plan and concant investments in Pakistan's struct pipelines, the report Gwadar port. By enhancing connectivity through Chabahar, Consumption of natural gas India seeks to bolster its economic and strategic presence in the region. As the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project nears completion, it is expected to play a pivotal role in facilitating trade and strengthening regional ties. The successful implementation of this project will not only

of plots by PSIEC, ensuring compliance with legal principles, including Audi Alteram Partem (right to be heard), and fostering stakeholder

Another Industrial friendly move by CM led Punjab Cabinet

jor move aimed at facilitating the industrialists of the state, the Punjab cabinet led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Thursday gave its consent to constitute an appellate authority for cancelled plots of Punjab State **Industrial Export Corporation** (PSIEC). A decision to this effect

CHANDIGARH: In a ma-

was taken in a meeting of the Council of Ministers held here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister at his official residence o today evening.

Disclosing this here today a spokesman of the Chief Minister's Office said that the Cabinet gave consent to constitute an appellate authority for Cancelled plots due to various reasons in PSIEC. Appellate Mechanism will ad- the Department of Industries efficient mechanism for filing, exceptional circumstances dress the long pending cases & Commerce, Government reviewing, and deciding ap- with valid reasons.

JAGMOHAN SINGH

After Pehlagamn terror attack,

India shuts Attari border but

Beating Retreat Ceremony

held as usual on April 24 in

the evening during the sunset.

The footfall was also as usual

witnessed. Nevertheless to say

that visitors on the Pakistan side

were much less from routine.

Border Security Force (BSF)

Jawans carried out the Beat-

ing Retreat Ceremony at Joint

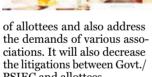
Check Post (JCP) Attari border

and at the same time Pakistan

Rangers also organized a parade

in their own territory visible

Amritsar



PSIEC and allottees. This policy will take effect from the date of notification by

After Pehlagamn terror attack, India shuts Attari

border but Beating Retreat Ceremony held as usual

of Punjab, with a deadline of 30.09.2025 for appeals related to existing cancellations or six months from the date of cancellation for fresh cases. It aims to establish a structured, transparent, and

treat ceremony was a little bit

different from routine when

during sun set 'Flag lowering'

ceremony gates of International

borders of both the nations

confidence. Any plot holder whose plot was cancelled (except those already resumed or re-allotted)

by PSIEC, upon substantiation of their claim with relevant documents or evidence. Applicants shall submit a written appeal in the prescribed format (Format-A) either physically or via email to appeal.psiec@ gmail.com. The appeal must be submitted by 30.09.2025 for already cancelled plots and within six months from the date of cancellation orders for future cases. Delays may be condoned by the BOD in

parade commander didn't go

forward to shake hand with

his Pakistani counterpart as

usual. The similar state of af-

fairs from the Pakistan side was

During evening parade

from both sides none of the

visitors were allowed to raise

slogans against neighboring

nations and 'Beating Retreat

Ceremony' concluded in a

peaceful manners since today

while keeping control over the

visitors as heavy deployment

Hawkeyes on each victors

also noticed.

CNG fuel stations surge by 2,300 pc, PNG



Hardeep Singh Puri, on Friday highlighted that in the last 10 years, the number of CNG it was well organised by BSF stations providing green fuel surged more than 20 times, of BSF troops were keeping while the number of housethan doubled.

"Under the guidance of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the last 10 years, CNG stations have increased by 2, 300 per cent, PNG connections have increased by 467 per cent, LPG connections have increased by 128 per cent, the minister posted on X.

has begun," he added.

use up 467 pc in 10 years: Hardeep Puri sumption is likely to rise by close to 60 per cent by 2030



"These are not just figures,

our resolve. They show that big changes are possible with new thinking, true intentions and hard work, "Puri said. The minister further stated

is expected to rise from 188 million standard cubic metres per day in 2023-24 to 297 mmscmd by 2030 under the Good-to-Go' scenario which assumes moderate growth and developments based on current trends and commitments, the report observes. The consumption is projected to rise further to 496 mmscmd by 2040 under the same scenario.

India's natural gas con-

as the country seeks to reduce dependence on oil imports and switch to cleaner fuels for running vehicles, cooking in household kitchens and industrial use, according to a

month.



for vehicles in the country has holds using piped cooking gas has recorded a 5-fold increase and LPG connections more

This reflects not only an improvement in the lifestyle of the people but also an acceleration in the journey of 'Healthy India with Clean Fuel'.

they show the achievement of

that along with providing convenience to the people, these figures are accelerating the journey of 'Healthy India with Clean Fuel'. "These achievements have strengthened the foundation of developed India, on which the construction of the grand building of developed India

This initiative is particularly significant as the Chabahar-Za-

Īran's rail network, is nearing completion and is expected to be operational by 2024. The Chabahar port, located on Iran's Makran coast, is stra-

Central Asia. Transport Corridor.

enhance India's connectivity to Central Asia but also contribute to the broader goal of regional

economic integration.

India must expand steel production to achieve 'zero import & net export' goal: PM Modi NEW DELHI: Prime Minister to develop, nurture, and share accelerate the 'Make in India'

a routine manner

from the Indian side. Both the

forces from their respective ter-

ritories were showing aggres-

sive postures to each other in

Narendra Modi on Thursday highlighted the need for a goal of "zero imports" and a focus on net exports for the steel sector as "India is currently working towards a target of exporting 25 million tons of steel and to increase production capacity to 500 million tons by 2047".

Addressing the India Steel 2025 programme at Mumbai via video, PM Modi emphasised the importance of preparing the steel sector for new processes, grades, and scales, urging the industry to expand and upgrade with a future-ready mindset.

"We are proud that today India has become the second largest steel producer in the world, and we have set a target of producing 300 million tonnes of steel by 2030 under the National Steel Policy, "he said.

The Prime Minister underlined the vast employment generation potential of the steel industry and called upon both the private and public sectors

new ideas. He emphasised collaboration in manufacturing, R&D, and technology upgrades to create more job opportunities for the country's

\$1.3 trillion National Infrastructure Pipeline is being advanced to accelerate the projects that are being implemented, which would open fresh opportunities for the steel sector.

the Prime Minister said.

Crores of houses are being constructed under the PM Awas Yojana, and significant infrastructure is being built

He also highlighted that the

The infrastructure projects

being implemented under the National Master Plan include large-scale efforts to transform cities into smart cities, along with an unprecedented pace in the development of roads, railways, airports, ports, and pipelines, creating more opportunities for the steel sector.

in villages through the Jal Je-



But today, the Beating Re-remained shut and the Indian

marked that welfare initiatives like these are also providing new strength to the steel industry. He highlighted the govern-

ment's decision to use only 'Made in India' steel in government projects and noted that government-driven initiatives account for the highest consumption of steel in building construction and infrastructure. Underscoring that steel is a

primary component driving the

Modi remarked that government policies for the steel industry are playing a crucial role in making many other industries in India globally competitive. He highlighted that sectors such as manufacturing, con-

struction, machinery, and automotive are gaining strength from the Indian steel industry. He mentioned that the government has introduced the National Manufacturing Mission in this year's Budget to

initiative. The mission caters to small, medium, and large industries and will open new opportunities for the steel sector, he added. Noting that India was long dependent on imports for high-

grade steel, which was critical for defence and strategic sectors, the Prime Minister expressed pride in the fact that the steel used in India's first indigenous aircraft carrier was produced domestically. He also noted that Indian steel contributed to the success of the historic Chandrayaan mission, symbolising India's capability and confidence. The Prime Minister re-

marked that this transformation was made possible through initiatives such as the PLI scheme, which has allocated thousands of crores to support the production of high-grade steel. He emphasised that this is just the beginning and that there is a long road ahead.

Keeping strict vigil to maintain law & order in the state and details of Punjabis stuck in J&K hotels

FW DESK Chandigarh

Condemning the unfortunate incident of terrorist attack in Pahalgam (Jammu and Kashmir), the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Wednesday said that state is on high vigil and is according top priority to maintain law and order in Punjab

Interacting with the media persons after a high level meeting with officers of Civil and Police administration, the Chief Minister said that this terrorist attack on innocent tourists is a barbaric and inhuman act. He said that this incident has once again proved that the terrorists do not have any religion and their sole aim was to spread terror amongst the masses. Meanwhile, reiterating the firm commitment of the state government to maintain peace and communal harmony in the state, Bhagwant Singh Mann said that they were fully ready to meet any sort of challenge



disturb hard earned peace in

Punjab Chief Minister said that checking and patrolling has already been intensified on the interstate and interdistrict points especially at the vulnerable areas. He said that the Punjab is fighting the nation's war against drugs and terrorists and is in constant touch with the Jammu and Kashmir government to bring back tourists from the state. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that a nexus of smugglers, gangsters and terrorists is trying to disrupt the hard earned peace of state through the drones adding that

soon the state government will rope in anti drone techniques to check the smuggling of weapons and drugs through the drones.

Chief Minister said that security has been beefed up in the state and strict vigil is being kept across Punjab to ensure that no one violates the law. He said that Punjab Police is fully capable of foiling any such attempt and a perfect coordination is being ensured between Army, BSF and Punjab Police. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that Punjab has a strong second line of Defence in form of the state Police which is committed to maintain

the law and order in the state. Chief Minister further said

Security Review: Punjab CM Mann Himachal CM Discusses Chairs high level meeting State's Security along Ch State's Security along China with ITBP Commander that security at Tourist places has been enhanced in Punjab and no one will be allowed to disturb law and order in the state. Meanwhile, he said that this attack is a dastardly act as no religion allows such a heinous crime adding that that this senseless violence was an outrage against humanity and deserves to be condemned in the strongest possible words by everyone, regardless of religion, region, nation or any other persuasion. Bhagwant

SHIMLA: Himachal Pradesh ment the government would Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu on Thursday held a meeting with Sanjay Gunjyal, Frontier Commander with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Northern Frontier, and discussed the role of paramilitary force and issues concerning state's security along

the India-China border. Also, topics like a roadmap for promoting border tourism in the frontier regions, procurement of local produce for ITBP supplies and provision of medical services to local communities through ITBP healthcare facilities were discussed. a government statement said.

The Chief Minister said to strengthen disaster manageestablish improved coordination with ITBP's regional

He said helipads located in ITBP-controlled zones could be utilised to promote tourism in remote areas.

esponse centre.

All formalities in this regard would be completed in consultation with the ITBP, which would also help enhance connectivity. Sukhu said the government is taking several steps to strengthen the rural economy

"If the ITBP procures food products directly from local residents, it would create employment opportunities and benefit farmers and horticul-

He urged the Commander to prioritise the involvement of local residents in construction projects after completing all requisite formalities.

The Chief Minister also directed the state officials to expedite all procedures for establishing communication towers in border areas.

He lauded the developmental efforts and other initiatives undertaken by the ITBP in the frontier regions.

Commander Gunjyal briefed the Chief Minister about steps taken under the Vibrant Village Programme for the construction of three proposed roads in the Sangla Valley and in Kaurik area.

He also shared details of 15 additional roads proposed in remote and forward border regions. Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri virtually attended the meeting and shared views and suggestions, while Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi, Chairman, Milkfed Budhi Singh Thakur, OSD to the Chief Minister Gopal Sharma, among others, were present in

Government must immediately revoke NSA imposed on **Amritpal Singh: Dhami**



The Shiromani Gurdwara Par-

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

bandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami has condemned the government's decision to extend the detention of Amritpal Singh under the National Security Act (NSA) for another year in Dibrugarh Central Jail, Assam. He has demanded that the NSA be immediately revoked. Dhami stated that this step by the government is a direct violation of human rights, as it keeps him away from due judicial process. He claimed that Amritpal Singh has not committed any crime that justifies branding him anti-national and imprisoning him thousands of kilometers away from Punjab. This action is not appropriate from a human rights perspective. He called upon the Punjab Government to immediately withdraw the NSA imposed on Bhai Amritpal Singh and allow him a fair and impartial judicial process

Punjab Police arrests prime accused involved in TarnTaran's village Sarpanch murder case



JAGMOHAN SINGH Tarn Taran

Anti Gangster Task Force (AGTF) Punjab in joint operation with Tarn Taran Police has arrested the prime accused involved in murder case of Sarpanch Bachittar Singh alias Bikkar, said Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav on Monday. The arrested accused has been identified as Sukhbir Singh alias Sukh, a resident of Barwala in Tarn Taran. As per the information, Sarpanch Bachittar Singh was shot dead by two bike borne assailants in village Naushera Pannuan in Tarn Taran on September 12, 2024. DGP said that arrested person Sukhbir Singh is a habitual offender with several cases under the NDPS Act, Arms Act ses, and snatching in been registered against him. Further investigation is underway to identify his associates and unearth the full extent of his criminal activities, he added. Sharing more details, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) AGTF Promod Ban said that the teams of the AGTF under the supervision of AIG Sandeep Goel and teams of Tarn Taran Police under the supervision of SSP Abhimanyu Rana, were pursuing the culprit involved in this case, and based human and intel-inputs located both the accused persons roaming in the area

Haryana Government will extend full cooperation to Army in all its initiatives: Dr. Sumita Misra

ACS-Home Chairs High-Level Meeting to Strengthen Civil-**Military Coordination**

GULSHAN KUMAR Chandigarh

A preliminary meeting in connection with the upcoming Civil-Military Liasison Conference (CMLC)- 2025, Haryana, was held today under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, Dr. Sumita Misra. The meeting was co-chaired by Major General Ranjiv Singh Saini from the Indian Army.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held with senior officers of the Indian Army, officers of the concerned departments of the Haryana Government and the concerned District Deputy Commissioners on establishing coordina-



(Western Command) and the Harvana Government and issues related to land, welfare of soldiers and ex-servicemen of the Army.

Dr. Misra directed all concerned departments and Deputy Commissioners to expedite action on issues pertaining to the CMLC and submit their reports

also emphasized timely execution of tasks to ensure effective civil-military cooperation.

Singh Mann said that Punjab

has a border with Pakistan and

Jammu & Kashmir so the state

is on high vigil and an eagle

eye is being kept against anti-

national forces. Punjab Chief

Minister said that due to the

proactive and sustainable vigil

of Punjab Police the conspira-

cies of such forces inimical to

state have been foiled. He said

that Punjab has unleashed war

against smugglers, gangsters

and terrorists adding that they

will not be allowed to succeed

in their evil designs. Bhagwant

Singh Mann said that the state

government is committed for

preserving the hard earned

peace of Punjab for which no

Dr. Misra instructed the SEWA Department to fasttrack the release of grants for ASHA Schools, which cater to children with special needs and are operated by the Army. On the issue of Army Welfare Houstion between the Indian Army within stipulated timelines. She ing projects in Bahadurgarh,

Panchkula, and Gurugram, she directed the respective DCs to submit land availability reports and asked HSVP to coordinate with Army representatives to find amicable solutions.

For allotment of additional land for parking at DSOI, Panchkula, she directed the department officials to move a formal proposal in this regard. On the issue of cleaning and repair of drainage system outside the boundary wall of Air Force Station, Barwala, the Additional Chief Secretary directed the formation of a committee comprising officials from Irrigation, PWD, Public Health Engineering departments etc. and solve the issue at the earliest.

The Additional Chief Secretary reaffirmed Haryana's unwavering support for the Armed Forces and assured full cooperation in all initiatives requiring state involvement

Special campaign against criminals extorting money in the case of honeytrap in Haryana & Punjab SATISH HANDA

Increasing cases of sex exploitation and extorting money in honeytrap cases since the past few years worry police in Haryana and Punjab states. Under the special campaign being run against criminals, the CIA staff of the district Narwana police has achieved great success in arresting 2 accused including a in the case of extorting Rs 8 lakh in a recent case of honeytrap. The arrested accused have been



woman by taking major action identified as Balindra son Suba cused Manish submitted an Singh resident Kahsun and a woman. On January 8, 2025, a woman had registered a case

of rape against Manish in Police Station Sadar Narwana, the investigation of the case was being investigated by the Deputy Superintendent of Police Narwa-

na. The mother

of alleged ac-

application to the police that the woman accusing him of rape demanding Rs 8 lakh from

her family in exchange for settling the case and Rs 1 lakh has been taken by her in advance. The investigation of the case was handed over to the CIA in-charge Narwana.

The CIA in-charge formed a team under the leadership of ASI Ramesh Kumar who noted down the serial numbers of currency notes of the remaining amount and handed them over to the complainant woman, calling her to a grocery shop in Uchana Kalan village to collect

Punjab Police busts illegal weapon smuggling network being operated from USA; one held with 5 pistols

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar

Counter Intelligence (CI) Amritsar has busted an illegal weapon smuggling module having links extending to the United States with the arrest of its one operative from Ludhiana, said Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yaday on Tuesday.

The arrested accused has been identified as Gurwinder Singh alias Guri, a native of Pakhowal, Ludhiana and presently residing at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Ludhiana. Police teams have also recovered five pistols—including two .45 bore, two .30 bore, and one .32 bore from his possession, besides, impounding a white coloured Hyundai Verna car (PB91N0209), in which the accused was travelling.

preliminary investigation has cused Gurwinder Guri was acting under the directions of his USA-based handlers identified as Gurlal Singh and Hardeep Singh, who have formed an alliance abroad and are operating transnational weapon smuggling ring using local associates in Punjab, he said.

As per the information, arrested accused Gurwinder Singh is brother-in-law of USA-based Hardeep Singh, who was earlier arrested by STF Ludhiana in drug smuggling case of Sarpanch Gur-

Eight renowned industrial groups desire



Thereafter, Hardeep Singh fled away from India to USA in year 2022.

Sharing operation details, DGP Gaurav Yadav said that CI Amritsar received a tip-off indicating that accused Gurwinder Singh was tasked by his handlers to deliver a consignment in Ludhiana. Acting swiftly, the police team from CI Amritsar intercepted and arrested accused Gurwinder Singh near Sham Nagar Phatak Ludhiana, when he was going to deliver the consign-DGP Gaurav Yadav said that ment in his Verna car.

The DGP said that the rewered firearms were inten ed for use in criminal activities across Punjab. Further investigations are on to establish backward and forward linkages in this case to dismantle the entire network, he said, while adding that more arrests are recoveries are likely in this case.

A case FIR No. 21 dated 21.04.2025 has been registered under section 25 of the Arms Act and Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Police Station SSOC, Amritsar.





Chandigarh

Haryana's Energy, Transport and Labour Minister Anil Vij strongly condemned the major terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, calling it a very painful incident. He said that "I want to state that this is Narendra Modi's India. Where, when, and how the response will come, I don't know-but I do know that they will receive such a strong reply that they will never dare and even those who send them will hesitate to think about it. Vij said, terrorists are prepared and used to carry out attacks with the most impact, but they will be answered. Responding to the question about the loss of a Navy Lieutenant from Haryana in the attack—and how the terrorists were targeting and killing after asking names-Energy Minister Anil Vij said that such terrorists are fully trained and brought specifically to carry out acts that will have the greatest psychological

and emotional impact.

Drug abuse monitoring in Haryana with installation of CCTV camera in all medical stores G Anupama said that the depart-

Chandigarh

of Pahuwind in Tarn Taran.

Information reveals, nearly 1300 persons have been arrested in past three allegedly involved in drug abuse in Haryana, as such state health department has ordered CCTV cameras to be installed in all medical stores to prevent drug abuse in the state, Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi said it will be made mandatory to install CCTV cameras in all medical stores, besides drug sellers will have to display their licenses at a place where customers can easily see them. He has directed to inspect all de-addiction centers in the state and submit a report by April 22. The government is strict about drug addiction since most of the centres are violating rules. The Chief Secretary in a state level Narco Coordination Center meeting directed the Deputy Commissioners to inspect the de-addiction centers and submit a detailed compliance report immediately.

The meeting evaluated the efforts being made to tackle fast increasing drug-related crimes as well as an action plan to strengthen anti-drug initiatives in every district across the state. The Chief



Secretary also proposed to increase the number of Prahari Clubs, which are designed to create awareness among students and youths about drug abuse. He suggested that along with teachers, parents of youth suffering from drug addiction should also be included in these clubs so that a more positive environment for counselling youths suffering from drug addiction can be established. Harvana Home Secretary Dr Sumita Mishra said that during the thorough inspection of de-addiction centres, not only deficiencies should be identified but improvements should also be accepted. She said Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has launched 'Sankalp' to provide information to control drug abuse and awareness about its ill-effects.

Meanwhile, Additional Chief Secretary, Services Department,

ment has developed a digital platform in the form of Haryana Drug Abuse Monitoring System to enable end-to-end de-addiction services in licensed centres. The pilot project has been successfully tested in Ambala and Panchkula and now it will be implemented in the entire state. A star rating system has also been started for de-addiction centres. Director General of Police (DGP) Shatrughan Kapoor and Director General of Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau (HSNCB) OP Singh said that a total of 834 FIRs have been registered under the NDPS Act from 1st January to 31st March this year in which 1319 accused were arrested, which included 119 cases were related to commercial quantity of narcotics, while 578 cases were related to intermediate quantity. He said 2515 villages were covered under the 'Sports for Youth' initiative, aiming to educate and involve the youth in the fight against drug abuse. Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police, who joined the meeting through video conferencing, have also presented reports from their districts

to set up industry in Haryana: HEPB **SATISH HANDA** Chandigarh

To fulfill the dream of Viksit Bharat, we will make Haryana a key hub for manufacturing, said Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini while addressing 17th meeting of Haryana Enterprises Promotion Board (HEPB) with the representatives of the industry in which Anil Vij Labour Minister, Rao Narbir Singh Industry & Pollution Control Minister, Dr Arvind Sharma Tourism Minister, Ranbir Singh Gangwa PWD (B&R), Anurag Rastogi Chief Secretary, Rajesh Khuller Principal Chief Secretary to CM and Arun Gupta Chief Secretary. Saini said the state grew tremendously as an industrial power centre in the 10 years due to industry-friendly and labour welfare policies. He said Harvana todav ranked fifth in the country in the GST collection on the strength of the progress of its industrial institutions. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi dreams of a developed India by 2047,



the Budget allotment of the Department of Industry and Commerce has been increased to over Rs 1,848 crore in this year's Budget, which is 129 per cent more than last year,' Saini said.

The Chief Minister said the Haryana Government has included several measures in the Budget to improve the quality of life of industrial workers. He said as many as 300 'Atal Kisan Shramik Canteens' would be opened in industrial areas across the state to meet the residential needs of workers so that they could get nutritious food at reasonable

and to fulfil this resolution, rates. CM said the state government has implemented several important measures, such as the Haryana Enterprises and Employment Policy-2020, to create a business-friendly environment and encourage investment. To ensure a simple and smooth approval process for investors, the government had established online singlewindow clearance systems, which helped the state in being ranked among the top states in the Ease of Doing Business

The Chief Minister said, on the lines of IMT Kharkhoda, 10 new Industrial Model Townships (IMTs) would be

developed in Haryana, for two-wheeler and four-wheelwhich the demand for land would be registered by HSI-IDC on the e-Bhoomi portal. Industries and Commerce Minister Rao Narbir Singh said development of industrial areas was on cards, and the demand for infrastructural upgrades by industrial organisations would start in the next three months and would be completed in six months enabling the state to become an industrial hub. Saini said that eight large industrial houses in the country as well as from abroad has expressed desire to set up their industrial units in the state, demanding state's cooperation such as a single window system, lack of interference by related government employees when they assured to provide 80% employment opportunities to the residents of Haryana, except for specialised technical jobs.

Among organizations that expressed desire to set up their industry in Haryana included a Japan based automobile parts manufacturing company for

ers expressed desire to set up a manufacturing unit in Kharkhoda, Vayu Products Pvt. Limited manufacturing Solar Products desired to set up two manufacturing plants in Haryana at Bhagalpur (Jhajjar) and Naraingarh in Ambala district. Another firm, Advani Willmar, wants to set up a plant at Mundlana (Gohana) to manufacture agriculture equipment and fertilizers. ATL **Battery Technologies Private** Limited expressed desire to set up a plant to manufacture Lithium Cell Batteries at IMT Sohna in Gurugram district. Panasonic Life Solution Limited wants to set up industry in Techno Park at village Beed Dadri at Jhajjar.GFL Foils Products Private Limited wants to set up Aluminium Industry in Rewari district. Another manufacturing unit JBM Electric Vehicles Private Limited has desired to set up an industry under HEBP policy with the assistance of Haryana state government assuring to provide 75% jobs to Haryana youths.

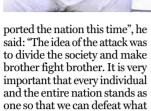
Rahul Gandhi: We Must Stand United to Defeat Terrorism Once & Forever

leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday said that the idea of the terrorists is to divide the society, and make brother fight brother, but the people of India must stand together to defeat terrorism once and

Addressing the media here at the end of his daylong visit to the Kashmir Valley in the wake of the Pahalgam attack, Gandhi said: "It has been a terrible tragedy, and I came here to get a sense of what is happening and to help.

"I met one of the injured because the rest of the injured have gone back home. I assure the families who have lost their dear ones that the entire nation stands as one with them,

Noting that the "entire J&K has condemned this terrible action and they have fully sup-



the terrorists want to do." Terming it "sad to see that some people are attacking my brothers and sisters from Kashmir in the rest of the country", Gandhi said that it is important that all of us stand together to defeat terrorism.

"We had a (all-party) meeting yesterday (on Thursday) and the united opposition has assured the government that we support whatever action the government wants to take. I met the Chief Minister and the LG. They briefed me about the situation. I assured them that I and my

the Congress leader asserted. Earlier on Friday, Gandhi visited the Army's Base Hospital

in whatever action they take to

end terrorism once and for all,"

in Badamibagh Cantonment area of Srinagar, where he met one of the injured tourists.

A total of 26 civilians were killed, and around two dozen people were injured in that cowardly terror attack that took place in Baisaran meadow of Pahalgam.

As per Congress leaders, Rahul Gandhi met various delegations, including those from the party and trade and tourism sectors. He also met Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

"Rahul Gandhi has come with a message of healing the wounds' of the people of the country, including Kashmiris, in the wake of the attack and its aftermath," a Congress leader party support the government

On his arrival, Gandhi was received by J&K Congress President, Tariq Hameed Karra and senior leader G.A. Mir at the

Waqf Act Amended to Prevent Encroachment of Government Properties, Centre to SC

institutions - such as property

management, record-keeping,

or tenets of the Islamic faith.

The affidavit highlighted that

despite there being a regime

'waqf by user', making registra-

lands as waqf including under

'waqf by user' which not only

lead to deprivation of valuable

property rights of individual

citizens but similarly unau-

thorised claims over public

properties. "While registration

of all kinds of waqfs (including 'Waqf by user') has always been

mandatory, the legal regime

never required the waqf deed

as a mandatory condition. In

other words, it was mandatory

to register 'Waqf by user' even

in the absence of a waqf deed

by giving other details for more

Referring to the recently

introduced Section 36(1A),

the Centre said that the 2025

amendment provides that a

waqf may now be established

only through a valid deed

of waqf. It clarified that the

amendment to Section 36 has

not interfered with the status

of existing/registered auqaf by

user, and any existing property

which has been registered as

waqf by user will retain its

status. The Union govern-

ment said that a proviso has

been inserted in Section 3 by

the Waqf (Amendment) Act,

2025, making it clear that the

mandatory requirement of a

waqf deed' applies prospec-

tively from the date of the 2025

amendment i.e., if any new

waqf is created after April 8.

before the amendment would

"Waqfs by user registered

than 100 years.

NEW DELHI: The Centre, in an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, said that it brought amendments to the Waqf Act, 1995, to prevent abuse of waqf legislation which resulted in the encroachment of government properties, apart from ensuring that the Waqf Boards in the country are properly administered and function with transparency.

"It is submitted that there have been reported misuse of waqf provisions to encroach private properties and government properties. It is really shocking to know that after the amendment brought in the year 2013, there is a 116 per cent rise in augaf area," said the preliminary affidavit filed by the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs. The Centre, in its reply document filed before the top court, said that it was found that most of the Waqf Boards have been functioning in the "most non-transparent manner" and have either not uploaded the details in public domain or have uploaded partial details. "In an era of transparency, it is absolutely necessary that all details concerning waqf/waqf boards be uploaded in Waqf Asset Management System of India (WAMPSI) portal," it contended.

The Union government said that under the old regime, due to the absence of adequate safeguards, government properties and even private properties were declared as waqf properties.

"The provisions of Sections 3A, 3B and 3C take care of the said situation which has been prevailing since several decades. It is submitted that there are startling examples whereby the government lands or even the private lands were declared as waqf properties," it said in the affidavit.

The Union government said that the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, was passed with the objective of modernising the management of waqf properties in India through transparent, efficient and inclusive measures. It argued that the reforms introduced are directed solely at the secular and therefore continue to be treat-

viso," the Centre said. The preliminary reply document filed by the Union

government said that before introducing the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, there has been a detailed executive level administrative aspects of waqf and Parliamentary level exercise in order to understand the problems plaguing the previous statutory regime, the conwithout impinging upon any sequences, and the appropriate essential religious practices measures that were required to remedy the same. The Centre contended that the "primary religious right being the right of mandatory registration of to make a dedication is not interfered with, and neither all kinds of waqf, including is the administration of any tion mandatory, individuals or specific waqf interfered with as organisations used to claim the same continues to be vested private lands and government with the mutawalli as per the urpose behind such wagf".

The affidavit said that it is a settled position in law that constitutional courts would not stay a statutory provision, either directly or indirectly, and will decide the matter finally, as there is a presumption of constitutionality that applies to laws made by Parliament.

"While the Hon'ble Court would undoubtedly have the ower to examine the constitutionality of the law, at the interim stage, the grant of an injunction against the operation of any provision of the law, either directly or indirectly would be violative of this presumption of constitutionality which is one of the facets of the delicate balance of power between the different branches of the State," it added.

In the hearing held on April 17, a bench headed by CJI Sanjiv Khanna had granted a week's time to the Centre and state governments and the Waqf Boards to file their preliminary reply to the petitions challenging the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. The Bench, also comprising Justices Sanjay Kumar and K.V. Viswanathan, had taken on record the assurance given by the Union government that it would not de-notify provisions related to 'waqf by user' or include non-Muslim members in the

PM Modi leads CCS in **Historic Retaliation: India Strikes Back at** Pakistan over Pahalgam Terror Attack



NEW DELHI: In a decisive response to the deadly terror attack on April 22 in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, India has taken a series of robust diplomatic measures to hold Pakistan accountable for its role in cross-border terrorism. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday evening discussed the implications of the attack, which claimed the lives of 25 Indian nationals and one Nepali citizen, with several others sustaining injuries.

The CCS expressed deep condemnation of the attack and offered heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and wishing for the swift recovery of those injured. The attack, which targeted tourists in a popular destination, was attributed to Pakistan-backed terror groups, sources said.

India has also received strong expressions of support from governments worldwide, condemning the attack and reaffirming their commitment to zero tolerance for terrorism.

The meeting also noted that the attack occurred against the backdrop of successful elections in Jammu and Kashmir and the region's ongoing progress toward economic development and stability. These achievements, India believes, are viewed as a threat by terrorist factions seeking to destabilise the region.

Recognising the seriousness of this attack and its crossborder linkages, the CCS took the following unprecedented measures:

Indus Waters Treaty suspended – In one of the most significant decisions, India has placed the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 in abeyance with immediate effect. This historic move effectively halts decades of cooperation on water-sharing between India and Pakistan.

Kashmir Economy has collapsed due to Pahalgam Terror Attack, says Kharge



ident Mallikarjun Kharge said on Wednesday that J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has conveyed to him that Kashmir's economy has collapsed following the Pahalgam terror attack. "The summer season has

just begun, and this is the time when tourists start visiting the region. Tourism is also the biggest source of income for J&K, especially Kashmir. They depend entirely on tourism income. Omar Abdullah told me that this year's economy has collapsed. He also said that tourism is their main source of livelihood and that they are devastated by this attack," said the Congress President, addressing a press conference at the Congress Headquarters in Bengaluru.

HM Shah, J&K CM Omar & LG Sinha pay tributes to people killed in Pahalgam

Minister Amit Shah, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha arrived at Srinagar Police Control Room on Wednesday to pay tributes to the tourists killed in the Pahalgam terror attack in which 16 people were

The bodies of the tourists killed in Tuesday's terror attack were brought to the Police Control Room in Srinagar on Wednesday morning. After paying tributes to the

slain tourists, the Home Minister is scheduled to visit GMC Anantnag to meet those injured in the attack He is also likely to conduct an

aerial survey of the attack site in Baisaran, Pahalgam, where 16 lives were tragically lost.

The bodies of tourists killed by terrorists in Pahalgam were brought to Srinagar on Wednesday as authorities are making



to their native places The Civil Aviation Ministry has arranged four additional flights from Srinagar today, two each to Mumbai and Delhi.

The Civil Aviation Ministry is also ensuring that the airfare does not skyrocket because of the rush as the Srinagar-Jammu Highway remained closed for the fourth day on Wednesday.

A team of the NIA reached

team is going to Pahalgam to collect evidence on the terrorists who carried out the cowardly attack on unarmed civilians.

A massive search operation was started in Pahalgam immediately after the terror attack to hunt down the terrorists.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the terror attack has redoubled the resolve of the nation to eradicate terror-

Why Indian Farmers protest against US Vice President: 'Vance Go Back! India is Not for Sale



THAKEN

day visit

to India US Vice-President not be held back. J.D Vance had to see the unpleasant incident of brutal massacre of tourists at Pahalgam and also faced the Indian farmers protesting with slogans Vance Go Back! India Is Not For Sale'.

Nearly after a century, Indian soil has again echoed 'Go Back' slogan to protest the dia, can build a future worth trict headquarters when the dignitary of the most powerful country in a planned way. together. And when President Previously, in 1928 the land of India had also expressed its Modi announced in February voice through the 'Go Back' slogan when the British reprethan double our bilateral trade sentative 'Simon Commission' to \$500 billion by the end of visited India and it had to face the slogan -'Simon Go Back'.

Now the Trump's new Tariff Policy, as alleged by the farmers' hoped, "We are now officially unions, thrust upon without one quarter into the 21st cenconsidering the Indian comtury, 25 years and 75 years to mon people view point and ground conditions, has also seems to have ignited the going to be determined by the open its agriculture market tions for withdrawing tariffs ground line and the farmers of India girded up the loin to nership. I believe that if India protest the visit of US Vice- and the US work together sucpresident J.D Vance. The Indian Soil once again echoed the 21st century that is prosperous slogan 'Vance Go Back! India and peaceful. But I also believe Is Not For Sale"

Gokhale Institute of Politics all of humanity.' and Economics, Pune, says-"President Donald Trump keeps the world on edge with daily blockbuster announceinto chaos. His unpredictable tariff policies have sown turmoil and uncertainty among nations leaders pondering.

What Vance messages through his address at Jaipur?

While addressing the India-22, the US Vice President said, "President Trump wants America to grow, he wants

JAG MOHAN build the future with our partners all over the globe. And when I look at this audience, his four- country over these last couple of days, I see a people that will Vance added, "Critics

have attacked my president, President Trump, for starting a trade war in an effort to bring back the jobs of the past. But nothing could be further from the truth. He seeks to rebalance global trade so that America, with friends like Inhaving for all of our people Trump and Prime Minister that our countries aim to more the decade, I know that both of them meant it."

The US Vice-President go. I really believe that the future of the 21st century is strength of the US-India partcessfully, we are going to see a that if we fail to work together Prof (Dr.) S N Tripathy, For-successfully, the 21st century mer Professor of Economics, could be a very dark time for

Why the Indian Farmers fear?

Reports received from different corners reveal that the ments, thrusting global trade Indian farmers under the banner of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), the largest umbrella tariffs; ironically this is while of Indian farmers, conveyed and financial markets, leaving their message of protest by the struggle path for remuorganizing programmes in nerative Minimum Support several places and burning the Price with legally guaranteed effigy of the US Vice President in token of their protest.

US Forum at Jaipur on April its units across India to hold import prohibition on gemass demonstrations and ef- netically modified maize as figy burning with the slogan well on ethanol with expec-"Vance Go Back! India Is Not tation of windfall gains for terests, India has chosen to produce. He urged the farmers



US Vice President J.D Vance arrive in India even as negotiations are on for a bilateral trade deal.

In its call the AIKS had alleged that the Indian Prime Minister has capitulated to the dictates of the US President Donald Trump and is going ahead with plans to ease tariff and non-tariff barriers for US products including farm products. Howard Lutnick, the US Commerce Secretary asserted that India should and agriculture cannot be 'off the table' in the negotiations for the Bilateral Trade Agreement.

The Farmers union feared that the Bilateral Trade Agreement under discussion will be the death-knell of dairy farmers as the US Dairy exports to India will make a quantum jump if tariffs and market restrictions are lifted. The US Wheat Associates claim that India has high levels of domestic support and trade distorting high the peasantry in India is on procurement. Similarly, in the case of Maize, there is AIKS had called upon all a push to remove India's

horticultural crops are all up for negotiation at the behest of US based Commodity Cartels. Even as Indian cotton farmers are already in an acute crisis and committing suicide and there is a continuous steady decline in annual cotton production from 37 million bales (170 kg each) in 2017-18 to 34.7 million bales in 2022-23 and estimated further decline to 31.6 million bales in 2023-24, the heightened negotiais extremely insensitive.

AIKS argues that a Mission 500 aiming to double total trade to \$500 billion by 2030 is in the offing according to news reports. The on-going trade negotiation is a deliberate move so that cheaper cotton, soybean, maize, apple etc. from the USA can be dumped in India, literally swamping the market. This will lead to a price crash for Indian farmers. All negotiations are being done without taking State Governments or the Parliament into confidence. Such Agreements also do not assure the implementation of International Labour Standards.

Quoting the stand of other countries, AIKS states that while countries like China, Canada, Mexico etc., made a resolute push-back against Trump's tariffs and rallied to defend their economic in-India to grow, and he wants to For Sale" in villages and dis- the USA. Soybean, almond, capitulate and surrender its and other sections of the peo-

eye before hitting back, while India with nearly 18 percent exports to the USA is refusing to stand up against the strongarm tactics of the USA. The farmers' Union warns that apart from agriculture, the interests of the MSMEs across sectors like generic pharmaceuticals to auto parts and millions of workers across these sectors are also going to be adversely hit.

A statement released on behalf of AIKS by Ashok Dhawale, President and Vijoo Krishnan, the General Secretary observe, "The Vice President of USA J.D. Vance's visit to India is part of putting pressure upon the State of India and the corporate led ruling classes to surrender the national interests to facilitate windfall profiteering to the Multinational companies.

Dr. Inderjit Singh National Vice-President of the AIKS reported to The Ground Post that the workers of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) registered protest against the visit of US Vice President J D Vance to India in connection with bilateral agreements on tariff and trade negotiations.

Singh stated that AIKS and SKM had given a call to register the opposition of Indian farmers against the bullying tactics by the Trump administration in the issue of tariffs and succumbing to the Modi government.

Addressing a meeting of farmers organised in the local grain market, Rohtak, AIKS national vice president Inderjit Singh questioned the continuing silence of Prime minister Modi while US President Trump has publicly claimed India's consent to lower down the tariffs on US products in Indian market and open the agriculture sector for the US

national interests. Notably, ple to know about the threats Canada and Mexico with more such a bilateral agreement than 70 percent of exports that would prove disastrous nk an for the livel of farmers and agricultural labourers and national food security. It was too disgraceful that most of the countries have refused to be cowed down. Modi government was succumbing to US pressures.

He stated that the US will dump its farm produce including fruits, cotton and dairy products in the Indian market while our produce can't compete with the huge amount of subsidies availed by farmers of developed countries where the cost of production was much less than those in the

developing countries. All India Democratic Women's Association Vice President Jagmati Sangwan asked the government to stand up firmly and not deceive the people of India to whom it was answerable.

Sumit Dalal, state General Secretary warned that India was not for sale. He reminded that the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM) draft released on 25 November last was also part of the broader agenda of the Modi government to facilitate the corporate to take over the agriculture sector. He claimed that effigies of Trump, Vance and Modi were burnt in all the districts of Haryana and more such protest actions against the unequal trade agreement against national interests that would inevitably be harmful even to other sectors like MSME and automobiles.

What effect the AIKS movement will have on Vance's visit to India and bilateral Tarriff Agreement, is in the womb of time, but one thing is certain-"Whenever a spark ignites, sooner or later it results in flames of fire.'

Jag Mohan Thaken is a Senior Journalist, Columnist ♂ Political Analyst, views are personal

PM Modi holds meeting with NSA, Foreign Minister at airport itself



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA New Delhi

According to sources, the Prime Minister did not utilize Pakistan's airspace during his return from Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister has advised the National Security Advisor and the External Affairs Minister that a representative from the Indian Government should urgently communicate with Pakistan concerning this

terrorist attack. Prime Minister Modi, who assessed the situation early in the morning, curtailed his visit to Saudi Arabia to return to India. Upon his arrival, he convened a meeting with the National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval and the Foreign Minister, S Jaishankar & Foreign Secretary at the airport to address the circumstances following the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir. A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by PM Narendra Modi, is anticipated later today after FM Nirmala Sitharaman returns from her foreign trip. This high-level review will concentrate on the security situation in the wake of the Pahalgam attack. Terrorists cursed Modi, asked tourists to recite Islamic verse before shooting them.

At least 26 people, two foreign tourists among them, were killed by a group of terrorists who emerged from the dense forests around the trekking paradise of the Baisaran meadows in the upper reaches of Pahalgam on Tuesday (April 22, 2025) afternoon. Number of others were wounded, including with critical injuries, and the death toll is likely

to rise, sources told, though there is no official casualty data from the government as yet.

On Wednesday, April 23, 2025, Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, stated that he had communicated with Home Minister Amit Shah, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and Tariq Karra, the president of the Congress' J&K unit, regarding the tragic terror attack in Pahalgam to obtain an update on the circumstances.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has abbreviated her official trip to the United States and Peru in response to the recent terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir, and she will return to India as soon as possible, as stated in an official announcement on Wednesday. Ms. Sitharaman had arrived in the U.S. on Sunday for a six-day engagement, followed by a planned five-day visit to Peru.

An Intelligence Bureau officer stationed in Telangana was among those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. Navy Lieutenant Vinay Narwal, who hailed from Karnal, lost his life in the Pahalgam terror attack. In light of the current circumstances, Air India will operate two additional flights from Srinagar to Delhi and Mumbai today, Wednesday, April 23rd. All other flights to and from Srinagar will proceed as scheduled. Air India is also providing complimentary rescheduling and full refunds for cancellations to passengers with confirmed bookings until April

30th, 2025, on these routes.



As inflation falls, it's time to raise farm incomes

ndia's retail inflation cooled to 3.34 per cent in March — its lowest since 2018 – almost guaranteeing further interest-rate cuts by the Reserve Bank of India. With back-to-back 25-basispoint reductions already lowering the repo rate to 6 per cent, the central bank has clearly shifted its focus to growth. Falling food prices, especially vegetables, eggs and pulses, have pulled down headline inflation. This has already led to a decline in lending rates, which, in more stable times, would spur borrowing, investment and consumption. Yet these are not stable times. Global trade tensions, particularly those driven by American tariff policy, have cast a shadow over exports. Domestic demand, therefore, becomes more critical. But there is a problem: falling food prices also mean shrinking farm incomes, which threaten rural consumption — the backbone of India's demand story. The damage is visible. In Andhra Pradesh, tomatoes were being sold for Rs 1 per kilogram in December. In February, farmers in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh dumped their produce, unable to cover costs. Post-harvest losses, estimated at Rs 1.52 trillion a year, remain unaddressed due to poor storage and transport infrastructure. With most farmers owning under two hectares of land and earning less than Rs 14,000 a month, their economic fragility is acute. Urban consumption continues to outpace rural spending. Yet the gap — nearly Rs 3,000 per month per capita — offers a clear policy opportunity. As export-led growth falters, reviving rural demand through investment in agricultural infrastructure, improved market access and targeted income support will not only aid farmers but also help drive a broader economic recovery. Interest-rate cuts may ease credit, but without bolstering rural purchasing power, their impact will be limited. Now is the time to shift the focus from inflation control to rural revitalisation. Timely action will benefit the wider economy.

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EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

BALAKRISHNA PISUPATI EXPLORES WAYS TO BRIDGE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION LOCALLY



Creative economy unlocks power of ideas

tory of innovations and creativity that changed the world. Yet, India's tryst with creativity and innovation ranges from the arts to science, from metallurgy to medicine, from astronomy and much more. As India works towards becoming a \$5 trillion economy, it needs to

rejig its approach to innovations, supported

by creativity at all levels.
Globally, in 2022, exports of creative services surged to \$1.4 trillion, marking a 29% increase since 2017. Creative goods exports also experienced a 19% rise, reaching \$713 billion. Collectively, the creative economy generates annual revenues exceeding \$2 trillion and supports nearly 50 million jobs

According to the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report on the creative economy, Creative Economy Outlook 2024, three sectors are the main contributors of the creative economy (2022): software services (41.3%), research and development (30.7%), advertising, market research and architecture (15.5%).

India's creative economy has also demonstrated significant contributions. In 2019, creative goods and services exports totalled about \$121 billion, with creative services accounting for nearly \$100 billion. The design segment alone represented 87.5% of creative goods exports, while arts and crafts contributed around 9%.

As of 2024, India's creative industry is valued at \$30 billion and employs about 8% of the country's working population. Creative exports grew by 20% in the previous year, generating more than \$11 billion.

Creativity in creative economy

While investments into traditional creative economic sectors are booming in a country



such as India, we still need to explore ways of being more creative and innovative to take the economic gains to new horizons, especially at the grass-root levels. This will ensure that such creations and innovations help local people. This will be a disruptive approach to promoting local economies.

Research has shown that creativity can be segmented into four types: deliberate and emotional; deliberate and cognitive; spontaneous and emotional, and spontaneous and cognitive. Creativity can be endogenous — triggered by one's own thoughts or imagination or exogenous — that is externally induced. It can be manifested concurrently or only episodically such as in crises or extreme climate events.

A significant part of local innovations falls into deliberate and cognitive as well as the spontaneous and cognitive segments. Creativity precedes innovation. While

creativity can be individual-based, innovation can be bootstrapped but needs an institution to support its scale or formalisation.

In a country such as India, enormous creativity exists but such creativity is not translated into innovation many a time. Creators come up with ideas while innovators translate the ideas into products and services. We need investments to bridge the gap between creativity and innovation.

Pioneering work on identifying and recognising grassroot innovations by organisations such as the Grassroot Innovations Augmentation Network (GIAN) have resulted in popularising hundreds of grassroot creative ideas.

An example from Indonesia

Where does one start? Consider a pioneering creative solution, the Antrodam Project, that has been conceived by the students of Binus School in Bekasi, Indonesia.

The Antrodam Project began with one mission: to create a solution to flooding, a challenge that affects communities world-wide. Looking for ideas from the best source of inspiration, nature itself, the Binus team explored structures from the animal and plant kingdoms to find the perfect design.

Inspired by the nests of Indian Harvester ants, the students engineered a flood protection system that works with nature rather than against it. The ants have intricate tunnel systems that direct water away from their nests, keeping them safe and dry. The students were also inspired by natural structures such as 'rose petals and their layered design to direct water; the lettuce leaf coral, with its intricate branching; the giant pill millipede which can roll into a compact shape; and the male frigate bird, known for its large, water-resistant throat pouch'.

This is sheer creative brilliance but what we now need are investments to scale up these creative ideas into an innovation at scale that can be applied elsewhere. I ake some examples of creativity from India such as the 'mitti cool clay refrigerator', pedal-operated washing machines or the amphibious bicycle. Each needs scale-up to be commercially attractive with appropriate protection for the creative idea, design and application.

Investing in creativity and innovation

It is time that India invests more in creative pursuits at all levels — grassroots to technology-intensive ideas. Grassroot innovations need more investments to ensure the proof of concept demonstrated is supported by capital investments.

The innovation and associated intellectual property protection for such innovations, including informal ones, need better protection through adjustments to Indian intellectual property protection policies and regulations.

It is also time that the government invests in 'one district one innovation' modelled after the successful initiative of "one district one product' initiative.

While the climate tech sector in India received \$2,853 million in 2023, the investments that grassroots creativity received seems to be very poor. Even if a small percentage of investments go to climate adaptation and mitigation actions that are creative and not working at the local level, India's ability to deal with climate change will be many times more.

What we need today is an ecosystem that balances creativity and innovations at all levels, backed by investments to ensure that India's ambitions to improve creative economic conditions are met.

Balakrishna Pisupati is the Country Head of the United Nations Environment Programme, India, and a member of Team UN India. Views are personal



PRABHASH RANJAN EXPLAINS WHY INDIA MUST LEAD, NOT LINGER, ON TRADE JUSTICE

India's silence undermines its trade credibility



he world is shaken by the reckless decision of the United States to impose reciprocal tariffs, which were announced on April 2, 2025, though it has been paused for 90 days, barring the tariff rates on China.

The illegality of these tariffs under international trade law, as defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO), makes little difference to U.S. President Donald Trump, who treats international norms with derision. Since the announcement of the tariffs, countries have responded in various ways, with some openly criticising the U.S. while others have chosen to remain silent.

Several nations have condemned the U.S. for imposing illegal tariffs and undermining the fundamental principles of international trade. Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong remarked recently that the imposition of reciprocal tariffs "is a complete repudiation of the MFN principle", which is a cornerstone of the multilateral trading system. Similarly, Brazil stated that these tariffs "violate" the U.S.'s commitments under WTO rules.

Another BRICS nation, China, has openly criticised the U.S. for breaching its WTO obligations and has initiated a dispute within the WTO. In addition, China has imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. imports. Japan has also formally stated that the unilateral imposition of tariff rates contradicts WTO agreements. Canada, too, has not hesitated to challenge the legality of the U.S. actions.

It has imposed retaliatory tariffs and filed a legal claim at the WTO regarding U.S. tariffs on Canadian automobiles and automobile parts. The positions adopted by



these countries are justified; international trade is complex and cannot operate effectively without fundamental rules. If a powerful country disregards these rules, other nations that uphold the rule-based system must call out that country.

While some nations have refrained from explicitly condemning the U.S. for violating international law, they have expressed general dissatisfaction with the unjustifiable increase in tariff rates. For instance, Fiji referred to the tariff hikes as 'unfair', and Italy's Prime Minister described them as a 'mistake'.

However, some countries have chosen to maintain silence regarding the U.S.'s illegal actions, issuing insipid statements that they are carefully examining the U.S.'s decision. These countries neither criticise the U.S.'s blatantly illegal actions nor formally express their discontent. India falls into this category.

Reasons behind India's silence

There are primarily two reasons presented to justify India's silence on the U.S.

ating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) with the U.S., and it is deemed not in India's interest to criticise the U.S. for its illegal actions publicly. This reasoning is questionable.

The U.S. is also negotiating

with India but has not hesitated to express its dissatisfaction with India's high tariff rates publicly, even when they are legal. Mr. Trump has openly criticised India's tariff levels on several occasions. Yet, it did not prevent the U.S. from negotiating with India even prior to

Moreover, India is not the only country negotiating bilaterally with the U.S.; many nations are in similar situations, and yet have publicly called out the U.S. for its unilateral actions. Claiming that the U.S.'s actions violate WTO law should not hinder negotiations, as New Delhi is not confronting Washington by imposing retaliatory tariffs but reminding it to honour international trade rules.

the announcement of the reciproc

Presumably, India will privately communicate this to the U.S., but a public statement would show its commitment to a rule-based trading order.

trading order.

The second reason is that the WTO's dispute settlement body is currently dysfunctional. Therefore, calling out the U.S. for its illegal actions, such as by filing a legal claim

perspective is flawed because it limits the role of international law to material outcomes such as compliance and enforcement. We must move beyond this narrow view.

at the WTO, is useless. This transactional

A key function of any legal system is its ability to differentiate between sheer public power and legitimate authority. Even though international law may not always and immediately punish decision-makers for non-compliance, it enables other actors to question those in power and to argue that their actions are illegitimate.

Both China and Canada are well aware of the definition of the WTCC dispute.

of the dysfunction of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. However, this has not deterred them from filing legal claims against the U.S.; they understand that they can use international law to strengthen their case for legitimacy.

Respect for trade rules Recently, around 40 WTO member coun-

tries, including many developing nations, issued a statement supporting trade multilateralism and WTO rules in response to U.S.-imposed tariffs. Notably, India, which often champions a rule-based trading system, did not sign this statement.

In accordance with its professed vision, this is a crucial moment for India to lead the Global South by advocating trade multilateralism and building a coalition against unilateral actions. History should remember India as a nation that defended national interests while taking up the cudgels for the developing world to establish a fair and just trading order.

Prabhash Ranjan is Professor and Vice Dean (Research), Jindal Global Law School. Views are personal.



Kabir returns: Irreverent, rooted, and still relevant

ew figures in Indian literary and spiritual history evoke as much awe, ambiguity, and appropriation as Kabir. In *The Notbook of Kabir*, S. Anand—poet, publisher, and self-professed "Kabirite"—engages with the mystic not to pin him down, but to let him fly. Through bold translation, sharp critique, and personal rumination, Anand takes Kabir out of the museum and sets him loose in the streets, in the margins, and in the minds of those still questioning faith, hierarchy, and meaning.

For Anand, Kabir is not a

figure to be revered from a distance. He is a living, shape-shifting presence who thrives in contradiction and irreverence. The book opens with Anand's playful declaration of allegiance to "Kabiristan", a place where meaning is often inverted, slippery, and subversive. This tone carries through the work, echoing Kabir's own *ulat bansi*

ew figures in Indian literary and spiritual history evoke as much style—his 'upside-down' verse that delights in dismantling orthodoxy.

orthodoxy.

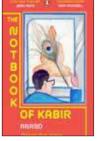
The Notbook of Kabir is not a scholarly biography, nor a faithful translation. It is a personal, political, poetic exploration of Kabir's legacy as reinterpreted through the lens of the Bhakti movement, Buddhism, and Ambedkarite anti-caste thought. Anand provocatively questions long-held assumptions—such as the claim that Kabir was a disciple of the Brahmin sage Ramananda—arguing that these narratives serve to domesticate Kabir's radical message within upper-caste frameworks.

One of the book's strengths lies in its refusal to privilege received wisdom. Anand questions who gets to be a guru, what authority means, and why it so often coincides with caste privilege. He asks, for example, whether reverence for the guru would persist if the teacher were a Dalit. In doing so, he exposes

how even progressive traditions like Bhakti are susceptible to appropriation and caste erasure.

appropriation and caste erasure. Fifty Kabir songs—translated and reimagined—form the heart of the book. Sourced from marginalised singers such as Kaluram Bamaniya, Prahlad Singh Tipanya, and Mahesha Ram, these songs are not mere artefacts; they are living performances. Anand's translations, full of rhythm and irreverence, match the spirit of Kabir more than any literal rendering could. They are, in Anand's own words, acts of joyful surrender to the "flamboyance and flexibility" of oral tradition.

But this same creative exuberance sometimes comes at a cost. The book flits from anecdote to insight, from verse to polemic, without always providing a firm historical or philosophical grounding. Kabir's alignment with Buddhism is suggested but not fully examined. His misogyny, well-noted by



The Notbook of Kabir: Thinner than Water, Fiercer than Fire By S. Anand; Viking;

scholars like Wendy Doniger, is acknowledged only in passing, with missed opportunities to interrogate the interplay between gender, caste, and spiritual renunciation.

To his credit, Anand does not pretend to be exhaustive or definitive. The text is laced with playfulness and digression, qualities that mirror Kabir's own resistance to categorisation. Rather than positioning himself as a scholar with authoritative claims, Anand plays the role of a curious interlocutor-sometimes irreverent, sometimes impassioned, always engaging. This refusal to tidy up the contradictions allows the book to stay true to Kabir's essential ambiguity.

What makes *The Notbook* of *Kabir* particularly resonant

today is its challenge to structures of authority-religious, textual, and caste-based. In an India where dominant narratives seek to purify, simplify and flatten history, Anand's Kabir is gloriously impure and uncontainable. He belongs not to Sanskritised tradition but to the vernacular, to performance, to protest. In reclaiming Kabir through the voices of singers from oppressed communities, Anand offers not just an alternative reading, but an act of restoration.

The Notbook of Kabir is not a textbook. It is not a hagiography. It is a companion for those willing to wade into discomfort, contradiction and delight. Anand gives us Kabir not as a saint to be followed, but as a question to be lived. This is a book that doesn't offer conclusions but opens doors—sometimes upside down.

In an age where identities are fixed and faiths rigid, Kabir's wild laughter rings clearer than ever. And in Anand's hands, it reaches new ears, irreverent and urgent, reminding us that truth—if it exists at all—often begins with doubt

Air India, IndiGo reroute International Flights after Pak Shuts Airspace for India

NEW DELHI: Leading carriers Air India and IndiGo on Thursday announced that their international flights will take an alternative extended route, after Pakistan closed its airspace for India amid rising diplomatic tensions after the deadly Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir.

Air India said that due to the announced restriction of Pakistan airspace for all Indian airlines, it is expected that some Air India flights to or from North America, UK, Europe, and Middle East will take an alternative extended

"Air India regrets the inconvenience caused to our passengers due to this unforeseen airspace closure that is outside our control. We would like to reiterate that at Air India, the

safety of our customers and crew remains top priority," the airline said in a post on social media platform X.

Meanwhile, IndiGo also said in a post on X that due to the tination at the earliest. We sudden announcement of airspace closure by Pakistan, "a

are being impacted"

"We understand the inconvenience this may cause, and our teams are doing their best to help you reach your desencourage you to check the latest flight status. If your flight few of our international flights is impacted, please explore

claim a refund through our website," said the low-cost carrier in its update on social

The high-level emergency meeting of Pakistan's National Security Committee (NSC), chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday afternoon, seconded the recommendations made by the Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and decided an immediate closure of its airspace for India.

Islamabad also said that India's decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) will be considered as an "act of war", stating that Pakistan will use its national power to tackle any unilateral decision taken by India in

fiscal year 2024-25 (April to of Eight Core Industries (ICI) registered a 3.8 percent growth March) compared to the prein March 2025 compared to vious year the same month last year, ac-The final growth rate for Decording to provisional data

cember 2024 was confirmed at a robust 5.1 percent. Steel production, which car-

rate of 4.4 percent during the

India's Core Industries Index Shows 3.8% Growth in March 2025

ries a weight of 17.92 percent in the index, increased by 7.1 percent in March 2025 over the same month last year, with its cumulative index rising by 6.7 percent for the fiscal year.

Electricity generation, having the second-highest weight in the index at 19.85 percent, posted a cumulative growth

grew by 6.2 percent, while its cumulative annual growth stood at 5.1 percent.

The Fertiliser sector demonstrated strong performance with an 8.8 percent increase in March 2025 compared to March 2024

Coal production showed moderate growth at 1.6 percent, while Petroleum Refinery Products registered a marginal increase of 0.2 percent. However, two sectors re-

corded declines in March 2025. Crude Oil production fell by 1.9 percent compared to March 2024, with its cumulative index showing a 2.2 percent decline for the fiscal year. Natural Gas experienced a significant contraction of 12.7 percent, with its cumulative index decreasing by 1.2 percent during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The cement industry emerged as the standout performer with 11.6 percent growth in March 2025, contributing to a strong cumulative annual growth of 6.3 percent, reflecting ongoing infrastructure development activities across the country.

Nearly 90% Kashmir tour bookings cancelled after Pahalgam attack



FW DESK Srinagar

Nearly 90 % of tourist bookings for Jammu and Kashmir have been cancelled following the terror attack in Pahalgam, according to PTI report quoting several Delhi-based travel agencies. The cancellations come in the wake of Tuesday's attack in Baisaran valley, a popular spot in Pahalgam, where terrorists opened fire on tourists. At least 26 people, including two foreigners and two locals, were killed in what has become the deadliest terror incident in the Valley since the 2019 Pulwama bombing, PTI reported. Travel agents said popular destinations like Gulmarg, Hajan Valley, and the Tulip Gardens were among the most-affected. In Kashmir also, the hoteliers and travel agents are reporting cancellations. Lal Chowk and Boulevard which used to be full of tourists now wears a deserted look, "All tourists at our guest house left, said Mohammad Imran, a staffer at a guest house in Srinagar. "We had bookings for May and June. They too have cancelled.'

Dr. Sabeen Mekan as Senior Vice President, **Clinical Development**

FW DESK

Vancouver (British Columbia)

Zymeworks Inc., a clinical-stage biotechnology company develop-ing a diverse pipeline of novel, multifunctional biotherapeutics to improve the standard of



that Sabeen Mekan, M.D., has

inflammatory disease and Global

Clincal Development Operations.

Panipat textile goods manufacturers get orders worth Rs. 5000 cr. from USA

SATISH HANDA

Panipat

The US-China tariff war has started a golden opportunity for Panipat textile manufacturers and exporters. US tariffs on China have increased the prices of Chinese products, due to which American buyers have switched over their procurement of textile goods placing orders on Panipat exporters. Information reveals, Panipat exporters have received orders worth Rs 5000 crore from American buyers at the Indian Handicraft-Gift Fair held in Noida recently. It is expected that more orders for amounts worth Rs 5000 crore will be received by September this year. The US-China tariff war has become an opportunity for the textile city Panipat, when China imposed a 125 percent tariff on America, and responded by imposing a 245 percent dumping duty on China. In America, Chinese blankets, bedsheets, bathmats, towels and carpets have become more expensive than Indian products after their prices have much increased, as such the American orders being placed to China Information reveals, about one arrived at the Indian Handicraft-Gift Fair held in Noida the exporters of Panipat, apart from another rupees five thouexpected by September this year as a result happiness among with China than Panipat.



exporters of Panipat has been seen. Now Panipat's exports to America can increase from 9,600 crores to 15 thousand crores in 2025-26, expecting worldwide exports to reach rupees 30,000 crores. Panipat's exporters are very happy with this and have also invited American buyers for a meeting in Delhi.

The Indian Handicraft-Gift Fair is held twice a year in September and April at Greater Noida. This fair being World's largest handicraft and gift fair gets a huge gathering of buyers from all over world, in which nearly 3500 buyers from about 105 countries attend this fair. Panipat exporters have received the maximum American orders. showcases the Indian handicraft sector to the world. The aim of this fair is to increase the production capacity of Indian handicrafts, improve quality and bring innovation in designs. Inare being shifted to Panipat. formation reveals that Chinese products were nearly 40 percent aner in Amer exporters from China used to get maximum orders in the past. In from 16 to 19 April this year, America, the prices of Chinese who have placed orders worth mink blankets, bedsheets, towabout five thousand crores to els, bathmats, carpets and sofa covers were up to 40 percent lower than those exporters in sand crores worth of orders are Panipat as a result American buyers used to place more orders

Zymeworks Appoints

care for difficultto-treat diseases,



been appointed as Senior Vice President, Clinical Development. Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Mekan will have a key role in formulating the clinical development strategy for Zymeworks' clinical-stage oncology portfolio, including global regulatory affairs. Dr. Jeff Smith, who joined Zymeworks in 2023, will continue as Executive Vice President & Chief Medical Officer, with primary responsibility for Zymeworks' emerging R&D portfolio in autoimmune and

Government Vigilant against Dumping & **Predatory Pricing says Joint Secretary Mishra**



New Delhi

"A new world order is developing with tariffs and retaliatory tariffs announced almost in real-time. Chemicals is one sector which may benefit from this development. Exports to the US may be re-directed towards us, so we need to be vigilant against dumping and predatory pricing which may happen in the next few months. A task force under the Ministry of Commerce had been set-up to closely monitor the situation." Said Deepak Mishra, Joint Secretary, Petrochemicals, Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Government of India at the India Speciality Chemicals Conclave organised by ASSOCHAM. "We are working to develop a Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) framework for India. Once this is in place, products can be brand ed accordingly in conformity to international environmental norms and quality controls." he said. "Research and development is crucial for speciality chemicals business as it is more of a knowledge centric business. The industry must work together with academia to enhance capabilities for research." he added.

'Viksit Bharat' journey a shared national mission: FM Sitharaman

NEW DELHI: India's journey to become a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 is not merely an aspiration but a shared national mission powered by a vision for inclusive, sustainable, and innovation-led growth, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said. During her address at the

Hoover Institution at Stanford University in the US, the Finance Minister said that India has risen from the world's tenth-largest economy to the fifth-largest, a clear sign of "our growing strength and global

Despite the pandemic shock and a banking crisis, our progress over the past decade, anchored in strong macroeconomic fundamentals and steady



she told the gathering durng her keynote address, titled 'Laying the foundations for a developed India #ViksitBharat

FM Sitharaman said that some of the works done in India

stand out, and one such example is that of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and its success.

"More than a billion digital identities have been created using DPI. Using these digital identities, bank accounts of people were created, and during the Covid-19 pandemic,

mestic capacities, renewed institutional partnerships and adaptive strategies suited for the evolving global landscape.

NEW DELHI: India's Index

Six out of the eight core

sectors recorded positive

growth, with Cement show-

ing the strongest performance

The Eight Core Industries,

which comprise 40.27 percent

of items included in the Index

of Industrial Production (IIP).

money was transferred by the

government with a click of a but-

ton. DPI also came in useful in

administering vaccines during

the Covid-19 pandemic, " the

Finance Minister mentioned

G20, the World Bank or the

IMF, this singular population-scale achievement of India

is repeatedly lauded, " she

Minister, over the next two

decades, sustaining India's

growth momentum calls for

a fresh approach grounded

in bold reforms, stronger do-

According to the Union

"In my interactions with the

during her speech.

released today.

at 11.6 percent.

Startups & MSMEs have filed 310% more patents in the last five years says Controller General

New Delhi

Patent filling by startups and MSMEs have increased by 310% in last 5 years from 1492 in 2018-19 to 6120 in 2023-24. In 2023-24 more than 30% patby educational institute, said N. Ramchander, Joint Controller, Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks at AS-

SOCHAM event. In less than 3 years over 2.4 million students and faculty about IP rights through the



Awareness Mission (NIPAM) launched in 2021, N. Ramchander, Joint Controller, Controller General of Patents, Designs and across India have been educated Trademarks, DPIIT stated at

Ecosystem for Viksit Bharat organised by ASSOCHAM today.

He further said that Indian patent office along with WIPO has conducted six roving semi-3rd Global IP Leadership Con-nars in Chennai, Mumbai, Ben-National Intellectual Property ference Building a Robust IP galuru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad N. Ramchander.

and Delhi PCT system of filling patents and Madrid system of trademarks in the month of March 2025.

The filling of patent applications in India has surged by 116% rising from 42,763 in 2014-15 to 92,172 in 2023-24. more remarkable increase of 1,624%, jumping from 5,978 in 2014-15 to 103,057 in 2023-24. India has seen biggest change in resident and non-resident distribution over past 10 years with the share of resident filling increasing from 24.8% in 2013 to 60% in 2024, added

China Plus One: India as a Fit Candidate in Pharmaceuticals

ing hub as China's share in Gross Production stood at 33 per cent as per the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Trade in value-added (TiVA) Database 2023, and this was 2.75 times of the U.S. share in Gross Production of the World. And the U.S. ranks 2nd in terms of Gross Production. China's production exceeded that of nine next largest manufacturers nations manufacture at least 3 per cent of the world total.

By 1995, top 10 countries in manufacturing used to have is the world's largest producer and enhance the capability in almost 65 per cent share in of Active Pharmaceutical Ingross output and China's share was around 5 per cent at that countries including the U.S. time. By 2020, share of top 10 countries in manufacturing drugs that either come from on China for APIs. Then in has reached almost equal to China's share in gross output APIs which are sourced from which reflects the strength of Chinese manufacturing

tries to rethink about their on a single source or country dependence on China, and which is potentially unreliable. look for alternative sources of In recent tariff war between

Economic Framework (IPEF) was touted as an alternative as it accounted for almost 40 per cent of the global GDP. Countries such as the U.S., Japan, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Brunei, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and India came together.

In May 2020, it was widely highlighted that a total area of 461,589 hectares was identified across India to attract businesses moving out of China. This identified land pool was almost double the size of Luxembourg. Pharmacombined. Richard Baldwin ceutical sector was identified (2024) pointed out that six as the focus area for promoting manufacturing along with other nine sectors.

In pharmaceuticals, China gredients (APIs), and many is dependent heavily on the China in finished form or from China. During COVID-19 outbreak, it was realized by many countries that supply of es-COVID-19 pandemic com- sential medicines must not be

As per the report by Bain & Company (2025) titled, 'Healing the World: A Roadmap for making India a Global Pharma Exports Hub', China is the leader in pharmaceutical exports (volume terms) if we observe the data of 6-digit India Trade Classification Harmonized System (ITC-HS) pertaining to APIs, Formulations, Biosimilars and Vaccines. France has second rank with just one-fifth in terms of volume in compariranked third with the size of almost 17.88 per cent of China in pharmaceutical exports.

In Key Starting Materials (KSMs), Drug Intermediates, and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), India must lower dependence on imports exports. In last almost four decades, India has seen a major shift. In 1991, there was less than one per cent dependence 2008, due to Beijing Olympics, several API plants were closed in China which led to increase in the price of those bulk drugs which India was sourcing primarily from Chipelled many developed coun- compromised by just relying na, to the extent of 20 per cent. By 2011, the dependence on China for APIs rose to 60 per cent. BCG-CII Report in 2016 supply. Many countries start- the U.S. and China, this has had identified that nearly 80 or indirectly by prohibiting



some APIs) used to manufacture at least 12 essential drugs were being imported from China. It was only in FY21 that API exports from India stood at Rs. 32,856 Crore and API imports stood at Rs. 28,529 Crore. Quantity of API exports stood at 3,24,331 MT whereas Quantity of API imports was 3,90,476 MT. This partly reflected quality and complexity of APIs exported from India. Moreover, this was a positive sign in presenting India as 'China Plus One' in APIs. Recent developments place

'Plus One' candidates in an advantageous position, e.g., the US Biosecure Act intends to prevent Chinese biotech companies and manufacturers from benefiting from US government funding directly ed working on taking up the become another reminder. per cent of many key materi- companies which use manu-

son to China whereas India als (mostly intermediates and factured goods and services from certain Chinese companies, and those linked to government/military of China. Second major initiative is formed by the US, EU, Japan, South Korea and India. Inaugural meeting took place as vention 2024 that was held in San Diego. The purpose was to the biopharmaceutical sector. On domestic front, certain

initiatives have been taken to build strength in pharmaceutical sector. First, the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical Kev Starting Materials (KSMs)/ Drug Intermediates (DIs) and Active Pharmaceu-

identified products. A total for Pharmaceuticals, with a from India. financial outlay Rs. 15,000 crores and the tenure from FY 2020- 2021 to FY 2028-29, provides for financial incentive to 55 selected applicants for manufacturing of identified products under three categories for a period of six years. The eligible drugs under this scheme include APIs. Thirdly, the Scheme for Biopharmaceutical Alliance Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks provides for a financial outlay of Rs. 3,000 crores and the tenure from FY 2020-2021 to part of Bio International Con- FY 2024-25. The Scheme provides for financial assistance \$30.47 Bn. to three States for establishing build resilient supply chain in Bulk Drug Parks. The success of these schemes will make

One' tag in pharmaceuticals. Biopharmaceuticals is an-2024 report by BIRAC pegged India's Biopharma at \$53.8 Bn with almost 35.65 per cent tical Ingredients (APIs) in share in India's BioEconomy. India has been launched with
It should be seen in the back- huge market for Indian phara financial outlay of Rs. 6,940 ground that just 9 manufac- maceutical products. India is

crores and the tenure from turers account for over 70 per importing about \$800 Mn FY 2020-2021 to FY 2029- cent of the global supply in 30. This Scheme provides case of Global Vaccine Marfor financial incentive to 41 ket. 3 vaccine manufacturers (Serum Institute of India, of 51 applicants have been Bharat Biotech International, selected under the scheme. and Biological E Limited) out Secondly, the PLI Scheme of these 9 manufacturers are

> When these facts are seen in comparison to Ireland then Indian Pharmaceutical Industry's size seems insignificant. Ireland exported \$92 Bn of pharmaceutical products in 2023 thereby becoming the 3rd largest exporter of pharmaceutical products in the world For Ireland, pharmaceutical products were the most exported product in 2023, and exports to the U.S. alone stood at \$31.6 Bn. In contrast to opportunity currently is to this, India's total pharmaceutical exports for FY25 stood at

Recent data has shown that medicines from Indian companies provided \$219 Bn India self-reliant. Addition- in savings to the US healthally, this will present India as care system in 2022 alone. a fit candidate for 'China plus' Between 2013 and 2022, savings to the US Health System stood at \$1.3 Trn due to other area which has immense the use of generic medicines potential. India's BioEconomy exported by Indian pharmaceutical companies. The U.S. will generate additional \$1.3 Trn in savings over the next five years. The U.S. alone is a

worth of pharma products from the US and exported pharma products worth US \$8.9 Bn. So, the US remained the largest market for Indian pharma exports contributing more than one-third of the pharmaceutical exports. This shows the strength of Indian

Pharmaceutical Industry.

What Ajay Banga, as the World Bank President said on July 28, 2023, when he was addressing a G20 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' meeting at Gandhinagar seems most relevant: "India has a window of three-to-five years to seize this opportunity to attract investment. I think India's cash in on the 'China plus One' opportunity. This opportunity won't stay open for 10 years." Now, we are in 2025, and two years have already passed, so it has become crucial to realign national efforts with speed and scale to become 'Plus One' in Pharmaceuticals in sub-segments where we lack.

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish-Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali),

DISCLAIMER: Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

RBI Issues New LCR Guidelines for Banks Sensex, Nifty end Lower as Geopolitical Tensions Rise

sued new Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) guidelines which will require a bank to assign additional run-off rates of 2.5 per cent to internet and mobile banking-enabled retail and small business customer deposits with effect from April

Banks will also have to adjust the market value of Government Securities (Level 1 HQLA) with haircuts in line with margin requirements under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF).

In addition, the final guidelines also rationalise the composition of wholesale funding from "other legal entities". Consequently, funding from non-financial entities like trusts (educational, charitable and religious), partnerships, LLPs, etc., shall attract a lower run-off rate of 40 per cent as against 100 per cent



currently.

"To give the banks adequate time to transition their systems to the new standards for LCR computation, the revised instructions shall become applicable with effect from April 1, 2026," the RBI statement said.

The Reserve Bank has undertaken an impact analysis of the above measures based in India, and further align on data submitted by banks, the guidelines with the global as on December 31, 2024. standards in a non-disruptive expected net cash outflows It is estimated that the net manner, according to an RBI over a 30-day stress scenario.

impact of these measures will improve the LCR of banks, at the aggregate level, by around 6 percentage points as on that date. Further, all the banks would continue to meet the minimum regulatory LCR requirements comfortably. The RBI is sanguine that these measures will enhance the liquidity resilience of banks

The Reserve Bank had issued a draft circular on July 25, 2024, on "Basel III Framework on Liquidity Standards - Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) - Řeview of Haircuts on High Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA) and Run-off Rates on Certain Categories of Deposits". The draft circular proposed certain amendments to the LCR framework and invited comments from banks and stakeholders.

The final LCR guidelines have been issued after carefully examining this feedback, the RBI statement added.

The Liquidity Coverage Ratio is a regulatory standard developed by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. It requires banks to hold a buffer of High Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA) that can cover

uity indices saw intense selling pressure on Friday amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, following the barbaric terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.

Sensex started the day on a positive note, reaching an early high of 80,131. However, the market quickly turned negative, dropping sharply to a low of 78,606, a loss of 1,525 points, as reports emerged of a ceasefire violation at the India-Pakistan border. The index managed to recover some of the losses but still ended the day 589 points lower, closing at 79,213 - adecline of 0.7 per cent. Similarly, the Nifty index rose to a high of 24,365 before plunging to its intra-day low of 23,848, a drop of 517 points. The Nifty ended 207 points lower, settling at 24,039, a decrease of 0.9 per cent.

Rising geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan continued to weigh heavily on



investor sentiment, prompting a cautious start for Indian equities," said Sundar Kewat of Ashika Institutional Equity. Despite the sharp decline, the benchmark indices closed the week on a positive note. The Sensex gained 660 points, and the Nifty added 187 points over the course of the week. Among the Sensex stocks, Axis Bank was the biggest loser, following the announcement of its Q4 results. Other major losers included Zomato, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid Corporation, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, Tata Motors, and SBI, all of which saw declines of 2-3 per cent.

On the flip side, stocks like TCS, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech

Cement, and Infosys managed to close with notable gains. The broader market was also hit hard, with both the BSE Mid-Cap and SmallCap indices fall-

ing more than 2 per cent each. In terms of sectoral performance, the BSE Realty, Healthcare and Power indices experienced sharp declines, each falling up to 3 per cent.

Other sectors such as Auto, Capital Goods, Consumer Durables, and Metal saw declines of around 2 per cent each.

The Bankex and FMCG indices also ended the day in the

red, down by about 1 per cent. Rupak De from LKP Securities said that Nifty has slipped after a consolidation on the daily chart, indicating a rise in bearish

"In the short term, sentiment is likely to continue driving the market trend, with the possibility of the index heading lower. Support on the lower end, is placed at 23800/23515," he

Market Valuation of Top-10 Companies Surges by over 3 Lakh Core, HDFC Bank Biggest Gainer



MUMBAI: The combined market capitalisation of the top 10 most-valued companies surged by Rs 3.84 lakh crore last week, driven by a bullish trend in equities. HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerged as the top performers.

Despite the two-day holiday, the stock market surged over 4 per cent last week. Nifty rose 1,023 points or 4.48 per cent to close at 23,851 and Sensex rose 3,395 points or 4.52 per cent to close at 78,553. HDFC Bank's market capital-

isation surged by Rs 76,483.95 crore to Rs 14,58,934.32 crore. Bharti Airtel's market valuation grew by Rs 75,210.77 crore, taking the company's market cap to Rs 10,77,241.74 crore. ICICI Bank gained Rs 67,597 crore, pushing its valuation to Rs 10,01,948.86 crore, while State Bank of India added Rs 38,420.49 crore, reaching Rs 7,11,381.46 crore. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) saw an increase of Rs 24,114.55 crore, bringing its market value to Rs 11,93,588.98 crore. The market cap of Bajaj Finance rose by Rs 14,712.85 crore to Rs 5,68,061.13 crore. The market cap of ITC grew by Rs 6,820.2 crore to Rs 5.34,665.77 crore. The market capitalisation of Infosys rose by Rs 3,987.14 crore to Rs 5,89,846.48 crore.

Indian Bank to Disburse Rs 20,000 Crore to Self-Help Groups in FY26



a public sector lender headquartered in Chennai, has announced plans to disburse Rs 20,000 crore to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across India in the current financial year (FY26). This initiative aims to empower grassroots women entrepreneurs and support inclusive economic growth. In a recent 'Mega SHG Credit Outreach Programme' held in Bhubaneswar, the bank sanctioned Rs 509.91 crore to 9,961 SHGs.

The event was attended by M Nagaraju, Secretary of the Department of Financial Services. Binod Kumar, MD & CEO of Indian Bank, and Mahesh Kumar Bajaj, Executive Director.

This programme is part of a nationwide effort to provide credit access to one crore women SHG members, aligning with the government's 'Viksit Bharat 2047' vision for inclusive development.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has also encouraged banks to simplify loan procedures for SHGs, making financing more accessible and inclusive. SHGs play a crucial role income-generating activities of RRBs in the country from 43 Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Bank, Indian Bank, and State West Bengal Gramin Bank, headamong women, contributing to to 28. According to sources, the Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Bank of India respectively. For quartered in Kolkata under Puntheir economic empowerment. Finance Minister's scheduled Maharashtra, Odisha, and Raj- Uttar Pradesh, Baroda UP Bank, jab National Bank's sponsorship.

NBFC Credit Growth to Moderate to 13-15% in FY25-26: ICRA **NEW DELHI:** Credit growth of

non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) is expected to ease to 13-15 per cent in financial years 2025 and 2026, down from the 17 per cent recorded in the previous two fiscal years, according to a recent report by rating agency ICRA.

Overall NBFC credit stood at approximately Rs 52 trillion in December 2024 and is projected to exceed Rs 60 trillion

Retail assets, which accounted for 58 per cent of overall NBFC credit in December 2024, have been the primary growth drivers, while other wholesale and infrastructure credit expanded at a stable rate of 10-12 per cent during FY2023-FY2025.

The retail assets of NBFCs expanded at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23 per cent during FY2023-

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to

review the implementation and

progress of the 'One State-One

aims to achieve better operational

efficiency and cost rationaliza-

tion, will come into effect from

May 1, merging 15 Regional Rural

ill reduce the total number

The consolidation effort, which

RRB' initiative on May 6.



Finance Minister to review 'One State-One RRB' Implementation on May 6

retail assets to grow at a relatively slower 16-18 per cent CAGR during FY2025 and FY2026, citing the high base created in the post-COVID expansion of this segment and concerns about borrower overleveraging, which has impacted loan quality in certain asset segments.

Asset segments including microfinance, personal loans, credit cards, and unsecured business loans are witnessing higher stress in FY2025, lead-

However, ICRA now expects ing to elevated delinquencies and write-offs.

> Unsecured business loans account for nearly 28 per cent of retail NBFC credit as of December 2024.

> "While the stress is largely confined to the unsecured loans at present, in a constricted credit flow environment, the refinancing ability of some of the borrower segments shall get adversely impacted," stated Karthik Srinivasan, Group Head Financial Sector Ratings

a single RRB entity, fulfilling the

'One State-One RRB' objective.

banks-Chaitanya Godavari Gra-

meena Bank, Andhra Pragathi

Grameena Bank, Saptagiri Gra-

meena Bank, and Andhra Pradesh

Grameena Vikas Bank—will

merge to form Andhra Pradesh

Bank o

In Andhra Pradesh, four

at ICRA Limited.

Thus, performance-secured loans availed by these borrowers, namely small-ticket vehicle loans and micro and small-ticket mortgage loans, etc., shall remain a key monitorable," he added.

The rating agency noted that while most regulatory actions are expected to have some nearterm impact on growth, they augur well for the sector in the long term.

Most entities have the ability to absorb any near-term impact, considering their strong balance sheets and healthy earnings profiles.

'Moderate loan growth expectations, along with limited dependence on short-term funding at present, bode well for sectoral liquidity, which is expected to remain adequate, but access to the commensurate funding remains key," the report stated

Gramin Bank will be consolidated

into Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank

with its headquarters in Lucknow

under Bank of Baroda's sponsor-

ship. These banks were earlier

sponsored by Bank of Baroda,

Bank of India, and Punjab Na-

tional Bank. In West Bengal,

three banks-Bangiya Gramin

Vikash, Paschim Banga Gramin

asthan. Each state will now have Aryavart Bank, and Prathama UP

IMF, World Bank See India's Potential as



SAN FRANCISCO: Finance Minister Niramala Sitharaman said that India has become the fastest-growing economy, driven by the "visionary leadership" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the stability provided by a continuing government.

Addressing the Indian diaspora in the US, the Finance Minister said, "When we say that India is the fastest-growing economy and when the IMF and World Bank recognise that India can be the engine driving global trade, what they are recognising is the immense potential that exists in India."

Highlighting the steps to strengthen the Indian economy, Sitharaman said, "During the Covid-19 pandemic, our fiscal deficit went up. But in 2021, we came up with a clear signal as to how we wanted to manage our fiscal deficit. We set year-onyear targets and committed to bringing the fiscal deficit below Bank, and Uttarbanga Kshetriya 4.5 per cent by 2026. And that's we have been following each year without fail."

> She said the government's primary focus under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is achieving 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. This vision encompasses improvements across sectors impacting women, the impoverished, youth, and farmers.

FM Sitharaman highlighted that India prioritises 'Sunrise Sectors' and stands out as a Sitharaman will travel to Peru

structure, driving innovation and growth.. She also said, "Prime Minister

Narendra Modi makes it a part of his every overseas visit to connect with the Indian diaspora because he thinks that it is important that India connects with each one of you who, located in whichever part of the world, are doing your best to contribute to the world and stand out as an example.

Sitharaman is on a five-day visit to the United States. Upon her arrival in San Francisco, she was received by Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra

During the visit, she is slated to deliver a keynote speech at Stanford University and hold discussions with CEOs in San Francisco on investment and technological advancements. The visit will also include participation in diaspora events, enhancing India's global cultural presence.

In Washington DC, Sithara-World Bank Spring Meetings, and the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings. She will also hold bilateral talks on the sidelines with counterparts from the US, the UK, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and other countries, as well as top officials from international financial institutions. After completing her US trip,

Rising Investment by **Indian Incaboard Drags Net FDI Numbers**



NEW DELHI: India's net foreign direct investment (FDI) has fallen dramatically to USD 1.5 billion during April 2024-February 2025, down from USD 11.5 billion in the corresponding period last year, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. This sharp decline comes despite robust growth in gross FDI inflows.

The country's gross FDI growth of 15.2 percent yearon-year, reaching USD 75.1 billion during the 11-month period of FY 2024-25, up from USD 65.2 billion in the previous fiscal year.

The State of the Economy report in the April 2025 RBI bulletin identified Singapore as the largest source of equity inflows with a 29.8 percent share, followed by Mauritius leader in Digital Public Infra- for a visit from April 26 to 30. and the United States.

Indian economy is moving towards nourishment to flourish

meeting with RRBs will address

various issues, including the on-

going consolidation process. The

Banks (RRBs) across 11 states. consolidation affects RRBs in 11 Grameena Bank. These banks

This fourth round of consolida- states: Andhra Pradesh, Uttar were previously sponsored by

West Bengal



creased by 3.34% annually nomic activities slow down in March, while it increased and the pace of development by 3.61% in February. It is is hampered. In such a situaworth mentioning that retail tion, it would be correct to say inflation has come down to that the pace of development its lowest level in the last 67 months, while it was at the tion decreases. level of 5.22% in December 2024. At the same time, it better-than-normal rainfall was at 5.1% in January 2024. this year is a significant devel-It is worth mentioning that opment for the Indian econoafter November 2021, retail inflation has increased at the to lead to better crops, reduc-

4.31% in January. 2.69% in March 2025 compared to March 2024, while the economy. the cost of food in the wholesale market increased by Office (NSO) has projected only 1.57%. Retail inflation the GDP growth rate to be is within the 2% to 6% infla- 6.4 per cent in its first adtion tolerance limit set by the vance estimate for the Gross Reserve Bank of India. It has Domestic Product (GDP) for remained below 4% for the the financial year 2024-25, second consecutive month, which is lower than the last making it easier for the Re- three financial years. The GDP serve Bank of India to cut growth rate in the previous fipolicy rates in the proposed

monetary review in June. in determining one's purchas- GDP to grow at 6.6% during ing power. When inflation the financial year 2024-25. increases, the prices of goods

mand for goods and services. Then, the sale of various products decreases, their production decreases, the company e t a i l incurs losses, workers are laid infla- off, employment generation tion in- decreases, etc. As a result, ecoaccelerates only when infla-The IMD's prediction of

my. This forecast is expected lowest pace in March 2025. ing farmers' dependence on Here, wholesale inflation also irrigation and the overall cost declined and came down to of farming. Currently, about 2.05% in March, while it was 48.8% of India's total agriculat the level of 2.38% in Feb-tural land is irrigated, with the ruary and was at the level of remaining 51.2% dependent on rain. The potential increase The price of food in the in rainfall could significantly retail market increased by boost agricultural production, thereby positively impacting

The National Statistical nancial year was 8.2%. At the same time, the Reserve Bank Inflation plays a vital role of India has projected the

Despite the recent slow and services increase, which pace of GDP growth, hope reduces a person's purchasing is on the horizon. The govpower and decreases the de- ernment's focus on increas- cheap capital for banks. When worth noting that loan growth



Bihar.

ing investment, savings, and consumption in the budget is a promising strategy. We can and development by boosting these areas, bringing hope for a brighter financial future.

After loan growth between 14% and 16% in the last two years, the overall credit growth has slowed down for the past few months. In December 2024, credit growth came down which was the high lending rate. Cheap capital is not available from banks. Earlier, investors used to keep their deposits in the bank, but today, in the hope of getting higher returns, they are investing in the stock market, mutual funds, gold, bonds, etc., due to which banks are facing a shortage of capital. It is worth noting that banks take deposits from customers and give loans to people in need in the same amount, but customers are currently avoiding

depositing their money. In such an adverse situation, the central bank is the source of

the policy rates are cut, the Reserve Bank will give loans to banks at cheaper rates, which accelerate economic activities they can lend to people in need at more affordable rates, and borrowing will increase. Currently, banks are forced to give loans at higher rates, and due to the availability of loans at higher rates, ordinary people and business owners are avoiding taking out loans. Because of this, companies are short to 11.2%, the biggest reason for of capital, which makes them unable to produce at full capacity. Demand for products has also decreased. As a result, economic activities have been disrupted, and the pace of development is not increasing.

After the reduction in the repo rate in February, credit growth has picked up slightly. In March 2025, loans grew at a rate of 11.10% as compared to the same month last year, while loan growth was slow in February 2025. During this period, loans given to industry registered an increase of 7.3%. At the same time, personal loans registered a growth of 14%. It is

in India averaged 11.83% from 2012 to 2025, which reached a high of 20.80% in December 2023 and a record low of 4.10% in March 2017.

When we compare the Indian economy's growth rate with the global economy's growth rate, we are proud. Our economy is significantly outpacing the worldwide level. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the global GDP growth rate was 3.2% in 2024 and is projected to be 3.3% in 2025. In contrast, the IMF estimates the global economy to grow at a rate of 3.1% in 2024 and

3.2% in 2025. The Indian economy is not just better than that of the world's most powerful country, the US, but it's also expected to remain strong in the coming years. The growth rate in the US is estimated to be 2.7% during the financial year 2024 and 2.0% in the financial year 2025. This comparison underscores the strength and resilience of the Indian economy.

With the potential for cheaper loans, banks can lend at more affordable rates. This, in turn, will encourage people to take loans, leading to a boost in both investment and savings. The prospect of increased consumption and growth in economic activities is on the horizon, bringing hope and encouragement for the future.

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad Based Senior Columnist, views are personal.

India's DBT System Saves Rs 3.48 Lakh Crore, **Boosts Welfare Efficiency: BlueKraft Report**

NEW DELHI: A new quantitative assessment by the BlueKraft Digital Foundation has revealed that India's Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system has generated cumulative savings of Rs 3.48 lakh crore by eliminating leakages in welfare delivery.

The report indicates that subsidy allocations have decreased from 16 percent to 9 percent of total government expenditure since DBT implementation, representing a significant improvement in public spending efficiency. The assessment, which analyses data from 2009 to 2024, examines DBT's impact on budgetary efficiency, subsidy rationalisation, and social outcomes. The transition from paper-based disbursals to direct digital transfers has ensured public funds reach intended

beneficiaries. A cornerstone of the DBT system is the JAM trinity—Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar unique IDs, and mobile phones—which has enabled targeted and transparent transfers at scale. To comprehensively measure impact, the report introduces a Welfare Efficiency Index that combines fiscal outcomes with social indicators.

This index has increased



2014 to 0.91 in 2023, demonstrating substantial improvements in both effectiveness and inclusion as governments worldwide reconsider approaches to social protection. The data reveals distinct trends before and after DBT implementation. During the pre-DBT era (2009-2013), subsidies averaged 16 per cent of total expenditure at approximately Rs 2.1 lakh crore annually with considerable system leakages. In the post-DBT era (2014-2024), subsidy expenditure decreased to 9 per cent of total expenditure by 2023-24, while beneficiary coverage expanded 16-fold from 11 crore to 176 crore.

A temporary subsidy spike occurred during fiscal year 2020-21 due to pandemicnearly threefold from 0.32 in related emergency measures,

though efficiency subsequently rebounded. Sector-specific analysis demonstrates DBT's particular benefit to high-leakage programs. Food subsidies under the Public Distribution System saved Rs 1.85 lakh crore, representing 53 per cent of total DBT savings, largely through Aadhaar-linked ration card authentication. The MGNREGS program achieved 98 per cent timely wage transfers, saving Rs 42,534 crore through improved account-The PM-KISAN scheme

saved Rs 22.106 crore by removing 2.1 crore ineligible beneficiaries, while fertiliser subsidies saved Rs 18,699.8 crore by reducing sales of 158 lakh MT of fertiliser through targeted disbursement.

'France Stands Firmly with India', says President Macron US Vice President JD Vance arrives in India

US expresses optimism on tariff negotiations with Japan

tention to promote cooperation his intention to promote mutu-

Dials Prime Minister Modi on Pahalgam Terror Attack

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the telephone over the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, and said that France stands firmly with India and its people in this hour of grief.

Macron also said that France will stand together with its allies and would continue the fight against terrorism wherever necessary.

Taking to social media platform X, the French President wrote: "I have just spoken to my counterpart @narendramodi about the cowardly terrorist attack on Tuesday, which resulted in the tragic death of dozens of innocent civilians. France stands firmly with India and its people in this hour of grief. France,

TOKYO: George Glass, the

US Ambassador to Japan, on

Tuesday expressed optimism

about the ongoing tariff nego-

tiations between Washington

and Tokyo as he met Japanese

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

the second round of talks, which

is expected to be held later in the

month, local media reported.

Addressing reporters after his

meeting with PM Ishiba, Glass

said that the two countries are in

a "golden age" both "economi-

cally and friendship-wise."

The remarks came ahead of

rorism wherever necessary." Earlier on Thursday eve-



ning, the Ministry of External this kind of barbarism is totally Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal wrote on X: "President @EmmanuelMacron called Prime Minister @ narendramodi and conveyed his personal condolences on the brutal killing of innocent people in the heinous terror attack in the Indian Union justice Territory of Jammu and Kash-

"best and brightest" of the

United States and Japan have

been discussing how to improve

their economies and enhance

cooperation, adding he is "very

optimistic" about the results,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PM

Ishiba and Ambassador Glass

exchanged views on current

Japan-US relations, including

the US tariff measures. The

ministry mentioned that the

Prime Minister expressed his in-

According to the Japanese

according to Kyodo News.

support and solidarity with the



unacceptable.'

MEA Spokesperson Jaiswal further wrote: "Prime Minister thanked him (French President Emmanuel Macron) for his message of support and conveyed India's strong resolve to bring the perpetrators to

The heinous Pahalgam tertogether with its allies, will mir. He strongly condemned rorist attack, which occurred

continue the fight against ter- the attack and expressed full on Tuesday in the Baisaran meadow of Anantnag district, has drawn condemnation from across the world. The brutal incident led to

the killing of 25 Indian nationals and one Nepali citizen, and injuring several others. Following the attack, India

convened a Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. The Central government has

announced several diplomatic measures, such as closing the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Attari, suspending the SAA-RC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) for Pakistani nationals, giving them 40 hours to return to their country, and reducing the number of officers in the High Commissions on both

India also halted the Indus Waters Treaty signed in 1960 in the wake of the Pahalgam

further strengthen the alliance,

the ministry said in a statement.

Glass stated that the Japan-US

alliance is the most important and

he would like to cooperate for fur-

ther strengthening the alliance,

it added. "Both sides exchanged

views on regional situations.

such as China and North Korea.

Prime Minister Ishiba asked for

continued understanding and

cooperation for the immediate

resolution of the abductions is-

sue and gained full support from

Ambassador-Designate Glass,

the statement further read.

Sharing his view, Ambassador

Indian officials, with National

related matters, regional se-

iffs — have gained renewed

set a 26 per cent tariff on im-

ports, India currently faces a

reduced baseline levy of 10 per

cent, which is the standard

for most US trading partners

except China, during a 90-

day pause in the broader tariff

dent's first-ever visit to India

and his second bilateral en-

gagement with Prime Minister

meeting in Paris earlier this

This will be the Vice Presi-

While the US had initially

countries

momentum.

rollout.

NEW DELHI: United States Vice President J.D. Vance, accompanied by his Indianorigin wife Usha Chilukuri Vance and their three children, arrived in India on Monday for a four-day official visit.

This marks a significant diplomatic engagement and the first trip by a sitting US Vice President to India in more than a decade. The last such visit was by Joe Biden in 2013.

Vice President Vance, who began his international tour with a stop in Italy on Friday, landed at the Air Force Station in Palam, New Delhi.

Upon his arrival, Vance was received by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and was accorded a ceremonial Guard

of Honour at the airport. His visit underscores a renewed emphasis on strengthening US-India ties amid ongoing negotiations over a long-awaited bilateral trade agreement and deepening of strategic cooperation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to host the Vice President for formal talks, followed by a dinner at his official residence at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg on Monday evening.

year during the AI Summit. The meeting will include key That meeting was followed by PM Modi's visit to Washington for his first official meeting with the current US President after his return to office. The Vice President is travel-

ling with a five-member highlevel US delegation, which includes representatives from the Pentagon and the State Department.

The delegation's itinerary includes visits to Agra and Jaipur, underscoring the cultural dimension of the visit alongside strategic dialogue. Vance's wife, Usha Chilu-

Security Advisor Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister kuri Vance, who is of Indian origin, is also part of the trip S. Jaishankar expected to be with their children — Ewan, present during the discussions. According to sources, the 7; Vivek, 4; and Mirabel, 2. leaders will discuss trade-Usha Vance's family traces its roots to Andhra Pradesh. curity, and avenues to boost However, it remains unclear whether they will be meeting technological and economic with any relatives during their collaboration between the two stay in India.

Vance's arrival in India This visit also marks the second high-profile trip to India comes at a time when talks over a bilateral trade deal by a senior official from the Trump administration during originally triggered by former President Donald Trump's the current term. imposition of sweeping tar-

In March, Tulsi Gabbard, who serves as the Director of National Intelligence, visited India and participated in the Raisina Dialogue while also holding meetings with Indian officials and the Prime Minister.

Vice President Vance's presence in India after such a long gap reflects the significance both countries place on their evolving partnership.

His visit is expected to set the tone for further high-level engagements in the near future, especially in the context Modi, following their initial of growing global geopolitical shifts and economic realign-

Tweleve US states sue **Trump administration** over 'illegal tariffs'



of 12 US states sued US President Donald Trump's administration over "illegal tariffs" in the US Court of International Trade in

Attorneys general of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York Oregon and Vermont on Wednesday filed the lawsuit to seek a court order to block the Trump administration from enacting the tariffs.

The lawsuit said the policy has left the national trade policy subject to Trump's "whims rather than the sound exercise of lawful authority, "asking the court to declare the tariffs illegal and to block government agencies and officers from enforcing them, Xinhua news agency reported. It noted the US President can only invoke the Emergency Act when there is an "unusual and extraordinary threat" from abroad. "By claiming the authority to impose immense and ever-changing tariffs on whatever goods entering the

US he chooses, for whatever reason he finds convenient to declare an emergency, the President has upended the constitutional order and brought chaos to the American economy, "the legal action said. "Congress has not granted the President the authority to impose these tariffs and therefore the administration violated the law by imposing them through executive orders, social media posts, and agency orders, "New York Attorney General Letitia James' office said in a statement. "His tariffs are unlawful and if not stopped, they will lead to more inflation, unemployment, and economic damage, " said James. "President Trump's reckless tariffs have skyrocketed costs for consumers and unleashed economic chaos across the country, " New York Governor Kathy Hochul said in a statement on Wednesday. In response, White

House spokesperson Kush Desai

said the administration "remains

committed to addressing this

national emergency that's deci-

He further added that the in a wide variety of fields in a ally beneficial cooperation and **Tariff tangles: Global courier giant** suspends high-value shipments to US

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's new tariff regime has also impacted another sector - courier shipments to citizens in the country beyond

DHL Express announced it is suspending deliveries worth more than \$800 from all countries to the US because of a "significant increase" in red tape at customs. The delivery giant said it will temporarily stop shipments from companies in all countries to American consumers on Monday "until further notice", the BCC reported. However, business-tobusiness shipments will still go ahead, "though they may also major said. Previously, packages worth

up to \$2,500 could enter the US with minimal paperwork,



but now, due to tighter customs checks in place with the new tariff regime, which was launched earlier in April before being placed in abeyance temporarily, the value threshold has been lowered. DHL said that the change "has caused a surge in formal customs clearances. which we are handling around the clock" and while it is work- ping practices" ing to "scale up and manage this \$800, regardless of origin, may experience multi-day delays" the BBC report said.

The company said it will still deliver packages worth less than

\$800, which can be sent to the US with minimal checks.

mutually beneficial manner, and

Ambassador Glass concurred to

this point.\ PM Ishiba stated

that the Japan-US alliance is the

"cornerstone" of Japan's diplo-

macy and security and expressed

However, this segment also faces a challenge - with the US set to tighten curbs on these deliveries too - specifically those sent from China and Hong Kong - on May 2 when it closes a loophole allowing lowvalue packages to enter the US without incurring any duties.

The Trump administration has claimed that "many shippers" in China "hide illicit substances and conceal the true contents of shipments sent to the US through deceptive ship-

The White House said the increase, shipments worth over measures were aimed at "ad- ing place of seven other popes, dressing the synthetic opioid supply chain", which it said Jerome, and Renaissance mas-"plays a significant role in the synthetic opioid crisis in the

Pope Francis to be buried at Basilica of St. Mary Major VATICAN CITY: Pope Fran-

cis, who died on Easter Monday at the age of 88 at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta will be buried on Saturday at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome, a site of deep personal significance for the pontiff.

The basilica, one of the four major papal basilicas, has been a central Marian shrine for over sixteen centuries. Pope Francis often prayed here, especially after returning from his numerous apostolic visits abroad.

This will be the first papal burial at the Basilica since the 17th century, when Pope Clement IX was interred there. The basilica is also the final restter Gian Lorenzo Bernini and his family. True to the spirit of simplicity that defined his



life and ministry, Pope Francis Wednesday, April 23, pending had requested a modest burial. According to his last testament, his tomb will be in the ground, devoid of elaborate decoration,

that the body of Pope Francis may be transferred temporarily to St. Peter's Basilica on

approval from the College of Cardinals, to allow the faithful to pay their final respects.

The Dean of the College of The Vatican also confirmed Battista Re, has convened live in the modest guesthouse General Congregations starting Tuesday to prepare for the upcoming Conclave, expected

to May 10. The funeral will be attended

by numerous world leaders, with Italy and India already declaring three days of state mourning.

Just hours before his death, the ailing pontiff had met with US Vice President J.D. Vance after participating in Easter services despite his visibly weakened state.

Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Italian immigrant parents, Francis was the first Jesuit and first Latin American pope.

His election in 2013 following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI marked a turning point in the Church. Rejecting the papal anartments. Franc of Santa Marta and led with a pastoral heart and reformist

mating America's industries and leaving our workers behind with every tool at our disposal, from tariffs to negotiations". On April 2, Trump signed an executive order at the White House, invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to declare a national emergency and impose so-called "reciprocal tariffs" on all

US trading partners.

Canadian Police release images of Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara vandalism suspects

VANCOUVER: Canadian Police have released images of a vehicle and two people who were outside the Khalsa Diwan Society (KDS) Gurdwara on Ross Street in Vancouver when it was vandalised last week.

partment (VPD) sought public assistance to identify the individuals as they investigated the matter. On April 19, the prominent KDS Gurdwara in Canada was

vandalised with pro-Khalistan

The Vancouver Police De-

graffiti, sparking outrage among the local Sikh community. "We believe these people may have information about this crime and what the motiva-

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar



recognises the people in these pictures, or the vehicle, to come forward and speak with our investigators, "said VPD Sergeant Steve Addison.

According to the police department, investigators from the major crime section of the department who have been collecting and analysing evidence from the crime scene and the tion was. We ask anyone who have obtained images of a white

were in the area at the time. "Police believe the truck drove

through the area around the time of the offence, between approximately 4 and 4:30 a.m. on April 19. Two people, who are believed to be associated with the truck, then walked near the front entrance of the temple. One person was wearing a yellow cap, yellow jacket, and black pants. The other was wearing a grey hoodie with black pants,

read the VPD statement. The police department further stated that it initiated a criminal investigation on April 19 after suspects spray-painted surrounding neighbourhood, on the walls outside of the gurdwara, adding that the graffiti

pickup and two people who was written in both English and Punjabi. Last week, in a statement, the KDS condemned the act, describing it as a deliberate attempt to spread fear and division within the community.

> "A small group of Sikh separatists, advocating for Khalistan, defaced our sacred walls with divisive slogans like 'Khalistan Zindabad', "the gurdwara said. "This act is part of an ongoing

> campaign by extremist forces that seek to instil fear and division within the Canadian Sikh community. Their actions undermine the values of inclusivity, respect, and mutual support that are foundational to both Sikhism and Canadian society,

VATICAN CITY: Pope Fran- must announce the death of cis has died at the age of 88 at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican said in a statement Monday afternoon, India time.

"Pope Francis died on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, at the age of 88 at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta. the Vatican posted on X.

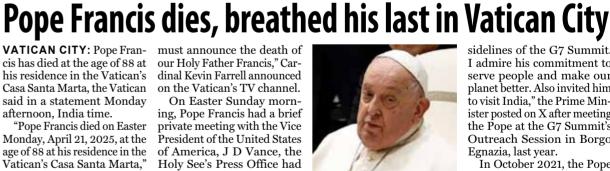
The leader of the Roman Catholic Church had been suffering from respiratory ailments and pneumonia.

"Dear brothers and sisters, it is with profound sadness I our Holy Father Francis," Cardinal Kevin Farrell announced on the Vatican's TV channel.

On Easter Sunday morning, Pope Francis had a brief private meeting with the Vice President of the United States of America, J D Vance, the Holy See's Press Office had detailed about the interaction that lasted a few minutes.

Vance was travelling to Italy with his family and visited the Secretariat of State before leaving for India.

Prime Minister Narendra



Modi has in the past admired Pope's commitment to serve people and had also extended an invitation to Pope Francis

to visit India at an early date.

"Met Pope Francis on the

I admire his commitment to serve people and make our planet better. Also invited him to visit India," the Prime Minister posted on X after meeting the Pope at the G7 Summit's Outreach Session in Borgo Egnazia, last year.

In October 2021, the Pope received PM Modi during a private audience at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican, which was also the first meeting between an Indian Prime Minister and the Pope in more than two decades

Attempt to play with human lives: Zelensky slams Putin's Easter truce offer

KYIV: Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a surprise ceasefire, declaring a 30-hour Easter truce in Ukraine that is set to last until midnight on Sunday. In response, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed skepticism, stating that this is just another attempt by Russia to play

with human lives. The proposal, which marks one of the most significant pauses in the three-year war, was described by Putin as a

Zelensky responded with deep scepticism, accusing the Kremlin of using religious holidays to manipulate public

"As for yet another attempt by Putin to play with human at this moment, air alert for potential violations



wrote on X.

our skies reveal Putin's true attitude toward Easter and toward human life.

Putin, during a televised briefing with Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov, announced that Russian forces would halt combat operations from 6:00 PM Saturday until midnight Sunday. While calling for Ukraine to reciprocate, Putin also instructed troops to remain or provocations.

The announcement coincided with blaring air raid sirens across major Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, which only subsided around the time the ceasefire was to take effect. Ukrainian authorities have not confirmed whether they would adhere

Zelensky dismissed the ceasefire as another ploy by

Moscow"Putin might do it to give some hope or to show his humanity. But either way, of course, we don't trust Russia, said Dmitry, a 40-year-old Ukrainian soldier. "These 30 hours will lead to nothing...

swap on the same day, with both sides confirming the return of 246 captured soldiers each. Zelensky noted that the total number of Ukrainian POWs released has now reached 4, 552.

Putin framed the truce as a test of Kyiv's willingness to engage in peace talks, stating, This will show how sincere the Kyiv regime's desire and ability are to observe agreements." Past efforts to arrange ceasefires around major holidays, such as Easter in 2022 and Orthodox Christmas in 2023, collapsed due to mutual distrust and ongoing hostilities.

A month ago, Ukraine agreed to a 30-day ceasefire proposed by former US President Donald Trump, but

Sharing information with the media, family informed about Harsimrat Kaur said that she had gone to Canada about two years ago to pursue her studies and was going out on a routine matter when the unfortunate incident occurred.

The girl was identified as Harsimrat Kaur Randhawa (21) killed when she was struck by a stray bullet in the port city of Hamilton, claimed family here India

An Indian student studying in

Canada died due to a suspected

gun shot when she was waiting



Tarn Taran girl studying in Canada killed, family claims Gunfire claimed her life

that claimed her life

Randhawa's family, from Dhunda village of Goindwal Sahib sub division in Punjab's border district of Tarn Taran has urged both the govern-

of repatriation of her body to India at the earliest possible.

Harsimrat was a student at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario, was waiting at a bus stop on her way to work when

a car. She had gone to Canada two years ago for a healthier Tears rolled down from the

with a husky voice about Harsimrat who had gone to Canada for her education. Incident occurred when she was waiting for the bus, she was shot and killed during a shooting carried out by some people moving in a car. People here in Tarn Taran from nearby villages began to assemble in their house to express their condolences when the news of the killing of Harsimrat Kaur

reached the village

future, said family. eyes of her grandfather, Sukhwinder Singh, when shared

> humanitarian gesture. perception.

raid alerts are spreading across Ukraine, "Zelensky

"Shahed (attack) drones in

The killings will continue." Despite the looming scepticism, Russia and Ukraine conducted a major prisoner

Moscow declined.

Haryana Approves

nise Police Force

Chandigarh

A meeting of the State-

Level Empowered Committee (SLEC) was held

(Home) Dr. Sumita Misra

here today to review and

approve the State Action

Plan for Modernisation

During the meeting, Dr.

Sumita Misra underlined

commitment to ensuring

ment for all residents of

Haryana. She said mod-

ernisation of our police

The committee approved

Rs 22.09 Crore State **Action Plan to Moder-**

Alchemist Hospital Leads the Way After Pehlagamn terror attack, Pak nationals rushed back to Pakistan who were on tourist visa to India in Advanced Cardiac Treatments



FW DESK Panchkula

Alchemist Hospital continues to reinforce its reputation as a center of excellence in cardiac care, with significant advancements in cutting-edge procedures and technologies that are revolutionizing the treatment of complex heart conditions. The hospital has recently introduced a suite of next-generation cardiac treatments, including Calcium Modulation techniques, Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR), Intravascular Ultrasound (IVUS), and the Event Loop Recorder

Calcium Modulation, a

heavily calcified coronary a minimally invasive procearteries, now allows interventional cardiologists at Alchemist Hospital to treat patients who were previously considered inoperable. This technique enhances the effectiveness of stent placement and reduces long-term com-

"With calcium modulation, we are entering a new era in to age or co-morbidities can angioplasty. It helps us navigate and treat stubborn calcified lesions that were once a major challenge, significantly improving patient outcomes, said Dr. Rohit Parti, Associate Director, Interventional Cardiology Alchemist Hospital, Panchkula.

The hospital has also suc- delivers world-class outcomes breakthrough in managing cessfully implemented TAVR, in complex open-heart proce-

dures-from coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) to valve repairs and congenital heart defect corrections. Notably, we are routinely performing off-pump, beating-heart surgeries that were once considered extremely high-risk or inoperable. With advances in ICU care—both in equipment and medication—critical care has been revolutionized. Morbidity and mortality have been significantly reduced, making surgeries safer and recovery Another technological leap

is the use of Intravascular Ultrasound (IVUS), which allows for detailed imaging inside the blood vessels. This helps doctors precisely place stents and assess blockages, leading to more personalized and accurate treatments.

The introduction of the Event Loop Recorder, a compact implantable device, enables long-term monitoring of patients with unexplained fainting or irregular heart rhythms. This device provides continuous ECG monitoring, aiding in timely diagnosis and intervention.

"These advanced tools are not just technologies—they're lifelines. With IVUS and loop recorders, we are not only treating but also predicting cardiac events, thus saving lives," shared Dr. Ashwani Nayyar, Senior Consultant and Head, Department of Cardiac



JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar

After Pehlagamn terror attack, India shuts Attari border by giving ultimatum to Pakistan nationals to leave Indian with in specific period of time, where upon as many as 191 Pakistanis crossed over to Pakistan through the integrated Check post Attari border here today.

According to the official at Attari border, informed that

today as many as 191 Pakistani nationals who were in India on tourist visas holding Pakistani passports today crossed over to Pakistan.

At the same time 287 Indian nationals who were in Pakistan on tourist visa had gone to Pakistan to visit their near and dear also arrived back to India from the Attari land route.

None of Indian nationals (women) who were holding Indian passports and married to Pakistan were allowed to

cross over to Pakistan nevertheless to say they have crated much hue and cry by saying that they were married to Pakistan and having children born in Pakistan who were holding

all the children who were having Pakistani passport to cross over to Pakistan after getting confirmation that their relatives from the Pakistan side were available across the bor-

force is essential not just for crime prevention and building a technologically adept and communityfriendly law enforcement Pakistani passports. Indian Authorities allowed

the State Action Plan of Rs 22.09 crore (60:40), which includes procurement of advanced arms and equipment like pistols and CQB (Machine Guns), FSL equipmemnt like image and video enhamcement software, facial recognition and comparison software, polygraph system with actereo-zoom microscope,

> In line with the Gov-Scheme, the 2025–26 plan focuses on improving operational efficiency, responsiveness, and citizenthe integration of smart technologies and capacity-

> along with purchase of hi-tech communication, security, CCTNS and train-

> ing equipment. In order

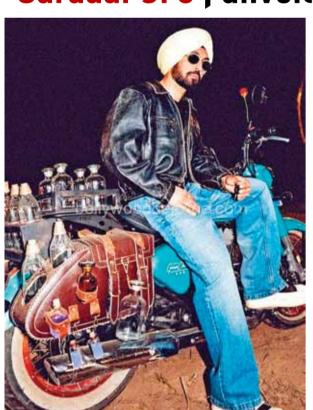
this modern equipment,

domain experts will be en-

gaged to provide technical

guidance and support.

Diljit Dosanjh 'finally' finishes shoot for '<mark>Sardaar Ji 3'</mark>, unveils release date



MUMBAI: Punjabi sensation Diljit Dosanjh shared that the shoot for his upcoming film "Sardaar Ji 3" has finally finished and is slated to release

dure for replacing narrowed

aortic valves without the need

for open-heart surgery. Ideal

for high-risk or elderly pa-

tients, TAVR offers a shorter

recovery period and excellent

results. "TAVR has trans-

formed how we approach aor-

tic valve disease. Patients who

were once denied surgery due

now walk out of the hospital

within a few days, feeling

better and breathing easier,

said Dr. Rajan Mehra, Head,

Department of Cardiotho-

racic and Vascular Surgery

(CTVS) Alchemist Hospital,

Panchkula Dr Mehra added.

"Our cardiac surgery program

Diljit took to Instagram, where he shared a string of pictures of himself posing next to a bike. In the image, the actor-singer is seen sporting a leather jacket paired with denims, sneakers and sunglasses.

"SARDAAR JI 3 Releasing 27th June Finally Shoot Finish Ho Geya Sari Team Ne Baut Mehnat Kiti Aa.. Baba Bhaag Lavey Milde an Theaters Ch BOOOOOO... MAIN TAN DAR GI (Sardaar Ji 3 is released on 27th June. upside down after he becomes The shoot has finally finished. the target of a criminal nexus. The team has worked really hard on the film. Let's meet

in the theaters.) Sardaarji was first released in 2015. The Punjabi fantasy by Rohit Jugraj. It stars Diljit Dosanjh, Mandy Takhar and Neeru Bajwa in lead roles.

fantasy films to be made in Punjabi cinema. It had the biggest opening ever for a Punjabi film in Punjab.

It revolves around Jaggi, who is tasked with driving away a ghost, who haunts a mansion in London. However hilarious situations ensue when he falls in love with the

els overseas in search of greener pastures. However, his life turns

horror comedy film is directed is based on the life of promi-Rampal and Suvinder Vicky.

The second installment was released in 2016. The film saw Diljit in a triple role alongside Monica Gill, and Sonam Bajwa. It told the story of a farmer, desperate to save his village from financial ruin, who trav-

in "Amar Singh Chamkila", will next be seen in Punjab '95 is an upcoming period drama film directed by Honey Trehan. It nent Sikh human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra. The film stars Diljit Dosanjh, Arjun



Later, speaking to reporters, been attacked. He expressed while condemning the attack, he said it was a grave tragedy his deepest condolences to the - how innocent people had

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) soldiers stand guard at the entrance of the India-Pakistan Wagah border

Pakistan on April 23, accusing Islamabad of supporting "cross-border terrorism" after a deadly attack on

post, about 35kms from Amritsar on April 24, 2025. India took a raft of punitive diplomatic measures against

Congress party stood by them and helped the victims. He said in this hour of grief.

sition had extended full support of the hour was for everyone to and cooperation to the government in whatever decision it takes in this regard. He said the entire country was together and united to deal with the situation. The senior Congress leader said everyone in Kashmir had

the purpose of this attack was to remain united and defeat the conspiracy and design behind this attack. He said it was sad that in some parts of the country some of our Kashmiri brethren were attacked. He said it is very important that all of us remain

Indus Water Treaty - The way forward



SRI KRISHNA KUMAR

ter Treaty (IWT) beween India and Pakistan is internationally regarded as an example of successful conflict resolution and one of the most durable water sharing agreements in the world, especially when it is between two nations almost perpetually in a state of hostility with each other. The Treaty was brokered by World Bank (then the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and signed in Karachi on September 19, 1960 by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India and Field Marshal Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan. For 64 years both India and Pakistan are peacefully sharing the waters of Indus and its tributaries.

Indus River

Indus River originates near the Mansarovar Lake in Tibet on the northern slopes of the holy Kailash Mountain. It enters India through the Ladakh District of Jammu and Kashmir. The river runs to the northwest via Baltistan into Gilgit, immediately south to the Karakoram Mountain range, slowly turns southwards and enters into Pakistan where it flows the whole span of that country to join the Arabian

has a catchment basin of more than 1,165,000 sq. km. Apthe river is 207 cubic kilometers, making it the 21st biggest from the east which together form the gamut of Indus Water Treaty. They are – from east to west - Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum. Of them, Sutlej originates from Rakshas Tibet; Beas, Ravi and Chenab originate in Himachal Pradesh and Jhelum has its origin at Verinag in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. All these five rivers have given its name to Punjab and they join each other to form a mighty Paninad river before it outfalls into

in Pakistan. The Treaty

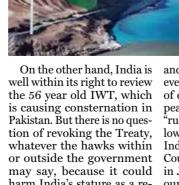
According to the Treaty, "eastern" rivers Sutlej, Beas and Ravi are to be governed by India and the "western" rivers Chenab, Jhelum and Indus are taken care of by Pakistan. Further, India is allowed to draw 3.6 million acre feet of water issue in Pakistan. They are a from the three western rivers one-river nation. If Indus is flowing into Pakistan, for nonand specified hydro-electric projects, which it has never that agriculture-dependent utilized because of inadequate country.

Indus River near Bahawalpur

Sea near Karachi. Indus River storage capacity. The Treaty is 3,180 kilometers long and creates the Permanent Indus Commission with a commissioner appointed by each counproximate yearly discharge of try. It would follow the set procedure for adjudicating any future disputes arising over alriver in the world in terms of location of waters. Either party yearly discharge. Indus River must notify the other of plans has five tributaries joining it to construct any engineering works which would affect the other party and to provide data about such works. In case of disagreement, a neutral expert is called for mediation and arbitration. Though Indus and Tal near Mansarovar Lake in Sutlej originate from Tibet, China has been kept out of the Treaty.

Leverage Potential Of Indus Water Treaty

It is not that IWT has never been considered by India as leverage against Pakistan during our 75 years' old history of four full-fledged wars and innumerable skirmishes. Yes it was, but every time the idea had to be abandoned due to insurmountable constraints. It is again making headlines with jingoistic statements like "water is the only tool of leverage India has over Pakistan, and India should use it." True, water is an extremely sensitive stopped – or even partially consumptive use, agriculture starved - the consequences would be catastrophic for



harm India's stature as a responsible nation upon which we are trying to build global consensus to isolate Pakistan. What the government should contemplate are the ways to fully utilize its award of waters - within the ambit of IWT and thereby hold out a real threat of reduced water flow into Pakistan.

What India Should Do

Any measures for reducing flow of water into Pakistan should not be initiated without carefully examining the consequences. We must go ahead with "permissible" utilization of waters from three western rivers for irrigation

and hydro-electric power. But even if we ignore the paranoia of our neighbor who has repeatedly challenged even the "run of the river" projects allowed by the IWT and built by India – decision of Permanent Court of Arbitration at Hague in January 2014 in favour of our Kishenganga Hydroelectric power project being the latest such example – we will have to ponder over two critical aspects. First, the status of our capacity building - present and in near future - to utilize gainfully our rightful share of "western rivers" and second, our simultaneous diplomatic initiative to segregate the interest of the people of Pakistan - for whom any reduction in water supply could prove disastrous – from that of the jihadist elements both

government India will have to create utilize its share of the Indus

inside and outside the Pakistan

the magnitude of the problem, our largest reservoir the Indirasagar on Narmada has the capacity of storing 9.8 lakh acre feet while our share from three western tributaries of Indus is more than its three times, at 3.6 million acre feet. Developing capacities to store and regulate river flows of this immensity needs years to build, massive rehabilitation of population and huge funding. Still if we embark upon "dam building tool" to punish Pakistan, the consequences might be hugely detrimental to India. In experts' opinion, barring water-scarcity during the winter harvest, it would be suicidal for India to block the natural flow of the rivers into Pakistan. Because, without the requisite infrastructure we would end up flooding our own hinterland.

The Way Forward

Big storages thus ruled out, the government should focus instead on short term doable measures. For example expediting the Tulbul Navigation Project – called Wullar Barrage by Pakistan - which is on hold despite the decision to restart it was taken in 2009. It aims at raising water levels in Jhelum River to allow round the year navigation between Srinagar, Anantnag massive storage facilities to and Baramulla. More navigation canals should be built as

River. Just to have an idea of inland waterways to open up areas for better marketing of their produce. Other measures to reclaim part of our share thereby reducing the flow into Pakistan - should be regulating riverine flows in Kashmir for developing better irrigation, recreation, sanitation and ecological facilities to boost its biggest industry which is tourism. Beautiful lakes of Kashmir valley including the Dal Lake – the biggest tourist attraction - have become polluted and are stinking. Available surplus water must be diverted for cleaning of lakes and draining out their filth, on a regular basis for healthier environment. Barrages or weirs could be suitably located for diversion schemes for irrigating exotic crops like saffron and tulips thereby increasing productivity. And finally many more hydro-power stations should be built to provide clean energy and make Jammu and Kashmir energy surplus state like Uttarakhand with a similar topography.

It is a paradox that Kashmiris have suffered the worst damage in the Indus Water Treaty between two nations each of which swears the interest of Kashmir as dearest to their hearts. By signing this Treaty, Pakistan has clearly kept its own interests supreme, almost abandoning those of Kashmir. While hammering this point over the local people, India should prioritize utiliza-

the living standard of Kashmiri people. This will initiate the biggest confidence building measure for the alienated people of this sensitive state. Indus Water Treaty constitutes undoubtedly a big leverage for India, but not the way it is being viewed in the present surcharged atmosphere. We need not (and cannot) stop water flowing into Pakistan and earn bad name as irresponsible nation - in addition to running risk

tion of its due share of water

in Kashmir to the maximum

possible extent, so as to improve

of drowning ourselves. This leverage should be used for the people of Kashmir by utilizing our due share of water for their uplift and prosperity. This will hurt Pakistan much more than just by having reduced flow of Indus waters. They will squirm also by the prospect of Kashmiri people once again reposing confidence in India, as they did explicitly after the failed invasion on Kashmir by Pakistan back in 1948.

It is a white paper offering in-depth understanding of the Indus Water Treaty and its dimensions. The author is an internationally acclaimed expert on water issues. He was affiliated with various UN organizations, Government of India and has also served as the Chief Engineer in the Irrigation Department of the undivided UP, when it also comprised Uttarakhand.