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Rs 19,810 crore boost for MP development

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at the Mantralaya on Monday approved projects worth approximately Rs 19,810 crore aimed at boosting public welfare and infrastructure development across the state.

Key proposals related to the Public Works Department, irrigation, women and child development, agriculture, and the establishment of new medical colleges received approval.

The Cabinet granted administrative approval of Rs 286.26 crore for the Midwasa Medium Irrigation Project in Sagar district, which is expected to provide irrigation facilities to 7,200 hectares of land across 27 villages in Sagar tehsil, benefiting a large number of

farmers.

Under the Public Works Department, projects worth Rs 10,801 crore were approved. These include Rs 150 crore for development and supervision of BOT roads, Rs 765 crore for payments on completed BOT projects, Rs 4,564 crore for annuity payments, and Rs 5,322 crore for externally aided projects of the Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation. The Cabinet also approved the continuation of these provisions during the 16th Finance Commission period from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2031.

In the rural sector, the Panchayat and Rural Development Department received approval of Rs 3,553.35 crore for the smooth implementation of various schemes, including the Prime Minister Poshan Shakti

and Mid-Day Meal programmes, over the same five-year period.

To strengthen the agriculture sector, the Cabinet approved Rs 2,250 crore for the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) for the next five years. The initiative will promote farm mechanisation, support rural youth through custom hiring centres, encourage crop residue management, and provide subsidies on agricultural tools, particularly benefiting forest landholders. The scheme is expected to enhance productivity, reduce labour dependence, and generate employment.

The Cabinet also approved Rs 1,674 crore for the continued establishment of new medical colleges in the state with support from the Government of India. These colleges will be linked to dis-

trict hospitals to improve healthcare infrastructure.

Additionally, around Rs 1,005 crore was approved to continue health services under the Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Department until March 31, 2031.

In the women and child development sector, Rs 240.42 crore was sanctioned for the continuation of key schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One-Stop Centres, and the Women Helpline-181 from 2026-27 to 2030-31.

The Cabinet also approved the establishment of eight new One-Stop Centres across the state in Maihar, Mauganj, Pandhurna, Manawar, Pithampur (Dhar district), Lasudia and Sanwer (Indore), and Petlawad (Jhabua), aimed at strengthening support systems for women.

Wheat buying underway in Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Food and Civil Supplies Minister Govind Singh Rajput said that wheat procurement at minimum support price is progressing steadily in the state. So far, 7.75 lakh quintal of wheat has been purchased from 17,572 farmers, with payments of around Rs 6.97 crore credited directly to their bank accounts.

Procurement has already begun from April 9 in Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal and Narmadapuram divisions, while remaining divisions will start from April 15. Over 2.09 lakh farmers have booked slots to sell more than 93 lakh quintal wheat.

A total of 3,171 procurement centres have been set up, equipped with seating, drinking water and essential facilities for farmers.

LIFTED BY IRON, BOUND FOR THE FUTURE



A coach of Bhopal Metro Rail Project which was displayed at Smart Park for public viewing, lifted by a crane for shifting to subhash nagar depot. In Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

Focus on farmers, women in cabinet decisions

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Lata Wankhede on Monday welcomed the decisions taken in the Madhya Pradesh Cabinet meeting, expressing gratitude to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and highlighting the government's focus on development, welfare and women empowerment.

She said the approval of the Midwasa Medium Irrigation Project in Sagar district, with an outlay of Rs 286 crore, will benefit farmers across 27 villages in three assembly constituency areas by providing irrigation to 7,200 hectares of land. This, she noted, will significantly boost agricultural productivity and improve farmers' incomes.

Wankhede further high-

lighted that the Cabinet approved development projects worth Rs 19,810 crore across multiple sectors. These include Rs 10,801 crore for public works, Rs 3,553 crore for rural development schemes, Rs 2,250 crore for agricultural mechanisation, Rs 1,674 crore for new medical colleges and Rs 1,005 crore for health services under the Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Department.

She said the approval of schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centres and Women Helpline-181, along with the establishment of eight new One Stop Centres, reflects the government's strong commitment to empowering women and ensuring their safety and welfare.

Praising Narendra Modi, Wankhede said the Nari Shakti Vandan Act is a historic step toward increasing women's representation in legislative bodies.

She added that under the Prime Minister's leadership, the Centre continues to prioritise farmers' welfare, including approving fertiliser subsidies to ensure timely and affordable availability.

She also credited the leadership of Amit Shah for setting a target to eliminate Naxalism, stating that Madhya Pradesh has achieved this goal ahead of schedule. She said regions like Balaghat, once affected by Naxal activity, will now witness accelerated development and integration into the mainstream.

Smart meter users get bill relief

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Consumers under the Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitaran Company are benefiting from the Time of Day (ToD) tariff system, which offers a 20 percent discount on electricity usage during solar hours (9 am to 5 pm). So far, 6.82 lakh smart meter consumers across the company's jurisdiction have received a total rebate of over Rs 4.40 crore on their electricity bills.

In Bhopal alone, 3.60 lakh consumers have been given a discount of Rs 2.41 crore. The initiative aims to encourage efficient power consumption during daytime hours.

Vishwas Sarang pushes fast-track work in Narela zones

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Sports Minister Vishwas Sarang on Monday chaired a review meeting in Bhopal to assess development works in Zones 11 and 12 of the Narela assembly constituency, directing officials to ensure quality and timely execution of projects.

Taking a strict stance, the minister warned that officials would be held accountable if poor road conditions caused inconvenience to the public. He also ordered immediate action against encroachments, directing authorities to identify and remove illegal constructions through a joint drive by the municipal corporation and revenue department.

ment.

Reviewing ongoing works, Sarang stressed that all development projects must be completed within stipulated timelines without causing disruption to residents.

On the AMRUT 2.0 sewerage project, officials informed that work is progressing at a fast pace. The minister instructed that remaining work be expedited and efforts be made to complete the project before the September deadline, especially keeping the monsoon season in mind to avoid waterlogging.

He also directed a scientific survey of all roads in the constituency and preparation of restoration plans with clear budget

allocation and priority-based execution.

Reviewing welfare schemes, Sarang instructed officials to ensure zero pendency in applications related to old-age pension, Sambal Yojana and death assistance. He set a strict timeline of resolving public grievances within three days and called for the use of IT-based systems or mobile apps to ensure transparency.

Expressing displeasure over delays in works under special funds and education cess, he directed officials to prepare a list of pending projects and complete them within fixed timelines, with priority to school construction in Semra and Bajara areas.

The minister also stressed fast-tracking of infrastructure, park development and housing projects under various schemes, including Housing for All. He directed early completion of tender processes and speedy disposal of land allotment cases.

To ensure transparency, Sarang made it mandatory to display details such as contractor name, project cost and timeline at every construction site.

He further directed officials to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply and maintain quality standards, along with regular maintenance of street lights and installation of high mast lights where required.



Artists of Puru Kathak Nritya Academy perform Kathak during a cultural event 'Nritya Ranjini-2026' curated by Kshama Malviya, at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

Women protest liquor shops, block entry with sticks

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Residents across several parts of Bhopal intensified their protest against liquor shops, with women in Rishipuram, Awadhपुरi taking to the streets and blocking access to the shop by holding sticks and refusing entry to customers.

On Monday evening, a group of women gathered near the 80-foot road in Rishipuram and marched to the liquor outlet, confronting those attempting to purchase alcohol. They raised strong objections, calling the presence of a liquor shop in a residential area a "social menace" and demanded its immediate closure. Locals said the protest also included symbolic actions such as staging a mock funeral of the liquor mafia.

Residents have been opposing the shop for several



days, even organising regular Sundarkand recitations near the site, alleging that the outlet has led to rising crime and disturbed the local environment.

In Eitkhedi, protests escalated further as local residents, joined by BJP leader and district panchayat vice-president Mohan Singh Jat, staged a sit-in outside a liquor shop. Villagers shut down the outlet and began a continuous protest with

bhajan-kirtan under a temporary tent.

Protesters said they had earlier submitted a memorandum to the district administration demanding relocation of the shop, but with no action taken, they were forced to intensify their agitation. They warned that the protest would continue until the shop is permanently removed.

Residents in Eitkhedi also highlighted that the shop is

located on a route frequently used by students and villagers from nearby areas such as Bhaironpura, Kalyanpura and Khamkheda. They alleged that people consuming alcohol near the shop create inconvenience and safety concerns, especially for women and children.

Similar protests are underway in other parts of Bhopal. In Semra Kalan, residents of Vijay Nagar Sairam Colony have been demanding removal of a liquor shop for over a year and have now started continuous protests with religious gatherings. On Kolar Road near Mandakini Square, locals have opposed the relocation of a liquor shop close to a residential area and a Jain temple. At Polytechnic Square, student organisation ABVP has also staged demonstrations against a liquor outlet near Professor Colony.

UPI on a keypad: BoB and Jio target rural banking gap

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Bank of Baroda and Reliance Jio have announced a strategic partnership to introduce bob World Lite, a mobile banking application tailored specifically for feature phone users. The app will debut on the JioPhone Prima 4G, marking a significant step toward expanding digital banking access across India.

Aligned with the vision of the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India to drive financial inclusion and make digital payments more accessible, this initiative aims to bring seamless banking services to millions of feature phone users nationwide. The app will be available not only to existing Bank of Baroda customers but also to customers of other banks through a simple self-onboarding process.

Unlike traditional mobile banking applications designed for smartphones, bob World Lite has been developed to deliver a comprehensive range of everyday banking services on affordable feature phones. With a lightweight design, low



bandwidth requirements, and easy keypad-based navigation, the app ensures secure and user-friendly access, particularly for users in semi-urban and rural areas.

Currently, bob World Lite supports key functionalities such as UPI-enabled scan and pay, fund transfers, bill payments, recharges, and profile management. Additional features are expected to be introduced in future updates.

As part of the partnership, the app will come pre-installed on JioPhone Prima 4G devices and will be easily accessible from the home screen. Existing users of the device can download the app directly from the JioStore.

Ex-MLA Rajendra Bharti claims political conspiracy

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Former MLA Rajendra Bharti on Monday alleged a "deep political conspiracy" behind the loss of his membership and recent conviction, launching a sharp attack on the BJP and former minister Narottam Mishra during a press conference at the state Congress office in Bhopal.

Bharti claimed he was offered Rs 70 crore to switch sides and withdraw pending cases. He alleged that in May 2024, an OSD to a Union minister met him in Delhi with a message purportedly from Mishra, urging him to join the BJP in exchange for a post in a corporation or board.

"They assessed my losses and promised Rs 70 crore. When I refused, I was threatened with consequences in the same case," Bharti said.

He added that he would soon reveal the identity of the OSD and further details, while accusing the ruling establishment of misusing power to target political opponents.

Beaten the night before, found dead next morning in Rajgarh

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

A 22-year-old woman was found dead under suspicious circumstances in Rajgarh district of Madhya Pradesh, triggering allegations of murder by her family after she reportedly informed her mother about being assaulted a day before her death.

The incident occurred in Bhavanipura village under Bhojpur police station limits. The deceased, identified as Birmi Bai, was found hanging inside her house on Monday. Police rushed to the spot after receiving information and sent the body to Khilchipur hospital for post-mortem. A case has been registered and further investigation is underway.

According to her family, Birmi had recently returned from her parental home after a dispute with her husband, Shiwcharan, over their two-year-old son. The situation reportedly worsened after she went back to her in-laws' house, leading to frequent arguments.

The husband stated that he had stepped out briefly on Monday to drop a relative and

buy household items. Upon returning within half an hour, he found the house locked from inside. When he managed to enter, he discovered his wife hanging and raised an alarm, but she had already died.

However, the woman's family has strongly disputed this version. Her father alleged that Birmi was murdered by her husband and in-laws, claiming she was being harassed for some time. Her mother said that during their last conversation on Sunday night, Birmi told her she was being beaten and tortured, and that her in-laws were demanding money.

Police officials said statements of both sides are being recorded. They added that the exact cause of death will be confirmed only after the post-mortem report and detailed investigation.

Police officials have also assured that all angles, including harassment and possible foul play, are being thoroughly examined. Further action will be taken based on forensic evidence and findings from the post-mortem report.



Bal Sant Samagam held in Bhopal on Monday showcases devotion, spiritual values, and inspiring performances by children.

Heat measures checked at Mahakaleshwar temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ujjain

The administrator of Shri Mahakaleshwar Temple and Additional Collector Pratham Kaushik conducted a detailed inspection of the temple premises in Ujjain on Monday to review arrangements for devotees.

The inspection covered both the inner and outer areas of the temple, with a special focus on

facilities along the darshan route in view of rising temperatures. Officials reviewed the availability of cold drinking water, matting, shaded areas, cleanliness, and ongoing construction works.

During the visit, instructions were issued to ensure better convenience, safety, and smooth movement of devotees, especially during peak hours. Authorities emphasised main-

taining proper hygiene and ensuring adequate arrangements to provide relief from heat. Senior officials, including Special Duty Officer (Security) Jayant Rathore, Assistant Administrators Moolchand Junwal and Ashish Phalwadiya, Engineer Shikant Pandey, and other staff members of the temple management committee, were present during the inspection.

CM orders strict Narmada protection

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has stressed the need for coordinated efforts between the government and society to conserve the Narmada river, describing it as one of India's most life-giving rivers. Chairing a review meeting of the Narmada Samagra Mission in Amarkantak, the Chief Minister directed officials to take effective steps for the protection and development of the river's origin and to ensure continuous action against encroachments along its banks. He called for increased public awareness involving officials, public representatives and development authorities to preserve the sanctity and ecological balance of Amarkantak, the origin point of the

Narmada. Reviewing forest conservation efforts in the region, the Chief Minister instructed thea plantation of native species and medicinal plants be prioritised. Officials informed that large-scale plantation of local species such as sal, mahua, amla and harra is being undertaken to improve groundwater levels and maintain natural forest ecosystems. More than 2.5 lakh saplings are currently available for plantation. The Chief Minister also ordered a strict ban on new construction activities in Amarkantak and emphasised curbing unregulated concrete development. He directed authorities to take firm action against illegal encroachments and ensure that polluted water does not enter the Narmada. Officials said a sewage treat-

ment plant has already been set up and efforts are ongoing to prevent contamination. Highlighting Amarkantak's importance as a religious and tourist centre, he stressed the need to regulate construction activities as per established norms. He also called for a strict ban on plastic use and liquor in the area and proposed the creation of designated "no movement" and "no construction" zones to preserve the region's environmental and cultural heritage. Officials informed that drone surveys are being used to monitor illegal constructions, with prompt action taken against violations. A committee has also been formed under the Commissioner to oversee development and conservation efforts in the area.

Haj bookings close April 15

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh State Haj Committee has issued important guidelines for selected pilgrims ahead of Haj 2026, setting April 15 as the final date for online flight booking confirmation. According to committee secretary Farzana Ghazal, all selected pilgrims must complete their flight confirmation process online within the stipulated deadline. The process can be completed only through the official Haj Committee of India website or the Haj Suvidha App. The committee has made it clear that pilgrims must ensure full payment of the Haj amount and clearance of all dues before confirming their flights. Without completing the payment, pilgrims will not receive their Haj

kit or boarding pass, which may affect their pilgrimage. Pilgrims have also been advised to safely keep the receipt generated after online confirmation, as it will be required while collecting travel documents. The committee further stated that once a flight is allotted, no changes will be permitted. Pilgrims have been urged to complete all formalities on time to avoid inconvenience. The committee has also advised pilgrims to regularly check official updates and circulars issued by the Haj Committee of India to stay informed about further procedures and travel arrangements. Any changes or additional instructions will be communicated through official channels, and pilgrims are encouraged to remain vigilant and prepared.

Farmers block road in Ashoknagar

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Farmers staged a road blockade on the Ashoknagar-Guna road near Ratikheda village on Monday evening, protesting against the delay in procurement of their produce at a government purchase centre. The protesters sat on the road and placed tractors to block traffic, disrupting movement in the area. The agitation was directed against the procurement centre set up at Amal warehouse, where farmers alleged that their crops were not being purchased despite prior bookings. On receiving information, administrative and police officials rushed to the spot to control the situation. Leaders of the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh also reached the site and

extended support to the farmers. Officials, including Deputy Director of Agriculture Amit Singh Bhadoria, assured the farmers that weighing of produce would begin immediately. Following this, arrangements were made at the warehouse, tokens were issued, and procurement work was initiated. Farmers said they had been waiting for several days despite having booked slots in advance. They alleged that the procurement process was being delayed and they were repeatedly misled by officials. They also complained about the absence of the committee manager and said the warehouse remained locked. Additionally, farmers raised concerns over foul smell from a nearby mushroom unit, which added to their difficulties while waiting at the site.



Congress State President Jitu Patwari talking to media persons at PCC headquarters in Bhopal on Monday.

Pioneer photo

Deal with US will betray farmers, labourers: Congress in Jabalpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jabalpur

Youth Congress workers staged a protest in Jabalpur on Monday against the proposed trade deal, leading to clashes with police and the use of water cannons. Led by national president Uday Bhanu Chib, the rally was heading towards the Collectorate when police stopped the protesters with barricades near Ghantaghar. As tensions escalated, police used water cannons for nearly half an hour to disperse the crowd. Despite repeated attempts, the protesters refused to retreat. Multiple fire brigade vehicles were deployed, spraying water on demonstrators, but the agitation continued with leaders

raising slogans against the central government. Several leaders, including MLA Lakkan Ghanghoria, were present during the protest. Police later detained over 100 workers, including the national president and state leadership, to control the situation. Heavy security arrangements and barricading were put in place across key routes in the city. Addressing the gathering, Chib alleged that the proposed US trade deal would harm farmers and labourers, calling it against national interest. He also criticised the central government over rising inflation, LPG prices and foreign policy, and said protests would be intensified across the country.

Rising mercury signals harsh summer

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

With the spell of storms, rain and hailstorms subsiding, Madhya Pradesh is now witnessing a sharp rise in temperatures, marking the beginning of an intense summer phase. On Sunday, day temperatures crossed 40°C in at least five cities, with Ratlam recording the highest at 41°C. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bhopal, heatwave conditions are likely to set in across the state from April 16. Regions in Malwa and Nimar, including Indore and Ujjain divisions, are currently experiencing the highest temperatures. Khajuraho recorded 40.4°C, while Dhar, Mandla and Narmadapuram registered

40.2°C. Several other districts, including Damoh, Rewa and Tikamgarh, reported temperatures close to 39.5°C. Among major cities, Indore recorded 39.2°C, Bhopal 38.6°C, Jabalpur 38.7°C and Ujjain 38.5°C. The weather department has indicated that a weak system may become active on April 15, but it is unlikely to provide significant relief, and hot conditions will persist. Authorities have issued advisories urging people to take precautions against extreme heat. Residents have been advised to stay hydrated, avoid prolonged exposure to the sun during peak afternoon hours, and wear light, loose cotton clothing. Special care has been recommended for children and the elderly.

Heatwave alerts have been issued for districts including Dhar, Khargone, Khandwa, Sidhi and Singrauli. Notably, the early part of April witnessed unusual weather patterns, with rain, thunderstorms and hailstorms reported across more than 45 districts, causing damage to crops. However, as is typical, the second half of April is now expected to bring sustained high temperatures across the state. Health experts have also cautioned that prolonged exposure to extreme heat may lead to heatstroke and dehydration, especially for outdoor workers. Authorities are closely monitoring the situation and may issue further alerts if temperatures continue to rise.

Blaze destroys disposal unit, losses over Rs 50 lakh in Chhindwara

Bhopal: A major fire broke out at a disposal factory on Sonpur Road in Chhindwara in the early hours of Monday, gutting the entire unit and causing heavy losses. The fire erupted around 2 am and quickly spread across the factory due to the presence of large quantities of polythene and disposable materials. Firefighters battled the blaze for several hours, with five fire tenders and four municipal tankers deployed at the site. The fire was brought under control after 6 am, though smoke continued to rise from the debris.

The factory, owned by Deepak Sahu, also had a residential structure where his family was present at the time of the incident. An elderly family member sustained burn injuries, while Sahu was also injured while attempting to rescue him. The injured were provided medical assistance. Locals acted swiftly to remove cylinders and diesel stored at the site, preventing a bigger disaster. Cash worth around Rs 28 lakh was also safely recovered, though property damage is estimated to exceed Rs 50 lakh. The cause of the fire is yet to be determined.

Main accused in forest guard murder arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Police have arrested the main accused in the murder of a forest guard who was run over by a tractor-trolley during a crackdown on illegal sand mining in Dimni area of Madhya Pradesh. The accused, Vinod Kori, was arrested from Ahmedabad in Gujarat after evading arrest for several days. A reward of Rs 10,000 had been announced for his capture by Superintendent of Police Samar Saurabh. Earlier, police had already arrested two other accused, including the tractor owner, in connection with the case. According to officials, the

incident occurred on April 8 when a six-member team of the forest department was carrying out action against illegal sand mining. During the operation, the accused allegedly drove a sand-laden tractor-trolley over forest guard Harkesh Gurjar, killing him on the spot and fleeing the scene. A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Surendra Pal Singh said the accused was traced after a sustained search operation and was apprehended from Ahmedabad. Police teams had been tracking his movements across locations before finally nabbing him.

During interrogation, police are trying to ascertain where the accused remained in hiding and who assisted him while he was absconding. Authorities are also probing the larger network of illegal sand mining linked to the case. The incident had sparked outrage among forest officials and locals, highlighting the growing threat posed by illegal mining activities and the risks faced by enforcement teams. Further investigation is underway, and police are expected to take strict action against all those involved.

Workers protest over wages, block highway in Pithampur

Indore: Hundreds of employees of a unit of Motherson Group in Pithampur, Dhar district, staged a protest on Monday over wage-related issues, disrupting traffic on the Mhow-Neemuch National Highway. The workers stopped work and sat on a dharna outside the company premises, later blocking the highway for nearly two-and-a-half hours. The protest led to long traffic jams on both sides, with trucks, buses and private vehicles stranded, causing inconvenience to commuters. Police officials said the situation was brought under control after discussions with the protesters. CSP Ravi Sone stated that the road blockade was cleared peacefully and employees are now in talks with company management. Workers alleged that despite government directives, their salaries have not been increased, unlike in other companies. They demanded a monthly wage of Rs 25,000, citing rising living costs and financial difficulties. Many employees, including a large number of women, said they have been working for over two years without a significant hike. Protesters also raised concerns over strict work conditions, alleging minimal break time, wage deductions for delays and excessive pressure during shifts. The administration has warned of strict action if roads are blocked again and urged workers to submit their demands formally. Meanwhile, the company has sought 15 days to consider the demands, but employees are insisting on an immediate resolution.

CHANGE IN NAME

I SHREYA ATUL POPHLI D/O ATUL MUKUND POPHLI Here by Declare That I have Changed My name as, SHREYA DANDVATE so from now and in future I will be known by my new name.

SHREYA DANDVATE

ADD: E-31, SURENDRA VIHAR, HUZUR, BAGMUGALIYA BHOPAL (M.P.) 462043

CHANGE OF NAME

In previous Passport my name written as HANNAN ARSHAD. Now I changed 112 my name My new name HANNAN ARSHAD KHAN S/o MOHAMMAD ARSHAD KHAN R/o B-2, Airport Road, Colonels Corner, Gandhi Nagar, Bhopal (M.P.) I will be known by new name.

केनरा बँक Canara Bank

Ashita Branch Ashita

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property)

Whereas: The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Canara Bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 20.01.2026 calling upon the borrower M/s Feazan Bhooas Suppliers Prop. Mrs. Asmaa W/o Waseem (Hereinafter Called As Borrower) & Mr. Mirza Haseeb Amjad & Mr. Wasim Kha (Hereinafter called as Guarantor) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, being ₹ 27,26,516.39/- (Twenty Seven Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Five Hundred Sixteen Rupees and Thirty Nine Paise), within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rule on this 9th day of April of the year 2026.

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Canara Bank for an amount of ₹ 27,26,516.39/- (Twenty Seven Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Five Hundred Sixteen Rupees and Thirty Nine Paise), and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All Part & Parcel of Land Survey No 6/3-184/6/3 Situated at Ward No 01 Dorabad PH No 49, Tehsil Ashita, Distt - Sehore (MP). Area 0.064 Hec Boundaries: East: Dupadiya Road, West: Land of Seller, North: Land of Jain Sahab, South: Land of Habib UR Rehman

DATE: 09.04.2026 PLACE: Ashita

Authorised Officer CANARA BANK



SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICIICI Home Finance

Registered Office: ICIICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

Corporate Office: ICIICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059

Branch Office: 1st floor, Plot no. 46, Ahuja Tower, NapierTown, Bhawartal Swami Dayanand Sarswati Ward, Jabalpur-482001

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: April 14, 2026 Place: Jabalpur

Authorized Office ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Mohendra Kori (Borrower), Durgao Kori (Co-Borrower), F/34 Single J C O Line 482020 Madhya Pradesh/ Madhya Pradesh. LHJBL00001291647	Property Situated At Khasra No. 791/3 792/2 792/3 56, Barela, District Jabalpur 482020 Madhya Pradesh/ Date of Possession- 09-04-2026	15-01-2026 Rs. 5,21,776.46/-	Jabalpur

कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद सारनी जिला बैतूल म.प्र.

Email: cmosarni@mpurban.gov.in Fax/Phone: 07146-256400

क्रं. नपा/लो.नि.वि./2026/2156 सारनी, दिनांक 26/03/2026

:: निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ::

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु केन्द्रीयकृत प्रणाली में शासन के उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदार से ऑन लाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट <http://mptenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

क्र.	टेंडर क्रमांक जारी दिनांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की समयावधि एवं लागत	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य एवं EMD	निविदा की अंतिम तिथि
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2026_UAD_495028_1	Interception & Diversion of Nallahs With STP works Project of Sami town under SBM 2.0	18 माह (वर्षाकाल सहित) 29,68,52,000.00	50000.00 1484260.00	02.05.2026

नोट :- निविदा से संबंधित किसी भी प्रकार के संशोधन का प्रकाशन ऑनलाईन <http://mptenders.gov.in> की वेबसाइट पर ही किया जावेगा, पृथक से समाचार में प्रकाशन नहीं किया जावेगा।

मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी नगर पालिका परिषद सारनी

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

ICIICI Home Finance

Registered Office: ICIICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

Corporate Office: ICIICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059

Branch Office: 1st floor, office no.1, Triyam Heights, Opp. Axis bank, A.B. Road, Guna - 473001

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: April 14, 2026 Place: Guna

Authorized Office ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Gajraj Singh Meena (Borrower) Savitree Bai Meena (Co-Borrower), Ward 09 New Sunrise Wall Gali, Chachaura Road Binaganj Guna 473115 Madhya Pradesh. LHGUN00001596538	Vasundhara Complex, Shop No. 109, Shop No. 110, Shop No.111, Ward No. 04, Sadar Bazar At Kumraj, District Guna- 473001 Madhya Pradesh. Bounded By - North By: Shop No.108, South By: Magiya Gali, East By: House of Kanahalal Magiya, West By: 6 Feet Road. Date of Possession- 08-04-2026	15-01-2026 Rs. 48,53,152/-	Guna
2.	Gajraj Singh Meena (Borrower) Savitree Bai Meena (Co-Borrower), Ward 09 New Sunrise Wall Gali, Chachaura Road Binaganj Guna 473115 Madhya Pradesh. LHGUN00001596542	Vasundhara Complex, Shop No. 109, Shop No. 110, Shop No.111, Ward No. 04,sadar Bazar At Kumraj, District Guna- 473001 Madhya Pradesh. Bounded By- North By: Shop No.108, South By: Magiya Gali, East By: House of Kanahalal Magiya, West By: 6 Feet Road. Date of Possession- 08-04-2026	15-01-2026 Rs. 1,29,878.98/-	Guna

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICIICI Home Finance

Registered Office: ICIICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

Corporate Office: ICIICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059

Branch Office: 1st Floor, The Empire, Office no.-F.05, 33-City Centre, Ward no. 30, Near Income Tax Building, Opposite Madhav Rao Scindia Park, Gwalior (MP)- 474011

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

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Date: April 14, 2026, Place: Gwalior

Authorized Office, ICIICI Home Finance Company Limited

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Shelendra Singh (Borrower), Shradha Devi (Co-Borrower), 61 Engineer Regiment Jammu And Kashmir Jammu And Kashmir Middle Class Jammu 185154 Jammu And Kashmir LHGWA00001512156.	House Constructed On Plot No. 264, Part of Survey No. 587, Ward No. 18, Gokul Vihar, Gram Maharajpura Gird, District Gwalior Madhya Pradesh- 474002. Bounded By- North By: Plot No.263, South By: Plot No.265, East By: Plot No.247, West By: Road./ Date of Possession- 08-04-2026	28-01-2026 Rs. 20,60,261/-	Gwalior
2.	Shelendra Singh (Borrower), Shradha Devi (Co-Borrower), 61 Engineer Regiment Jammu And Kashmir Jammu And Kashmir Middle Class Jammu 185154 Jammu And Kashmir LHGWA00001512157.	House Constructed On Plot No. 264, Part of Survey No. 587, Ward No. 18, Gokul Vihar, Gram Maharajpura Gird, District Gwalior Madhya Pradesh- 474002. Bounded By- North By: Plot No.263, South By: Plot No.265, East By: Plot No.247, West By: Road./ Date of Possession-08-04-2026	28-01-2026 Rs. 13,18,583/-	Gwalior
3.	Suryansh Chhari (Borrower), Seema Devi (Co-Borrower), Ankit, (Guarantor), Ward No 10 Ambah Chirpura Road, Ambah Morena Morena Morena Gwalior Middle Class Ambah 476111 Madhya Pradesh LHGWA00001539626.	Part of Survey No. 876/Min-1 And 877/Min-1, Ward No. 61, Gram Badagaon, District Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, Bounded By- North By: 20 Ft Road, South By: Plot of Dataram, East By: Remaining Part Plot of Seller, West By: Plot of Other./ Date of Possession- 08-04-2026	28-01-2026 Rs. 9,93,879/-	Gwalior
4.	Suryansh Chhari (Borrower), Seema Devi (Co-Borrower), Ankit, (Guarantor), Ward No 10 Ambah Chirpura Road, Ambah Morena Morena Morena Gwalior Middle Class Ambah 476111 Madhya Pradesh LHGWA00001539627.	Part of Survey No. 876/Min-1 And 877/Min-1, Ward No. 61, Gram Badagaon, District Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, Bounded By- North By: 20 Ft Road, South By: Plot of Dataram, East By: Remaining Part Plot of Seller, West By: Plot of Other./ Date of Possession- 08-04-2026	28-01-2026 Rs. 42,442/-	Gwalior

IN FOCUS



Sannyasis during the Gajan festival procession at Sonapalashi Buro Shiv Tala, in Purba Bardhaman district, West Bengal. The festival, dedicated to Lord Shiva and observed on the last day of the Bengali year, involves devotees performing rigorous penance and traditional rituals. PTI

Sonam Wangchuk urges Centre to resume talks on Ladakh issues

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, released from the Jodhpur jail on March 14 after the revocation of the stringent National Security Act (NSA) by the Union Home Ministry, is apparently growing impatient in the absence of an announcement of the fresh schedule of talks.

A week after he visited Kargil, where he emphasised that the unity between regions like Leh and Kargil has given strength to the movement in support of their demands, including statehood for Ladakh and extension of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to the region, Wangchuk Monday claimed Ladakh is hanging between trust and



mistrust while it is awaiting resumption of the dialogue. In a post on X, Wangchuk said, "Today marks exactly one month since the unconditional revocation of my detention under the NSA, 1980.

The revocation order gave us hope that the Centre was willing to correct past mistakes, as it

spoke of "building mutual trust" for a "constructive and meaningful dialogue." However, even after 2.5 months since the last dialogue on February 4, not even a date for the next round of talks has been announced". Referring to the attempts being made to create division between Leh and Kargil, Wangchuk said

in the same post on X, "On the 'trust' front, shady entities are using this gap to sow seeds of Leh- Kargil (Buddhist - Muslim) divide. As people in this sensitive border region grow disheartened and demoralised, I urge PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to take timely measures, in national interest, to resolve the issues at the earliest".

To foster better coordination and build trust between the Union Territory administration and local stakeholders, the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, has been actively working to resolve long-pending grievances and address key public issues.

39,386 nominations filed for Gujarat local body polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

A total of 39,386 nomination forms have been filed for 10,005 seats across Gujarat in the upcoming local body elections, marking a significant level of participation. The scrutiny of nomination papers is set to begin today, after which the final list of candidates will be confirmed. According to State Election Commission sources, the overall picture of candidates and the number of uncontested seats will become clear once the verification process is completed.

Additionally, by-elections are being held for 13 seats in 11 municipalities, for which 40 nomination forms have been received. At the district level, elections will be conducted for 5,234 seats in district pan-



chayats, with 4,906 nominations filed. Meanwhile, elections for talukapanchayats—excluding Gandhinagar, Kapadvanj, and Kathlal—have attracted 20,638 nominations for 5,234 seats across 280 talukapanchayats.

Officials indicated that details regarding uncontested seats will also emerge following the completion of scrutiny.

The elections are expected to witness competitive contests across multiple tiers of local governance.

Rahul using fake documents to target Himanta: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Monday hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks targeting Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of indulging in "vendetta politics" and attempting a "political assassination" using "fake documents". The BJP's response came after Rahul Gandhi launched a strong attack on Sarma, calling him the "most corrupt" and accusing him of

misusing the State machinery.

Backing All India Congress Committee's (AICC) media and publicity department chairperson Pawan Khera, Rahul Gandhi on Monday said his party would "not be intimidated".

At a press conference on April 5, Khera had alleged that Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, held multiple passports and foreign assets that were not disclosed in the chief minister's election affidavit for the April 9 Assam Assembly polls.

RS to elect its deputy chairman on April 17, NDA likely to renominate Harivansh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The Rajya Sabha will hold the election for the post of deputy chairman on April 17, and the ruling NDA is likely to push for re-electing Harivansh to the key post.

The post of the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha fell vacant after the tenure of Harivansh ended on April 9. Harivansh has since been nominated to the Upper House by President Droupadi Murmu and took the oath on April 10.

Union minister and BJP leader JP Nadda, who is also leader of the house in Rajya Sabha, is learnt to have discussed the re-election of



Harivansh as deputy chairman with leaders of various parties while trying to bring about a broad consensus on his name.

However, the Congress, TMC and

Left parties have raised objections to the "keenness" the ruling party is showing in holding elections for filling the post of deputy chairman of the Upper House when the post of deputy speaker in Lok Sabha has been vacant since 2019.

An official announcement said that the election for the post of deputy chairman will be held on April 17 at 11 AM. "The office of the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha having fallen vacant.

The Chairman has, under rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha), fixed Friday, the 17th of April, 2026, as the date for holding the election to the

said office of the deputy Chairman.

"The election will take place at 11-00 AM immediately after laying of papers/reports on the Table on that day," a notification from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat said.

Members can give notices of motions for election to the office of deputy chairman up to 12 noon on Thursday, April 16, 2026.

Those members who have yet to take an oath as members of the Rajya Sabha will also take their oath/affirmation on Thursday, April 16, when the upper house meets for a special session, during which the amendments to the Women's Reservation Act will be taken up.

Congress general secretary

Jairam Ramesh alleged that the government wants to "bulldoze" the appointment of the deputy chairman in the Rajya Sabha. "A government that does not appoint a Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha for seven years wants to bulldoze the appointment of a Deputy Chairman in the Rajya Sabha in less than four days," Ramesh said.

Trinamool Congress Leader Derek O'Brien said the BJP wanted to hold the election for the deputy chairman in the Upper House on April 17 when the MPs are busy with state elections and questioned the "hurry". "Mocking Parliament Again," O'Brien said in a post on X.

Wage protests turn violent, spread across...

The violence erupted a day after the UP Government announced a series of measures aimed at strengthening labour welfare, including mandatory double overtime pay, timely wages and weekly offs for workers in Gautam Buddha Nagar. District Magistrate Medha Roopam on Sunday held meetings with representatives of industrial units and issued key directives to safeguard workers' rights. She directed that workers willing to continue their jobs should not face any inconvenience and asked managements to maintain dialogue with employees in line with government norms.

The administration also directed industrial units to ensure CCTV cameras at factory gates remain functional and set up a control room to address workers' grievances and maintain law and order.

Supreme Court rejects plea on voter deletions...

Senior advocate D S Naidu, appearing for the poll panel, informed the court that there are approximately 30 to 34 lakh appeals currently pending. "Every tribunal now has over one lakh appeals to handle," the bench said.

Justice Bagchi, during the hearing, referred to the sanctity of the electoral process and said the right to vote is not merely a constitutional formality but a "sentimental" pillar of democracy. "The right to vote in a country you were born in is not just constitutional, but sentimental. It is about being part of a democracy and helping elect a government," he said. He, however, said that the tribunals, manned by former judges, cannot be overburdened by fixing the timelines for adjudications. "It is not the end justifying the means, but the means justifying the end," Justice Bagchi said.

"We need to protect due process rights. The voter should not be sandwiched between two constitutional authorities," he said, adding that it would not interdict the election process at this stage. Justice Bagchi noted that the Calcutta High Court Chief Justice had already formulated the manner and mode for appeals, which began on Monday. The CJI emphasised that the petitioners must exhaust their remedies before the appellate tribunals. Assembly elections in West Bengal will be held in two phases on April 23 and 29, and votes will be counted on May 4.

The apex court also wanted to know if those arrested by the NIA for the April 1 gherao of seven judicial officers in Malda district "had any political background", with the CJI saying "this has to be taken to a logical conclusion".

PM pushes for quick rollout of women's quota

Acknowledging the nationwide enthusiasm among women on this issue, the PM observed that women across the country are voicing their aspirations about reaching Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. "I appeal to all women to maintain their active participation in this entire process and meet their MPs to share their perspectives and expectations," PM Modi remarked.

Recalling the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Act in the new Parliament building in 2023, the PM noted that it was passed unanimously with all parties agreeing that it should be implemented by 2029 in any case. Making a special appeal, PM Modi urged women to take the discussions from the Nari Shakti Vandan programme to every village in the country through personal meetings and social media.

Tracing the contribution of women from the

freedom struggle to the Constituent Assembly, the Prime Minister highlighted the role of Nari Shakti in laying the foundation of independent India. "From President to Prime Minister, wherever women have been, they have created their own legacy," stated Modi.

Citing panchayati raj institutions as an excellent example of women's leadership, the Prime Minister shared that over 14 lakh women are successfully working in local government bodies today. In approximately 21 states, their participation in panchayats has reached nearly 50 percent. "This active participation of lakhs of women in politics and social life surprises even the world's leading leaders and political experts, enhancing India's pride," remarked the Prime Minister. Emphasizing that lakhs of women working in local bodies and institutions for years now possess extensive experience, the Prime Minister said they are ready and eager for bigger roles.

US blockade deepens Hormuz crisis

The notice added that transit through the strait "to or from non-Iranian destinations is not reported to be impeded by these measures," but it added that ships "may encounter military presence" in the strait.

Iran's effective closure of the strait, through which 20% of traded oil passes in peacetime, has sent oil prices skyrocketing, pushing up the cost of gasoline, food and other basic goods far beyond the Middle East. Tehran has allowed some ships perceived as friendly to pass while charging considerable fees, leading to accusations it is holding the global economy hostage.

Some analysts are doubtful that the US can restore normal shipping through force alone - and it's not clear how a blockade would work or what the dangers might be to US forces.

The question is essentially who can endure the most pain: Could a blockade make Iran's economic situation untenable and force it to concede? Or will it drive global oil and other prices so high that US President Donald Trump is forced to back down?

The US military's Central Command announced that the blockade would be enforced "against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas." It said that would include all of Iran's ports on the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

CENTCOM's decision to allow ships traveling between non-Iranian ports to transit the strait was a step down from Trump's earlier threat to blockade the waterway.

In a social media message posted shortly after the blockade was due to begin, Trump said Iran's navy was "laying at the bottom of the sea, completely obliterated," but he added that Tehran still has "fast attack ships," and warned that "if any of these ships come anywhere close to our BLOCKADE, they will be immediately ELIMINATED." Iran issued threats of its own.

"Security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is either for everyone or for NO ONE," the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported Monday. "NO PORT in the region will be safe," read a statement from the Iranian military and the Revolutionary Guard.

The threats halted the limited ship traffic that resumed in the strait since the ceasefire, according to a report from Lloyd's List Intelligence. Marine trackers say over 40 commercial ships have crossed since the start of the ceasefire last week, down from roughly 100 to 135 vessel passages per day before the war.

The blockade is likely intended to pile pressure on Iran, which has exported millions of barrels of oil since the war began, much of it likely carried by so-called dark transits that evade

FROM PAGE - 1

Western sanctions and oversight. But the effects will be felt far beyond Iran. The price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 7% to hover around \$102 per barrel on Monday. It cost roughly \$70 per barrel before the war. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that, together with French President Emmanuel Macron, he would hold a summit this week "to drive forward the international effort" to end the conflict and unblock the strait. Starmer told lawmakers it must reopen with no conditions or tolls.

Iran assures safe passage for India through Strait...

He added that Iran's foreign minister has identified India as one of five priority countries for diplomatic engagement.

Expressing gratitude, the envoy praised the Indian government and its people as "reliable and compassionate partners," particularly during challenging times. He also confirmed that Indian tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz have not been charged any tolls. "You can ask the Indian government if we have charged anything up to now," Fathali said, reiterating Iran's commitment to maintaining smooth maritime trade ties.

India has consistently denied reports suggesting it paid any fees to secure the passage of nine liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) vessels through the waterway, especially after transit disruptions linked to escalating regional conflict.

On security concerns, Fathali asserted that the Strait of Hormuz falls within Iran's territorial waters and claimed that the situation deteriorated following military escalation despite ongoing diplomatic efforts. He alleged that Iran faced attacks during negotiations, including strikes on civilian infrastructure.

Referring to recent talks held in Islamabad, the ambassador said discussions covered nuclear issues, sanctions relief, and war reparations, though he described some demands as "unlawful." "Iran is ready for peace and negotiation," Fathali stated, while also warning that the country remains prepared for conflict if necessary. On the possibility of renewed dialogue with the United States, he said further negotiations would depend on Washington accepting Iran's conditions. Fathali also criticized the US for what he described as repeated breaches of commitments, accusing it of acting in bad faith and contributing to instability in the region.

Despite the tensions, Iran reiterated its willingness to engage diplomatically, while maintaining its stance on sovereignty and regional security.

SIT expands probe into TCS case

Well places sources say, the Central agencies have become involved as there is enough material evidence to suggest that an organized network, involving a WhatsApp group for targeting, financial trails, or broader radicalisation links, was actively involved in forced religious conversion. The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Maharashtra Police, National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) have sought detailed inputs and evidence from the Nashik Police SIT.

Reports indicate that teams from these agencies are expected to join the investigation on the ground and coordinate with Maharashtra Police in the investigation.

Meanwhile, the police sources confirmed that the SIT, led by ACP Sandeep Mitke, is examining digital evidence, including alleged WhatsApp coordination groups and blackmail material. Though no fresh arrests were made on

Monday, the investigation is going full steam with appeals for additional victims to come forward.

The SIT continues systematic questioning, evidence analysis and tracking of the absconding accused. Police Commissioner Sandeep Karnik has described the investigation as "systematic and evidence-based."

This focused police effort has already led to swift arrests and suspensions by TCS, highlighting both the scale of alleged misconduct and the authorities' response. More revelations and arrests cannot be ruled out in the coming days. ACP Sandeep Mitke has stated that "more arrests and custodial actions are likely" as the probe expands further.

The SIT was constituted on the orders of the Nashik Police Commissioner following intelligence inputs, victim statements and senior state-level directives to investigate nine FIRs involving allegations of sexual harassment, blackmail, grooming, and forced religious conversion at the TCS BPO unit in Satpur MIDC, Nashik.

Key allegations include coercive demands to perform Namaz, observe Roza, consume beef and adopt Islamic practices, alongside sexual exploitation, stalking, and career-related threats. Police sources confirm the SIT is treating the case as a coordinated racket involving senior team leads who allegedly used their positional power.

The SIT is probing a secret WhatsApp group on the accused's phones, described as the 'control room' for coordinating operations, including targeting Hindu women with false promises of marriage or promotions. The sleuths are looking for alleged intimate photos, videos allegedly used for blackmail, call records and office surveillance data. Detailed recordings from complainants and other employees are being examined by the SIT and it has appealed for more victims to come forward.

The most important aspect in this scandal is the undercover operation involving seven women police officers who worked inside the unit for approximately 40 days, gathering on ground intelligence that led to the arrests.

Seven individuals have been arrested so far including team leads Asif Ansari, Tausif Attar, Shafi Sheikh, Raza Memon, Danish Sheikh and Shah Rukh Qureshi while One key accused Nida Khan the Assistant General Manager, HR, referred to in some reports as the 'Lady Captain' is reportedly absconding.

The SIT has widened its search to Nashik and Pune and a notice was earlier served to her for allegedly suppressing complaints. The arrested accused have been remanded in police custody and are being interrogated to piece together the sequence of events leading to coercion and religious conversion.

Army officer attacked for objecting to public...

He said that they politely asked the men to move elsewhere, as it was a residential area and public drinking was inappropriate. "The moment we requested them to leave, they became hostile and dared us to call anyone. My father then asked me to call the police control room," he said.

Arora alleged that when police personnel arrived, they refused to record their complaint. Instead, one of the men spoke to the officer over the phone, after which the officer told them he would deal with the matter later.

"Soon after, seven to eight men arrived in two vehicles and started thrashing us and abusing my mother. They were associates of the accused," he claimed. He told the reporters that he was repeatedly assaulted for around 15 minutes in the presence of police personnel.

"Five to six men kept beating me continuously, while my father was also surrounded. We had called the police, but they did not intervene," he

alleged. Tejas sustained injuries to his face, neck, and palm. He alleged that the responding officer remained inside his vehicle and did not offer any assistance. The brigadier's wife also alleged that the officer present at the spot refused to intervene despite her requests. "The officer did not step in as the men continued assaulting my son. When I pleaded for help, he said he could act only after his team arrived," she claimed.

She said that after the attackers left, the officer refused to take them to the police station and instead opened the boot of the vehicle. "You are not the kind of people who deserve to sit on the seats," she quoted the officer as saying.

At the police station, the family claimed they faced further harassment. "They kept us waiting for about half an hour. A woman officer told us they did not have 'free time' as we had called the PCR multiple times. When my husband said we were both in uniform and deserved basic respect, she became aggressive," the brigadier's wife told the reporters. She also claimed that despite her son bleeding, the police insisted on an MLC report before registering the complaint and did not provide a vehicle to take them to the hospital. "Eventually, my husband took our son to the Army Hospital himself for treatment and X-rays," she alleged.

Terror commander nabbed after 16 years

Abu Hureira maintained low profile and kept shifting his bases in Malerkotla, Punjab to avoid detection. Mohammad Naeqeb Bhat, Adil Rashid Bhat and Ghulam Mohammad Mir, the local over ground operatives of LeT provided shelter, food, logistics and arms. They provided high quality documents and it helped Hureira to go off the radar of the security agencies and he continued to carry out LeT activities.

Abu Hureira's arrest was made possible by the sustained, layered intelligence work involving human intelligence (HUMINT), technical surveillance and inter-state coordination. The operation began around March 31, 2026 after a specific intelligence input was received. The seriousness of this input could be judged by the fact that the J&K Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat personally supervised the operation.

It started with the arrest of local associate Mohammad Naeqeb Bhat from the Pandach area on the outskirts of Srinagar. He was caught with a pistol and other incriminating material. During interrogation, Naeqeb disclosed his role in the LeT module, arms procurement links to Adil Rashid Bhat and support provided to foreign terrorists. This led police to Ghulam Mohammad Mir. Mir's questioning helped further unravelled the terrorist network. Human intelligence and technical surveillance pinpointed the hideout in Malerkotla, Punjab. A SOG team of J&K Police with central agency support, arrested Abu Hureira and Usman and they were later brought to Srinagar for further questioning. These raids confirmed the interstate nature of the network, which handled logistics, funding, and fake IDs. The probe also connected to a prior white-collar LeT cell busted six months earlier at Faridabad's Al Falah University, showing deeper linkages.

The success in 2026 reflects improved multi-agency coordination, persistent technical and human intelligence, and the cascading effect of interrogations. Once the local module cracked with Naeqeb Bhat's arrest, the chain of disclosures quickly led to Abu Hureira's hideout in Punjab.

Police officials have described this as a major blow to LeT's residual infrastructure in the region, exposing how foreign terrorists rely on Indian documents and local enablers to operate long-term. This case underscores both the challenges of hybrid terrorism and the effectiveness of sustained, coordinated counter-terror efforts.

Asha Bhosle cremated with State honours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Mumbai

“Abhi Na Jaao Chhodkar...” The strains of that wistful song played in the background at the Shivaji Park crematorium on Monday as hundreds of people gathered inside - and outside - to bid music legend Asha Bhosle a final sayonara.

A gun salute rang out as the last rites of Bhosle, perhaps the last of the singing greats who ruled the sound waves for decades and still do, were held in accordance with Hindu rituals and with full state honours. Her son Anand performed the rituals.

Bhosle, one-half of the legendary Mangeshkar sisters, passed away on Sunday due to multi-organ failure. She was 92, as was her Lata didi when she died in February 2022.

Priests recited mantras around the funeral pyre, decorated with vibrant yellow and orange



People gather as the mortal remains of singer Asha Bhosle are taken for last rites in Mumbai on Monday

marigolds. Granddaughter Zanaai was inconsolable. Sister Usha Mangeshkar, also a singer, and brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar, a music composer, were there too.

Among those gathered to pay their last respects to India's singer nonpareil were Maharashtra Chief

Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar, director Ramesh Sippy and actors Aamir Khan and Vicky Kaushal.

It was a moment of sorrow and song, too. Before the pyre was lit, singers Shaan, Sudesh Bhosle and

Anup Jalota paid a musical tribute to the enduring legend who sang some 12,000 songs in an incredible eight-decade career that started when she was just 10.

While Sudesh Bhosle crooned “Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana”, Shaan sang “Pyaar Ke Mod Pe”.

“Asha ji will always be with us. Her voice, her words, her thoughts towards life will always inspire us, and there was no one like her, nor will there ever be. She was the one unique, strong-willed person who lived her life on her own terms.

“And whatever tragedies happened with her, there's no one like her who faced them with a smile, always maintaining a positive mindset, and did her work with full professionalism,” Shaan said.

Lalit Pandit, who, along with his brother Jatni, composed the music for Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol's iconic 1995 film “Dilwale Dulhania

Le Jayenge”, which featured Bhosle's popular songs “Zara Sa Jhoom Loon Main” and “Ajnabi Mujhko Itna Bata”, said she was the last of her kind. “She has left behind so much work in her legacy that generations can learn from it. It is true that she was the last legend and is no longer with us, but she will always remain in our hearts,” he added.

And they were not the only ones.

Many fans, their hands folded in prayer, were heard singing the many numbers that made Bhosle the star that she was for music lovers of all ages and through many generations.

Snatches of “Aaiye Meherbaan”, the languid song of love filmed on Madhubala, and “Chura Liya Hai Tumhe Jo Dil Pe”, romance of another hue pictured on Zeenat Aman many decades later, and many others, could be heard. Some softly crooned, others louder.

Security tightened in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of Pahalgam attack anniversary

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

In the run-up to the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 civilians, including 25 tourists, were killed by terrorists after ascertaining their religious identities on April 22, the security grid has been tightened in the region to enhance general vigil along the International border and the line of control (LoC).

On the other hand, efforts have been made by the terrorist handlers sitting across Pakistan to push small groups of heavily armed terrorists inside the Indian territory to carry out surprise terrorist attacks in the region.

On Monday, a joint team of security forces launched a search operation in several border areas of Rajbagh and Ramkote in Kathua district following information about suspicious movement of suspected terrorists.

In Rajouri, General Officer



Commanding (GOC) of Ace of Spades Division, Major General Kaushik Mukherji, on Monday, said that the Army troops are on high alert in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri and Poonch districts and are fully prepared to deliver a befitting response to any hostile act by the enemy.

Meanwhile, the police and army are also continuing searches for the second day in the SIDCO forest area of the nearby Samba district, which was launched early Sunday after two suspected persons were noticed moving under the cover of darkness.

With the advent of the ‘Spring season’ in the valley, a fresh security audit was conducted, and adequate security personnel were deployed in and around the tourist hotspots, including local getaways, to instil a sense of security among the visiting tourists.

The famous Tulip garden in Srinagar, ski resort of Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Pahalgam, Tangmarg, Gurez valley, and Bandipora have been witnessing a surge in tourist footfalls with the beginning of the peak tourist season. Jammu region is

also witnessing a heavy rush of pilgrims headed towards Katra in Reasi district to offer prayers in the Cave Shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi, followed by a short trip to Patnitop, Bhaderwah and other tourist spots.

The tourist places which were closed down in the aftermath of the horrific terror attack were thrown open after beefing up the security measures in the region.

In recent weeks, the Union Home Ministry has also reviewed the prevailing security scenario in the Union Territory and adequate measures were taken to dismantle the terror eco-system.

Addressing a well-attended gathering at the ‘Rajouri Day’ event in the border district, Major General Kaushik Mukherji said that I assure you that our army is fully alert at the borders and is ready to give a befitting response to every hostile act of the enemy.

Delimitation aimed at creating north-south divide: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Congress on Monday alleged that the Government's proposed delimitation linked to the women's reservation law is an attempt to create a divide between the northern and southern States.

The Opposition party asserted that delimitation cannot be an exercise just in arithmetic but should also be about equitability in the real sense, and States such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana should not pay a price for better population control and having better indices.

“I believe the way delimitation is being thrust upon the people, it is an attempt to create a divide between the North and the South,” Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said at a press conference here when asked about Telangana Chief



Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete

Minister A Revanth Reddy's criticism of the Government over the reported delimitation formula proposed by the Government while seeking to amend the women's reservation law for its implementation in 2029.

“There are many southern States whose Human Development Index (HDI) parameters are better than other States - they controlled population, controlled expenditure, so why is delimitation being done to harm them?” Shrinete asked.

Delimitation proposal extremely dangerous: Sonia Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Monday asserted the real issue with the Government's move to bring bills in Parliament this week is delimitation, not women's reservation, and claimed the reported delimitation proposal is “extremely dangerous” as well as an “assault” on the Constitution itself. She also stressed that any delimitation involving an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically, and not just arithmetically, equitable.

In an article published in The Hindu, she also alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's real intention now is to further “delay and derail” the caste census.

Prime Minister Modi is making appeals to Opposition parties to support bills that the Government wants to “bulldoze” through Parliament in a “special session” when the election campaign in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal will be at its peak, she said.

“There can be only one reason for the extraordinary hurry, which is to derive political advantage and place the



Opposition on the defensive,” she alleged. The prime minister is, as usual, being economical with the truth, Sonia Gandhi claimed.

Tagging her article, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi said she has written about how the real concern in the important process of women's reservation is the risks and inequities posed by a “rushed delimitation”.

Noting that Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 unanimously in September 2023 during a special session, Sonia Gandhi said the law introduced Article 334-A in the Constitution, which mandated one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas, scheduled to come into effect after the completion of the next Census and the Census-based delimitation process.

Annpurna Devi hails Nari Shakti Vandan Act as revolutionary change

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Union Minister Annpurna Devi on Monday said the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam was a “grand democratic achievement” and a “revolutionary change” for women's empowerment and participation in democracy.

Addressing the ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan’, she said, “Today's programme is a celebration of a new and inspiring chapter in nation-building. This is a sacred moment where resolve, ded-



PM Narendra Modi, with Delhi CM Rekha Gupta, and others during the ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan’ at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi

ication, and success come together before us.”

Among those present at the event were Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, National Commission for Women Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar and Union Minister Savitri Thakur.

Noting that the legislation was a result of years of struggle, Devi said it is “a grand democratic achievement born out of years of struggle and perseverance of our matrushakti” and “a rev-

olutionary change that ensures women's capability, self-respect, and participation in democracy.”

Crediting PM Modi, Devi said it was his “firm resolve” that turned a long-pending reform into reality despite several attempts over the past three decades.

Highlighting women-led development, she said Indian women are becoming “flagbearers of development” and building a new global identity.

“PM Modi, you have given us a vision through which

the daughters of India are today becoming the flag-bearers of development and are establishing a new identity on the global stage with your vision of women-led development,” the minister said.

“This legislation is a constitutional proclamation of that change. What makes this decision even more special is that while several efforts were made over the past three decades, it is your firm resolve that has turned this transformation into reality,” she added.

PM to inaugurate Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday will inaugurate the Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor, which will cut travel time between the two cities to nearly half, and also undertake a review of the wildlife passage on the elevated section of the high-speed expressway. The 213-kilometre-long six-lane access-controlled Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor has been built at a cost of over Rs 12,000 crore.



The corridor traverses through the States of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and will reduce travel time between Delhi

and Dehradun from over six hours at present to around two and a half hours, according to an official statement. The prime minister will visit

Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh on April 14, during which he will visit Saharanpur to undertake a review of the wildlife corridor on the elevated section of the Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor.

Subsequently, Modi will perform prayers at Maa Daat Kali Temple near Dehradun.

Thereafter, the prime minister will inaugurate the Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor at a public function in Dehradun and will also address the gathering on the occasion, the statement said. The Delhi-Dehradun eco-

nomc corridor will play a pivotal role in strengthening regional economic growth by enhancing connectivity between major tourism and economic centres as well as opening new avenues for trade and development across the region.

“The project reflects the vision of the prime minister to develop next-generation infrastructure that combines high-speed connectivity with environmental sustainability and improved quality of life for citizens,” the statement said.

Below normal monsoon may spell trouble for India's economy

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Below normal monsoon this year may not augur well for India as deficient rainfall may impact farm output. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) long-range forecast on Monday comes at a time when the country is battling challenges in the backdrop of the West Asia conflict, resulting in inflation caused by disruption in the supply chain.

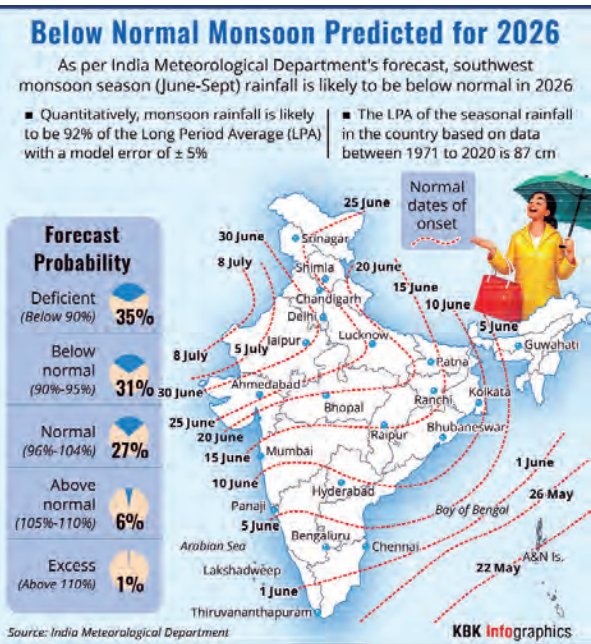
The monsoon is the lifeblood of India's nearly \$4 trillion economy, delivering almost 70 per cent of the rainfall needed to water farms and replenish aquifers and reservoirs.

Predicted poor rains may lead to less food grain production thereby stressing the economy further with no signs of the Iran conflict not

bating any time soon. A below-normal monsoon in 2026 would be the first in three years, and the outlook will be closely tracked by policymakers and markets for its implications on crop output, inflation and overall economic growth.

Addressing a press conference, Dr M Mohapatra, director-general of the Meteorology, IIMD, said, the 2026 southwest monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall this year over the country is expected to be below normal. The projection carries a model error margin of ±5 per cent, with the LPA for the June-September season pegged at 87 cm based on the 1971-2020 period.

“The monsoon over the country as a whole is most likely to be below normal 95-



90 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA)). Quantitatively, the seasonal rainfall over the country as a whole is likely to be 92 per cent of LPA with a model error of ±5 per cent. Rainfall below 96 per cent of the LPA is classified as “below normal,” he said.

The southwest monsoon, which typically sets in over Kerala around June 1 and withdraws by mid-September, is crucial for India's agriculture, irrigating nearly half of the country's farmland.

A weaker monsoon could impact production of rain-fed crops such as rice, pulses and oilseeds, while also fuelling food inflation and dampening rural demand. The LPA for seasonal rainfall over the country for the period 1971-2020 is 87 cm. Rainfall between 96 per

cent and 104 per cent of the LPA is considered normal.

Deficient rains may force farmers to rely more heavily on diesel-powered irrigation, lifting fuel demand at a time when the Iran war has already affected energy supplies. Crude oil has surged on supply disruptions and tighter flows through the Strait of Hormuz, a key transit route for Middle East exports.

The southwest monsoon accounts for more than 70 per cent of India's total annual rainfall. The IMD also added that weak La Nina conditions are seen moving towards El Nino.

“El Nino conditions are likely to continue during the monsoon season,” predicts the IMD. “Currently weak La Nina-like conditions are transitioning to neutral condi-

tions. But after June it's very likely that El Nino will develop,” Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director-general of the IMD said.

El Nino is a weather phenomenon that occurs when ocean temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean rise above normal, typically resulting in hot and dry weather in Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. He also highlighted that compared to last year, the northern hemisphere snow cover area during the last three months (January to March) was slightly below normal.

This winter and spring snow extent over the Northern Hemisphere has an inverse relationship with the subsequent southwest monsoon seasonal rainfall over the country.

Nation Focus



PM MODI CONGRATULATES PETER MAGYAR ON HUNGARY POLLS WIN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated Peter Magyar on his resounding victory in the parliamentary elections in Hungary and said he was looking forward to working closely with him to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation and advance the vital India-EU Strategic Partnership. Peter Magyar, leader of the centre-right Opposition Tiszta party, defeated incumbent Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban in the election on Sunday. “Heartiest congratulations to Peter Magyar and the Tiszta Party on your resounding election victory,” Modi said in a social media post. The PM said India and Hungary are bound by a deep-rooted friendship, shared values and enduring mutual respect.



KHARGE CALLS OPPOSITION MEET ON WOMEN'S QUOTA ON APRIL 15

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said the Congress will convene a meeting of all the Opposition parties on April 15 to deliberate on the implementation of the Women's Reservation law, accusing the Centre of not being prepared to hold a comprehensive consultation with all stakeholders. Addressing reporters, he maintained that while the party fully supports the legislation, there is a need for wide discussions on its implementation, given its broader national implications. “The Centre has called a meeting. I have already replied to the letter written either by Kiren Rijiju or even the Prime Minister to me,” Kharge said.

Congress issues whip to Lok Sabha MPs for special session



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Congress on Monday issued a whip to all its Lok Sabha MPs to remain present in the House for the special sitting of Parliament when the Government will bring up amendments to the Women Reservation Act.

The Congress has told its Lok Sabha MPs that some very important issues will be taken up for discussion and voting in the House on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

“All members of Congress Party in the Lok Sabha are requested to kindly remain present in the House from 11 am onwards till the adjournment of the House on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, i.e. 16th, 17th & 18th April, 2026, without fail and support the Party stand,” the party said.

“This may be treated as most important,” the three-line whip issued by the party said. The Budget session of Parliament has been extended, and a special three-day sitting of the House has been convened from April 16 to 18.

■ States Focus ■



GOVT TO BUILD MUSIC INSTITUTE ENVISAGED BY ASHA BHOSLE

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said the State Government will build a music institute envisaged by legendary singer Asha Bhosle. The 92-year-old singer, who mesmerised generations with her unforgettable melodies across seven decades, passed away on Sunday due to multi-organ failure at Breach Candy Hospital. The Cabinet headed by Fadnavis also paid homage to Asha Bhosle, with a condolence resolution being read out by Chief Secretary Rajesh Agarwal. Deputy Chief Sunetra Pawar and cabinet ministers were present for the meeting. Steps will be taken to build a music institute envisaged by Bhosle, a statement quoted Fadnavis as saying.



UDHAYANIDHI SAYS NDA WIN WILL MAKE TN RETROGRESSIVE

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Monday said the AIADMK-led NDA will make the State “retrogressive” if it is voted to power and appealed to the people to be wise in choosing the DMK combine to sustain the pace of growth. He said the people should reject the AIADMK in the Assembly election as it had “conspired” to halt the monthly entitlement scheme for women heads of families. “Prove in this election that the AIADMK and its ally, the BJP, have no space in Tamil Nadu. Annihilate them in the polls, and wisely choose the DMK to sustain the pace of growth in the State,” the DMK youth wing secretary said while addressing a poll campaign here in support of party candidates: Lakshmanan for Villupuram and Gowtham Dravidamani, who is contesting from Vanur Assembly constituency.

62,000 personnel deployed for Census in Chhattisgarh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Raipur

More than 62,000 personnel have been deployed for the Census 2027 exercise in Chhattisgarh that will be conducted in two phases between May 1 and February next year, officials said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference, State Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Manoj Kumar Pingua said the first phase, covering house listing and housing census, will be carried out from May 1 to May 30 this year, while the second phase, connected to popula-



tion enumeration, will take place in February 2027.

The upcoming Census will be conducted digitally for the first time in the country, with an optional self-enumeration facility, Pingua said.

“The self-enumeration window for the first phase will be open from April 16 to April 30, during which residents can submit their details

DMK made corruption part of system: PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the DMK Government in Tamil Nadu of making “corruption a part of the system” and said the people of the southern State are looking at the BJP-NDA with hopes for a change.

Interacting with the booth-level workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) Tamil Nadu unit under the “*Mera Booth Sabse Mazboot*” programme, Modi also said he is aware that the people of Tamil Nadu are ready to punish the ruling DMK for its alleged misgovernance.

“In Tamil Nadu, the DMK Government has made corruption a part of the system.

Every department is involved in irregularities. Several ministers are facing cases. Corruption, commis-

sion and collection are becoming the identity of the DMK Government,” he said.

The prime minister said there was a time when, even after the DMK was in the Central Government, no new projects would come to Tamil Nadu, and no matter how many problems there were, no solutions would be found.

“And then there is today’s time, when the NDA Government is bringing major projects for railways, highways and airports. It is working at a fast pace,” he said.

Modi said it is due to the hard work of the BJP workers that a new atmosphere has been created among the people of Tamil Nadu now.

“People are looking at the BJP-NDA with hopes for a change,” he said.

The prime minister said the welfare of farmers is the



NDA Government’s priority and a major step has been taken towards fulfilling the dreams of the middle class.

“Significant transformation has come in the healthcare sector. In Tamil Nadu, 11 new medical colleges have been built, and in a decade, the number of medical seats has doubled,” he said.

Modi said between 2004 and 2014, when the DMK was in the Central Government, its approach did not bring new development to Tamil Nadu.

“No matter how many problems were there, they were not resolved. After our Government came to power, Tamil Nadu has seen changes. For example, the

BJP will not allow Babri Masjid in Bengal: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Birbhum/Raniganj

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and Aam Janata Unnayan Party chief Humayun Kabir are “two of a kind”, and the BJP will never allow a Babri Masjid to be built in Bengal if it wins the State polls.

At a poll rally in West Bengal’s coal mine belt of Raniganj in Paschim Bardhaman district, Shah accused Banerjee of opposing the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, and drew parallels with Kabir’s initiative to build a mosque in Murshidabad’s Beldanga modelled on the demolished Babri Masjid in Ayodhya.

Kabir, an MLA from Murshidabad’s Bharatpur, who has now formed his own party and is seeking re-election, was suspended from the TMC



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressing the gathering during an election campaign rally in support of BJP candidates ahead of West Bengal Assembly elections at Kotasur in Birbhum district on Monday

PTI

in December last year after he proposed the construction of a Babri-like mosque.

“The Congress, Mamata Banerjee’s TMC and other parties such as the DMK, Samajwadi Party, and Bahujan Samaj Party supported keeping Ram Lalla under a tent for 550 years.

“After receiving an over-

whelming mandate from people in 2019, Modiji built the

Ram temple in Ayodhya, which leaders like Banerjee opposed. Now, Humayun Kabir, who is cast in the same mould as Mamata Banerjee, wants to build Babri Masjid in Bengal,” the former BJP chief said.

The BJP will never allow a Babri Masjid to be built in this State after it wins the upcoming polls, Shah asserted.

His remarks are seen as the BJP’s attempt at blunting the

TMC’s offensive over a video in which Kabir was purportedly heard saying he was in touch with BJP leaders to unseat Banerjee from power and receiving ₹200 crore as an advance for a ₹1,000-crore deal to split the minority votes.

Latching on to the purported remarks in the video, the veracity of which PTI could not independently verify, Banerjee alleged on Sunday that the BJP has “struck a ₹1,000-crore deal” with Kabir to defeat the TMC.

Addressing poll rallies in Mayureshwar and Khayrasole areas of Birbhum district earlier on Monday, Shah said the people of Bengal will reply to bombs and bullets with votes, and pledged the BJP would “hang the syndicate and cut money promoters upside down to make them straight” once the voters “bid adieu to the TMC Government”.

BJP’s policies promote detention, deprivation: Abhishek Banerjee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee on Monday alleged that the BJP’s policies promote “detention and deprivation”, while asserting that his party stands for “security and welfare”.

Addressing an election rally at Karimpur in Nadia district, Banerjee accused the BJP of trying to instil fear among voters and deprive them of their democratic rights through measures like the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

“People were made to



stand in queues, and their voting rights were taken away. The answer must be given through votes,” he said. “Large sections of marginalised communities, including Matuas, Namashudras and other backward class voters, were disproportionately affected by the SIR, despite possess-

ing valid documents. BJP means detention, and TMC means no tension,” he added.

Claiming that even some BJP supporters were now being “deprived of their rights”, he urged people not to be intimidated and assured them that their voting rights would be restored after the TMC returns to power.

The TMC leader also targeted the BJP’s central leadership, describing them as “outsiders” who come to the state for campaigning without understanding its culture and ethos.

TN paddy row: FM accuses Stalin of creating false narrative

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday said that the Centre had asked the State to review its existing bonus policy and consider discontinuing it on paddy, and asked Union Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman whether she was willing to place the letter in this regard in public domain.

Hours after the chief minister’s social media post, the Union finance minister uploaded a copy of the letter on her social media platform and said building food security required a constructive, continuous and positive engagement on agriculture



with all stakeholders.

“However, CM Thiru @mkstalin appears to continue with what he and his party are good at — draw a wedge between Centre and States, create false narratives and project themselves as the protectors of farmers and other Tamil people,” she said.



When essential food items depend on imports, domestic food security becomes vulnerable to external shocks and price fluctuations. That is not sustainable for a country of India’s size. Expanding domestic production of pulses and oilseeds is not only an economic necessity

but also a strategic need. “Doesn’t he know that huge imports of palm oil is because our demand for edible oil is not adequately met with oil seeds supply. Similar is the issue with pulses. Farmers can get better prices for crops in which there is a supply-demand gap. Clearly, farmers’ interest is not in CM Stalin’s mind,” Sitharaman said, flaying the CM.

By encouraging the production of pulses, oilseeds, and millets, India aimed to achieve the twin objectives of “nutritional security” through improved access to protein-rich crops and “economic stability” by reducing the edible oil import bill.

TVK debuts hologram Vijay for TN campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Chennai

In a move that has redefined the landscape of political campaigning in Tamil Nadu, TVK candidate for Kumbakonam, Vinoth Ravi, has deployed a 3D hologram of actor-turned-politician Vijay to reach voters across the State for the April 23 Assembly elections.

The technology made its debut in the Kumbakonam Assembly constituency on April 12.

A life-sized, high-definition digital projection of the TVK chief appeared alongside the party’s local candidate. Visuals from the ground showed the



“Hologram Vijay” delivering a synchronised speech from a campaign vehicle, creating an illusion of physical presence that drew crowds.

Vijay Chandran, TVK’s Thanjavur district treasur-

er, said they decided to do this when an acquaintance of his was telling him about the possibility of a 3D hologram. According to Chandran, the move is a strategic response to the

gruelling schedule of covering 200-plus constituencies that TVK is competing from.

“We realised that it is not possible for our Thalaivar (TVK chief Vijay) to go to all the constituencies. We were thinking about how best we can bring his message to people. I remembered Praveen K, a third-year student of AI and Data Science, who was telling me about hologram marketing. The hologram initiative allows our leader to be omnipresent, ensuring that voters in every corner of the State can experience his address directly, even as he physically attends high-stakes rallies elsewhere,” Chandran said.

NCC, NIELIT launch cyber security programme for cadets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a major step towards empowering cadets with structured training in cyber awareness, digital hygiene and practical cyber defence skills, the National Cadet Corps (NCC), in collaboration with the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), has launched a comprehensive Cyber Security Capacity Building Programme, defence ministry said on Monday.



It said a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between NCC and NIELIT in the presence of DG NCC, Lt General Virendra

Vats and DG NIELIT, Dr Madan Mohan Tripathi.

The programme will be implemented in two stages. The first stage, Cyber Security

Awareness Programme, is a 15-hour online training module designed to provide foundational knowledge of digital literacy, safe internet practices, cyber hygiene, and awareness of cyber threats. This stage will be open to all enrolled NCC cadets across the country and will be delivered through the NIELIT Digital University platform.

The second stage, Cyber Defender Programme, is an intensive 60-hour offline training designed for select-

ed cadets who qualify through a merit-based screening process. This stage will focus on hands-on training, real-life simulations, and practical exposure to cyber-security tools and techniques, enabling cadets to identify and respond to cyber threats effectively.

The initiative aims to create a pool of trained NCC Cyber Cadets who can contribute to spreading cyber awareness, promoting safe digital practices, and supporting cybersecurity initiatives at the grassroots level.

Woman Maoist killed in Chhattisgarh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kanker (Chhattisgarh)

A woman Maoist carrying a reward of ₹5 lakh was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh’s Kanker district on Monday, police said.

The deceased, identified as Rupri, was an area committee member of the Maoists and is believed to be the last senior Telugu cadre active in Chhattisgarh’s Bastar region, which comprises seven districts, including Kanker, they said.

The face-off comes 12 days after the Government declared Chhattisgarh free of armed Maoists on March 31. Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraaj



P, said the Government has been continuously appealing to Maoists to surrender and avail rehabilitation benefits, leading to a significant number opting to return to the mainstream in recent months.

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Order Order

SC notice to Centre, others on plea concerning MSP



The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea to accord weightage to States' proposal on the exact cost of cultivation while fixing Minimum Support Price (MSP).

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued notices to the Centre and others, including the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, seeking their response on the plea.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners, said the plea raises a very important issue related to the farmers in the country.

The plea has sought direction to the authorities to ensure complete procurement of all notified crops under the MSP calculated on the basis of the exact cost of cultivation.

It has also sought direction to take appropriate steps to ensure complete procurement of crops from all farmers who are desirous of selling their crops at the MSP.

NCLAT adjourns hearing on Vedanta plea in JAL case



The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Monday adjourned its hearing over mining giant Vedanta Group's petitions against the selection of Adani Enterprises' bid for debt-ridden Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL).

The insolvency appellate tribunal adjourned the hearing on account of a change in the composition of the bench, which was hearing the two appeals filed by Vedanta Ltd. The change has been made due to the unavailability of a member of the bench.

NCLAT will decide the date for the next hearing shortly. Vedanta has filed two petitions, challenging the March 17 order by the Allahabad bench of NCLT, which approved Adani Enterprises Ltd's ₹14,535-crore bid to acquire JAL through the insolvency process.

On March 24, NCLAT declined any interim stay on the order passed by the NCLT approving the Adani Group's bid for acquiring JAL.

However, it said the plan would be subject to the outcome of the appeals filed by the Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Group. This interim order by NCLAT was challenged before the Supreme Court, which also declined to grant a stay. However, the apex court had directed that if the monitoring committee planned to take any major policy decision, it should first obtain the Tribunal's sanction.



No changes at Vrindavan's Bankey Bihari temple: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court of India (SC) on Monday made it clear that it would not make "any structural changes" to the present arrangement with regard to religious practices at the famous Bankey Bihari temple in Vrindavan.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi took note of the submissions of senior advocate Shayam Divan and lawyer Tanvi Dubey, and directed that the matter be listed after two weeks to allow the parties to respond to a recently-filed status report.

The top court was hearing a petition filed by the management committee of the Thakur Shree Bankey Bihari Ji Maharaj Temple and Sevayats (priests).

The petitioners have challenged recent administrative decisions taken by a court-appointed High-Powered Committee (HPC) that have allegedly interfered with age-old religious traditions.

Earlier, the court had stayed parts of the Uttar Pradesh Shri Bankey Bihari Ji Temple Trust Ordinance, 2025, and formed the 12-member HPC headed by



retired Allahabad High Court judge Ashok Kumar to oversee the temple's operations. Divan told the court that he was given a status report late on Sunday evening and that he be granted two weeks to respond.

"We are not inclined to make any structural changes to the present arrangement," the CJ said while adjourning the hearing.

Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj said the HPC wants to go in accordance with the court's directions and no adversarial stand will be taken in this case.

The apex court, on December 15, 2025, issued notices on the plea and the status report was filed on Sunday.

The bench also issued a

notice on an application that has raised certain factual and other grounds, which require modifications or clarifications.

The petitioners have raised concerns on how the interpretation of wide powers has been done by the HPC that has passed certain orders touching upon the essential religious rituals of the temple, including a change in the "darshan" timing, closing the Dehri puja ritual, exorbitant charges imposed on Sevayat Goswami's charging for phool bangla service etc.

The challenge in the plea is mainly related to the change in the "darshan" timing of the temple and also the stopping of certain essential religious practices, including the *Dehri puja*.

The petitioners have submitted that the temple has historically followed strict seasonal timings and distinct schedules for summer and winter that are closely intertwined with internal rituals, including the waking and resting of the deity.

It was argued that recent changes in timings, effected pursuant to office memoranda issued in September 2025, have disrupted the essential religious practices at the temple.

Emphasising the temple's unique and sacrosanct nature, the petitioners have explained that there is a unique timing for morning and evening "darshan", rooted in tradition and religious purpose.

The petitioners have also highlighted that the discontinuation of the age-old "Dehri puja", performed exclusively by the Goswamis, is a part of the Guru-Shishya parampara, arguing that its suspension on the ground of crowd management is unfounded since the ritual is performed when the temple is closed to the public and at a limited, specific location.

The bench issued a direction to hear both the application and the main plea after two weeks.

No SC relief to Lalu in land-for-jobs case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a setback to Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Supreme Court on Monday refused to quash a CBI FIR in the land-for-jobs case involving the RJD chief and his family members.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh, however, granted exemption to the 77-year-old former Bihar chief minister from appearance before the trial court during the proceedings.

"We do not say anything about the issue pertaining to the application of Section 17A (of the Prevention of Corruption Act) on whether it is prospective or retrospective. Taking into consideration the facts and the circumstances, liberty is granted to the petitioner to raise the legal issue at the time of the trial," the bench said.

The top court allowed Yadav to raise the issue of the applicability of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act in the case during trial of the case.

Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act provides that no enquiry, inquiry or investigation shall be conducted by a police officer into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant under



Lalu Prasad Yadav

the law without prior approval from the appropriate authority. During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), argued that Section 17A of the Act would be invoked only if the accused was a decision-making authority.

Raju argued that prior approval against Yadav under Section 17A was not required as he was neither the person who took the decision nor the recommending authority.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Yadav, opposed the submission and said that there cannot be any investigation until the authorities get the sanction.

Sibal said the CBI has woken up after nine years to file another chargesheet on the same ground on which the case had been closed.

SC notice to Centre, ECI on plea to implement finger, iris biometric system

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear a plea seeking direction to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to implement finger and iris biometric identification system at polling stations to prevent duplicate voting.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made clear that the prayer sought in the plea can't



be considered for the current state Assembly elections in some States.

"However, whether such a recourse deserves to be followed before the next parliamentary election and/or state assembly elections needs to be examined. Issue notice," the bench said.

The top court sought responses from the Centre, the poll panel and several other states on the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Indian judiciary cannot be confined to buildings: CJI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday said the Indian judiciary of the future cannot remain confined within imposing buildings or constrained by geography.

Speaking at the 4th Ashok Desai Memorial lecture here on the topic "Reimagining Justice: The Indian Judiciary 50 Years Hence", the CJ said the judiciary of the future must transform into a service that is accessible, responsive and seamlessly integrated



into the daily lives of citizens.

"Indian judiciary of the future cannot remain confined within imposing buildings or constrained by geog-

raphy. It must transform into a service that is accessible, responsive and seamlessly integrated into the daily lives of citizens.

Assam Govt moves SC against bail to Pawan Khera

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Assam Government has moved the Supreme Court against the Telangana High Court order granting one-week transit anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case registered against him for levelling allegations against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife.

The petition was filed on Sunday through advocate Shuvodeep Roy and is likely to be taken up for hearing this week. On April 10, the High Court granted one-week transit anticipatory bail to Khera. The High Court gave him a week's time to file an application before the court concerned and granted him relief with certain conditions.

"Without expressing any opinion



on the merits of the case, this court is of the view that the petitioner has made out a case for grant of limited transit anticipatory bail, as his apprehension of arrest appears to be rea-

sonable and supported by material on record," the High Court had said in its order.

The conditions were that the petitioner shall be released on bail in the event of arrest on his executing a personal bond for ₹one lakh with two sureties for the like sum each, cooperate with the investigation and make himself available for interrogation as and when required by the Investigating Officer and that he shall not leave the country without prior permission of the competent Court.

The conditions further include that the petitioner shall, within the stipulated period, approach the competent jurisdictional court in Assam and seek appropriate relief and he, being a public figure, shall exercise restraint in making any further public statements in relation

to the subject matter of the present case, which may prejudice the investigation, the order said. The Congress leader on April 5 had alleged that the Assam CM's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, has multiple passports and foreign property, which were not declared in the chief minister's election affidavit for the April 9 Assembly polls in that State.

The case against Khera was registered at the Guwahati Crime Branch Police Station under several sections of the BNS, including 175 (false statement in connection with an election), 35 (Right of private defence of the body and of property) and 318 (cheating). Khera, who approached the High Court on April 7, showed his residential address in Hyderabad. He had requested the High Court to release him on bail in the event of his arrest.

Was almost declared corrupt by you, won't get justice: Kejriwal tells Justice Sharma, seeking her recusal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday told Delhi High Court judge Swarana Kanta Sharma that her earlier decisions in the liquor policy cases "almost declared" him guilty and corrupt, and that he apprehends he would not get justice if she continues to hear CBI's plea against his discharge.

Appearing before Justice Sharma to argue his application seeking her to withdraw from the case, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener contended that under the law on recusal, the question is not of a judge's integrity or uprightness, but of "reasonable bias" in the mind of the litigant.

Kejriwal claimed that except for the CBI's petition and one other case involving a political opponent of the BJP, no other case before Justice Sharma was being heard at the same "speed" and there was a "trend" of the court "endorsing" the



AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal arrives at the Delhi High Court for a hearing in a case related to the excise policy in New Delhi on Monday

investigating agencies' arguments. He submitted that on the first day of the hearing on March 9, the court "neutralised" the discharge order, which was passed by the trial judge after day-to-day arguments of over three months, by passing a "sweeping, ex parte order" in haste in violation of principles of natural justice.

On February 27, the trial court discharged Kejriwal, Sisodia and 21 others and pulled up the CBI, saying its

case was wholly unable to survive judicial scrutiny and stood discredited in its entirety.

On March 9, Justice Sharma issued notice to all 23 accused on CBI's plea against their discharge, saying certain observations and findings of the trial court at the stage of framing of charges *prima facie* appeared erroneous and needed consideration.

She also stayed the trial court's recommendation on

the initiation of departmental action against the CBI's investigating officer in the liquor policy case.

Kejriwal said that Justice Sharma had earlier denied relief to him on his petition challenging his arrest, as well as bail pleas by other accused, including Manish Sisodia and K Kavitha, and also made "strong and conclusive" findings.

He also objected to Justice Sharma attending four functions organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad. He contended that being an ideological opponent of the BJP and RSS, she apprehended that the judge "sympathised" with their ideology and that he would not receive justice.

As Justice Sharma asked Kejriwal if she had made any ideological or political statements in the events, the AAP chief said her attendance was enough.

Kejriwal also alleged that Justice Sharma has a conflict of interest in the case.

He concluded arguments on his recusal application.

SC reserves key SCAORA posts for women lawyers in upcoming polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday reserved the posts of secretary, joint treasurer and two executive positions for women lawyers in the upcoming elections of the Supreme Court Advocates-On-Record Association (SCAORA).

The top court invoked Article 142 of the Constitution to pass the order. This provision empowers the apex court to pass any decree or order necessary to provide "complete justice" in any pending case.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi was hearing a petition filed by advocate-on-record Vivya Nagpal. The plea sought the court's direction to mandate at least 33 per cent reservation for women in the executive body of the SCAORA and use its power under Article 142 of the Constitution to allow the petition. It also challenged an election notice issued on April 8 for the 2026-2028 term of the association and contended that it provides no reservation for women candidates.

The petitioner had sought to quash the notification for lacking such reservation, arguing it violated fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution and perpetuates sys-



temic exclusion of women from leadership roles in the body.

According to the plea, the association, comprising around 3,000 advocates-on-record who have exclusive rights to file and act in cases before the apex court, has historically seen negligible representation of women in office-bearer positions, with the current executive committee being all-male.

Seeking urgent relief, the petitioner also filed an application for an interim stay on the election process or, alter-

natively, a direction to conduct elections with 33 per cent reservation for women across executive and office-bearer posts.

The top court, in December 2023, had ordered that 30 per cent representation in State bar councils be provided to women lawyers.

To address contingencies where an insufficient number of women are elected, the bench had allowed for a "co-option" mechanism to fill up to 10 per cent of those seats.

Editor's
TAKE

The unfinished
promise of equality

As India commemorates the 135th birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar, the moment calls for more than homage – it demands introspection and a resolve to realise his dream

“Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy”; these were the prophetic words of BR Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. As India marks his 135th birth anniversary, his dream largely remains unfulfilled. After nearly eighty years of independence, India is still fragmented and layered, where caste hierarchies have transformed but not disappeared. Castes have taken on political and social dimensions and have consolidated their presence as identities that define the present-day political scenario of the country. Political parties, for their part, have often supported caste structures rather than making concerted efforts to dismantle them-distributing tickets on the basis of caste, allocating influential positions to appease dominant groups, and even openly declaring their intent to support the aspirations of the castes that back them.

To add yet another layer of complexity, religious and regional identities have grown increasingly pronounced. Vote-bank politics and the polarisation of masses along these lines have only worsened the situation. This is not to say that Ambedkar's dream has faded; it has not-only that it currently finds few committed takers, as electoral gains and power politics cloud the vision of political actors.

That said, despite these challenges, the Constitution of India remains the anchor of Indian democracy and has withstood the vagaries of time. Ambedkar consistently maintained that true democracy would not be possible without equality. In a society that does not honour individual dignity and tolerates deep divisions, democracy will always remain fragile. While the Constitution provides a legal framework, the principle of equality must permeate society. It guarantees fundamental rights, abolishes untouchability, and lays the groundwork for advancing equality.

The social system is changing, but the pace remains slow. Ironically, contemporary politics has not made sustained efforts to dismantle entrenched inequalities. More than seven decades on, there has certainly been progress, yet much remains to be done. India has achieved significant advances across sectors, but social inequalities persist. Hierarchies, discrimination, and exclusion continue to act as barriers to national progress. There have been some efforts to bring about change. Government initiatives aimed at social justice and inclusion-such as scholarships for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, digital literacy programmes, skill development missions, and housing schemes-reflect attempts to expand opportunities. Yet, the true tribute to Ambedkar must be measured in outcomes-whether the most marginalised experience a genuine sense of belonging and empowerment. Ambedkar did not seek charity for the oppressed; he demanded justice. On his 135th anniversary, the challenge is to move beyond ritual remembrance and undertake the unfinished task of social transformation. Only then can India truly fulfil Ambedkar's vision – a nation where democracy is rooted in equality and shared dignity.



Fraternity: The sustainer of democratic life

India remembers BR Ambedkar as the architect of the Indian Constitution and champion of social justice for the oppressed. He is deservedly celebrated for securing rights, advancing social justice and giving institutional shape to democracy



On the birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar, it is worth recalling that he did not see democracy as self-sustaining. He understood that its sustenance depended on the cultivation of a shared social order. The Constitution carries this vision forward, but its fulfilment remains an ongoing task. India remembers BR Ambedkar as the architect of the Indian Constitution and champion of social justice for the oppressed. He is deservedly celebrated for securing rights, advancing social justice and giving institutional shape to democracy.

Yet, this recognition captures only part of his intellectual vision. At the heart of Ambedkar's thought lay a deeper concern-fraternity. Not as a moral afterthought, but as the condition that sustains a harmonious society. It is this central idea that finds expression in the Constitution of India. Properly understood, the Constitution is not merely a framework of rights; it is a design that seeks to promote fraternity, because without it the democratic republic cannot endure. No constitutional arrangement, however well-crafted, can hold if society remains divided in its everyday life. Ambedkar's understanding of democracy went far beyond electoral processes or institutional design. He described it as a "mode of associated living", grounded in how individuals relate to one another. Political equality, he warned, could coexist with deep social and economic inequalities. Where such divisions persist, democracy risks becoming formal-stable in structure but fragile in substance. Fraternity addresses this contradiction. It enables individuals to recognise one another as members of a shared community, not merely as bearers of rights. Without such recognition, liberty tends to concentrate and equality remains confined to constitutional text. Fraternity, in this sense, is not an adjunct to democracy; it is the condition that allows democratic life to function in practice.

The persistence of social divisions in India underscores the urgency of this idea. A society marked by caste hierarchies, religious mistrust, linguistic divisions and widening economic inequality struggles to sustain a sense of common belonging. Individuals often share the same political framework while remaining separated in their lived experiences-whether in patterns of settlement, education or everyday social interaction. This distance is not merely structural; it is experienced in the ordinary routines of life, where interaction across social boundaries remains limited. For Ambedkar, caste represented the most enduring obstacle. It did not merely



ON THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BR AMBEDKAR, IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT HE DID NOT SEE DEMOCRACY AS SELF-SUSTAINING. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ITS SUSTENANCE DEPENDED ON THE CULTIVATION OF A SHARED SOCIAL ORDER. THE CONSTITUTION CARRIES THIS VISION FORWARD, BUT ITS FULFILMENT REMAINS AN ONGOING TASK

produce inequality; it structured social relations in ways that prevented mutual recognition. His call for the annihilation of caste was therefore not only a demand for justice, but a necessary step towards fraternity. Without addressing such structures, the possibility of a cohesive and harmonious society remains limited. Fraternity is explicitly affirmed in the Preamble of the Constitution of India. Yet, its significance lies not only in this declaration, but in how it shapes the constitutional scheme. The Constitution does not treat fraternity as a separate objective; it embeds it within a framework of rights and principles that actively reshape social relations.

This design reflects a clear insight: fraternity cannot be legislated directly. It must be cultivated through conditions that enable individuals to relate to one another as equals. The Constitution therefore operates indirectly-by removing barriers, reducing distance and fostering shared spaces. In doing so, it carries forward Ambedkar's central idea into institutional form. The Right to Equality is central to this design. By prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to opportunities, it seeks to dismantle the formal hierarchies that structure social life. These provisions do more than secure individual rights; they alter the terms on which individuals relate to one another.

As divisions of caste, religion and status are reduced, the basis for mutual recognition expands. Equality does not by itself produce fraternity, but it is its necessary starting condition. Without equality, fraternity cannot take root; with it, the ground is prepared for its growth.

The Directive Principles, particularly Article 39 of the Indian Constitution, seek to address economic inequality, which is another impediment to fraternity. These provisions are often understood in terms of welfare or economic justice. Yet, they also serve a broader constitutional purpose. A society marked by stark material inequality cannot sustain a shared sense of community. By reducing such disparities, the Constitution attempts to create the material conditions necessary for social harmony.

Fraternity is ultimately shaped through lived experience. It emerges not from abstract commitment, but from sustained interaction across social boundaries. The right to education under Article 21A of the Constitution, read with the inclusionary mandate of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act, reflects this understanding.

By requiring private schools to admit children from disadvantaged backgrounds, this framework creates shared spaces where individuals from different social and economic contexts can interact from an early age. Such interaction has the potential to weaken inherited divisions and foster a sense of common belonging.

This remains one of the few institutional mechanisms that directly advances the constitutional project of fraternity. Strengthening such provisions is therefore not only a matter of educational policy, but a step towards realising Ambedkar's vision of a just society.

The Constitution's commitment to secularism reinforces this design. It goes beyond State neutrality and relies on mutual respect across religious differences. Likewise, reducing inequality requires a shared sense of community. In both cases, law can create frameworks, but their success depends on fraternity.

Taken together, these elements reveal a coherent constitutional logic. Different provisions address different forms of division-legal, economic and social-but converge in promoting the conditions necessary for a democratic society.

The existence of these constitutional provisions does not guarantee their full realisation. Social divisions persist and, in some contexts, deepen.

Equality may be affirmed in law, yet remain uneven in practice. Shared institutions exist, but patterns of separation linger in everyday life.

This gap highlights the limits of constitutional design. The Constitution can promote fraternity, but it cannot ensure it. Fraternity requires continuous social effort – it must be nurtured through institutions, reinforced through policy and sustained through everyday interaction. In this context, greater attention to provisions that foster shared experience becomes essential. Measures such as the inclusionary framework in education assume particular importance. They represent attempts to move beyond formal equality towards lived equality, and thereby towards fraternity.

To read the Constitution through the lens of fraternity is to recover the core of Ambedkar's thought. His project was not limited to securing rights or correcting injustice. It was directed at creating a society capable of sustaining democratic life through relations of mutual recognition and respect. Fraternity, in this sense, is not an abstract ideal placed alongside democracy, secularism or welfare. It is the condition that allows these values to endure. The Constitution embodies this insight by seeking to promote fraternity through its design. Without fraternity, the Constitution may endure in form – but the democratic republic cannot endure in substance.

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SINCE 1865

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PIC TALK



People cover themselves on a hot day during the summer season in New Delhi. PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

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US-IRAN TALKS SIGNAL FRAGILE
HOPE FOR PEACE

Appropos of 'Diplomacy fails to deliver US-Iran deal' (April 13), the recent talks between the United States and Iran, though inconclusive, represent an important step towards de-escalation in an increasingly volatile West Asian region. The very fact that senior officials, led by JD Vance, engaged in direct dialogue after decades reflects a shared recognition that prolonged conflict serves no one's interests.

However, as rightly highlighted, the trust deficit remains the most significant obstacle. Longstanding tensions over Iran's nuclear programme, concerns regarding the security of the Strait of Hormuz, and Israel's ongoing military actions in Lebanon continue to impede meaningful progress. These issues are deeply interconnected and require careful, sustained engagement rather than

episodic negotiations. In such a fragile environment, even a temporary ceasefire provides a vital window of opportunity. It allows space for diplomacy to take root and for stakeholders to explore avenues of compromise. Squandering such moments would only deepen instability and prolong uncertainty in the region. The international community must therefore play a more proactive role in encouraging dialogue and ensuring restraint from all sides. Confidence-building measures, greater transparency, and respect for mutual concerns are essential to rebuild trust. Peace cannot be achieved overnight, but sustained diplomacy, patience, and political will can gradually bridge divides and prevent further escalation.

VANDANA | CHANDIGARH

Please send your letter to the info@dailypioneer.com. In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.

The illusion of peace amid ongoing conflict



ASHA IYER
KUMAR

2ND OPINION

We are into the second day of the so-called truce in the Middle East, touted as victory by all who lobbed bombs into the other man's territory with impunity and disregard for more than a month. On Wednesday – Trump's "big day for world peace" – hundreds were slaughtered and wounded in Lebanon, and just before I started writing this column, I heard three explosions behind me, echoing from interceptions in some part of the city.

Two nights ago, when the world was pushed to the brink, with no clue about what the morning would bring, when alarm clocks were set to the deadline in these parts and people sprang up to read the breaking news, one could at once hear a collective sigh of relief from every window across the globe. But two days later, what was perceived to have been achieved seems more illusory, and I am

forced to redefine the lexicons involved: 'Truce' and 'cease-fire' do not necessarily mean peace.

Whoever believes this is a pivotal point in the proceedings that only got more and more complicated with each passing day has to be delusional. And at this moment, the world probably chooses to be so, because respite and resolution often depend on how you respond to a situation than how the situation itself unfolds. The markets rallied instantly and oil prices dipped. We boosted ourselves with the thought that the worst is over now, and life will jig back to normalcy in a jiffy - as soon as the word 'ceasefire' rang out from the portals of the White House. As if, in two weeks, a blustering world leader out to pliffer other nations' wealth, his crony whose dictionary doesn't contain the word 'truce', a headline theocratic regime that refuses to give up, and its regional proxies will all sit down at a banquet and declare: let's be friends and get on with life and business.

Nothing that has happened in the past two days points at a resolution that will guarantee lasting peace. This is not a nihilistic prophecy. It is what a rational mind can conclude considering how divergent the demands on either side are, how all stakeholders and the impacted parties in the Gulf region are excluded from the 'closed door' talks, how there has been blatant violation of the promise to hold fire and how the language itself has

changed - Lebanon is not included in the deal, and so, Israel retains the power to pound them with any device of ruin.

"Truce" has become a hollow word-offering peace selectively while violence continues elsewhere. Peace cannot be dispensed in pieces. It cannot arrive in barrages of bombs. It cannot happen overnight with overblown claims of victory. What we now have is an uneasy calm punctured by sporadic attacks continuing in the Gulf countries, which we are persuading ourselves to believe as impending peace. Because the mind wants reassurance, even if it is chimerical and fleeting.

For now, there is cautious optimism that may hold for a short while-a brief psychological relief that something is in the works. Can we expect a viable outcome? Will it be worth the paper it is written on? Given the direction in which the ceasefire has gone, the dominant sentiment is one of scepticism.

It is a war that began without clear-cut objectives and spiralled out of control, leaving the world confused by its shifting narratives. Nothing concrete has been accomplished, despite repeated assertions. How this predicament will be resolved remains uncertain. What, then, was this war about-power, strategy, or simply destruction? The answer remains unclear.

The writer is a Dubai-based author, columnist and children's writing coach

The Pioneer
SINCE 1865

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A voice that lives forever

In the demise of Asha Bhosle, the nation has lost its melody queen, a musical legend whose magical voice will live in our hearts forever.

An inborn talent, Asha Tai remained unparalleled from the 1940s through a career spanning over seven decades, during which she reigned supreme in the world of music.

The magic of her voice cannot be described in words; it can only be felt. Whether devotional songs, romantic melodies, qawwalis, cabaret numbers, classical pieces, or lively disco tracks, she sang every genre with remarkable ease and elegance. Each song she rendered became distinctive and unforgettable.

With over 12,000 songs in numerous languages, she mesmerised generations of listeners. Honoured with the Padma Vibhushan and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, along with National and Filmfare Awards, her contributions remain unparalleled.

Her iconic songs will forever echo in the hearts of music lovers worldwide. Though she is no longer with us, her timeless voice will continue to inspire, comfort, and enchant generations to come. Her legacy endures beyond time and memory.

M PRADYU | KANNUR

Bureaucracy needs real change

Referring to the discussion on civil services remuneration, merely increasing salaries through successive pay commissions cannot transform the entrenched work culture within the bureaucracy. The persistent nine-to-five mindset, marked by complacency and limited accountability, continues to hinder efficiency and responsiveness.

In earlier times, administrators were known for discipline and rigour, often working under strict oversight. Today, however, a decline in work standards is evident, with limited incentives for performance and little consequence for inefficiency. Salary hikes alone cannot instil diligence or commitment. Even in advanced democracies like the United States, bureaucratic privileges have been questioned, and reforms have been attempted to improve governance outcomes. These developments highlight the need for structural and attitudinal changes rather than financial incentives alone. In India, respect for bureaucracy is reflected in generous pay revisions, but without accountability and reform, this risks perpetuating inefficiency. Lateral entry and private-sector expertise could bring fresh perspectives, yet institutional resistance remains strong.

R NARAYANAN | NAVI MUMBAI

Remembering Ambedkar's enduring legacy

Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti, observed on April 14, commemorates the birth of B. R. Ambedkar, a visionary who transformed India's social and constitutional landscape. More than a ceremonial occasion, it is a time to reflect on his enduring commitment to justice, dignity, and equality. Born in 1891 into a marginalised community, he faced systemic discrimination from an early age, yet rose through education and determination to become one of India's foremost intellectuals and reformers.

His academic journey took him to institutions such as Columbia University and the London School of Economics, where he developed ideas that would later shape modern India. As the principal architect of the Constitution, he ensured the inclusion of fundamental rights, legal safeguards against discrimination, and a framework aimed at securing social justice.

Ambedkar believed democracy must rest on liberty, equality, and fraternity, extending beyond political structures into everyday life. Honouring his legacy requires more than remembrance; it demands active commitment to his ideals-promoting education, ensuring equality, and building a society grounded in dignity, justice, and inclusive progress for all.

JUBEL D'CRUZ | MUMBAI

Evolving dynamics: A new chapter for the CAPF cadre

The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 has reopened deep fault lines — over stalled careers, denied parity, and what many see as an attempt to override a binding Supreme Court mandate — leaving thousands at the core of India’s internal security questioning their place in the system they serve

FIRST
Column



JATINDER
PAL SINGH

The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill 2026, introduced in the Rajya Sabha on March 25, cleared on April 1, amid opposition walkouts, and approved by voice vote in the Lok Sabha on April 2, received Presidential assent on April 9, CRPF Valour Day.

This has caused disillusionment among the CAPF officers’ executive cadre.

While public discourse has largely narrowed to IPS deputation quotas, the cadre’s deeper grievances centre on non-implementation of OGAS status, resulting in severe career stagnation, repeated court battles even for entitled benefits, absence of a meaningful voice in policy, and a growing feeling of institutional orphanhood.

Often, the government bundles unrelated allowances, granting one in lieu of another. Even when vacancies existed at higher ranks, eligible cadre officers were denied promotions and had to seek relief through prolonged court litigation.

The Bill is perceived as a mechanism to overturn the Supreme Court’s 2025 mandate. The most controversial element is Clause 3’s sweeping “notwithstanding” provision, which overrides other laws, judgments, or orders and empowers the Central Government to frame rules on these matters. It codifies IPS deputation quotas: 50 per cent IG posts, at least 67 per cent of Additional Director General (ADG) posts, and 100 per cent of Special DG and Director General (DG) posts to be filled exclusively by IPS officers on deputation.

The government argues this ensures Centre-State coordination and operational synergy, especially when CAPFs function in aid of state police. The Bill notably drops the earlier 20 per cent IPS quota at DIG level while firmly locking in dominance at higher echelons.

Judicial Mandate vs Legislative Reality

In the landmark judgment of 23 May 2025 in Sanjay Prakash & Ors vs Union of India, the Supreme Court explicitly recognised the Group A executive cadre of the CAPFs as an Organised Group ‘A’ Service (OGAS) “for all



MANY CADRE OFFICERS WHO PREVIOUSLY CHAMPIONED THE GOVERNMENT’S NARRATIVE NOW VIEW THE BILL AS A DEFINITIVE BREACH OF TRUST, LEADING THEM TO REASSESS AND SWITCH THEIR POLITICAL PREFERENCES

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 opinion-columnist-jatinder-pal-singh-2a52b235a

purposes”, entitling them to parity with other central organised services which enjoy OGAS benefits seamlessly; CAPFs do not. The Court directed a comprehensive cadre review within six months, amendments to recruitment and service rules in consultation with cadre representatives, and progressive reduction of IPS deputation up to IG level over two years to restore morale. The government’s review petition was dismissed on October 28, 2025, making the order final and binding. Contempt petitions for non-compliance remain pending.

Although CAPFs historically qualified as an organised service even before the Sixth Pay Commission, and partial NFFU was extended following earlier rulings, full structured career progression and complete Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU) as a safeguard against stagnation have remained diluted.

In sharp contrast, the Railway Protection Force (RPF), through the same litigation, has received full OGAS implementation with revised service rules, timely cadre management, and all consequential benefits. The divergent approach by the Ministry of Home Affairs versus the Ministry of Railways has reinforced perceptions of selective treatment and inherent conflict of interest.

Severe stagnation and the human cost

Roughly 13,000 Group A cadre officers form the operational backbone in CAPFs, yet face extreme bottlenecks. Assistant

Commandants are waiting for their first promotion even after putting in 15-16 years of service. This stands in glaring contrast to IPS, where an officer in the same time span reaches the post of DIG, and in state police a DSP can realistically expect promotion to SP within 8-12 years with further timely advancement. A single IPS deputation at senior levels blocks a dozen or so promotions in the chain below.

CAPF officers endure the harshest operational conditions-at high altitudes, on borders, in dense forests, and in repeated deployments-yet see no comparable entitled benefits. Supporting cadres such as the medical wing enjoy faster time-scale promotions up to Commandant, distorting hierarchy and professional respect in a uniformed force. Parliamentary panels have repeatedly flagged this stagnation as a serious threat to operational effectiveness, calling for urgent cadre reviews that have long remained pending.

Institutional orphanhood: No voice in policy

Cadre officers shoulder the heaviest national security burdens while having virtually no say in policy formulation, cadre reviews, or service rules that directly govern their careers. The dual control exercised by the Ministry of Home Affairs creates an inherent bias. Unlike IPS officers and state police forces, CAPF cadre officers are systematically denied robust

associations to advocate their interests-a striking irony in which commanders enjoy advocacy rights but withhold them from those under their command. This forces constant reliance on courts for routine matters, deepening the perception of second-class status within their own forces.

The “coordination” argument advanced by supporters is challenged by four decades of ground evidence: cadre IGs have successfully commanded their forces in operational areas, delivering comparable or superior results without disruption in liaison with state or civil administration. Softer or non-operational sectors are often assigned to deputationists for convenience. Limited and time-bound deputations could address genuine coordination needs without imposing a permanent glass ceiling.

The specialised operational ethos developed through ground-up service in extreme terrains remains irreplaceable.

Voices from retired officers

Retired CRPF IG KK Sharma, responding to a retired IPS officer, recalled that stalwarts like KF Rustamji, VG Kanetkar, and KPS. Gill themselves advocated entrusting higher leadership roles to senior CAPF officers once they gained experience. He described the issue as one of justice and moral entitlement after decades of IPS-led management,

Social consciousness is Ambedkar’s mantra for achieving social equality



ARVIND P
BHANU

On the occasion of the 135th birth anniversary of the great Bhimrao Ambedkar, whose name instantly evokes thoughts of social equality, we remember his contributions to igniting social change through a legal rights-driven mechanism. His tireless efforts and unwavering dedication paved the way for countless reforms that continue to inspire generations. Today, we honour his legacy by reaffirming our commitment to justice and human dignity for all.

Ambedkar advocated legal rights to eliminate inequality and discrimination. He believed that such rights must be accompanied by “social consciousness, without which equality cannot be achieved”. He devoted his entire life to this cause, viewing social consciousness as the fundamental mantra of social equality. His efforts culminated in drafting the Indian Constitution, which enshrines the principles of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all citizens. His vision extended beyond law; he championed education and economic empowerment as essential tools to uplift marginalised communities. Through his unceasing struggle, he laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and democratic society. Even today, his teachings inspire movements for social reform and human rights across India and beyond.

Vision of a casteless society

Ambedkar envisioned a casteless society where everyone enjoys equal rights and opportunities. He drafted the Indian Constitution, embedding principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. He prioritised equality before liberty, placing Articles 14-18 (fundamental rights to equality) before liberty rights such as Articles 19 and 21 in Part III of the Constitution. By abolishing untouchability and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of caste, the Constitution aimed to dismantle centuries-old social hierarchies. Ambedkar believed that social reform was essential for true democracy and that legal safeguards must accompany social change. His vision sought to create an inclusive India where all individuals could realise their full potential without the barriers of caste-based discrimination.

Roots of inequality

According to Ambedkar, India’s social and economic inequalities stem from the caste system. Born into a Dalit family, he faced discrimination from childhood, which strengthened his resolve to fight for the oppressed. His father’s lesson “edu-



cation makes everything possible”— ignited his lifelong faith in learning. Overcoming countless barriers, he earned degrees from Columbia University and the London School of Economics, laying the foundation for his advocacy. Ambedkar argued that true social reform required not only legal changes but also a deep transformation of societal attitudes. His work emphasised the need for political representation and economic empowerment of marginalised communities to achieve genuine equality.

Twofold freedom

As a philosopher and social reformer, Ambedkar argued for twofold freedom: first, freedom from shackles (liberation from social restrictions and inequalities), and second, freedom to act without discrimination (the capacity to pursue one’s goals and aspirations). He saw the caste system as restricting these freedoms for lower castes, viewing social consciousness as a powerful tool for achieving social justice through awareness of inequalities. Ambedkar believed that true emancipation required both the removal of systemic barriers and the empowerment of individuals to participate fully in society. He emphasised education and legal reforms as essential mechanisms to

dismantle oppressive structures and promote equal rights. Ultimately, his vision of twofold freedom was foundational in shaping modern democratic ideals and policies aimed at creating an inclusive and equitable social order.

Individual consciousness vs social awakening

People in his time had consciousness, but it was too feeble and individualistic to become truly social. Two examples illustrate this: his Marathi Brahmin teacher, Keshav Ambedkar, gave him the surname “Ambedkar” for social protection, and another Brahmin teacher, Dada Keluskar, recognised his talent and took him to Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III for funding his foreign education. These were acts of personal consciousness. Ambedkar transformed personal consciousness into social consciousness through legal mechanisms. He realised that individual advancement, while important, could not dismantle systemic oppression without collective action and structural reforms. Ultimately, his efforts laid the groundwork for a broader social awakening that challenged entrenched caste hierarchies and fought for equal rights across society.

Key contributions

His efforts inspired countless people to challenge social norms and discrimination. His negotiation skills secured the 1932 Poona Pact, reserving seats for Dalits in legislative bodies-a milestone for marginalised communities’ political representation. As Chairman of the Constitution’s Drafting Committee, he ensured provisions for social justice, equality, and the abolition of untouchability. He championed the cause of education for all, advocating policies that promoted access to schooling for disadvantaged groups. Additionally, he played a pivotal role in formulating laws that protected labour rights and improved working conditions across India. Through his writings and speeches, he raised awareness about caste-based inequalities and mobilised public support for progressive social reforms.

Beyond dalits: Universal equality

It would be unfair to say Ambedkar worked only for Dalits. He championed equality, liberty, justice, and fraternity for all deprived classes, with equal emphasis on women’s rights. The Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) reflected his vision for women’s equality, liberty, and justice. Before his death in 1956, he introduced the Hindu Code Bill, securing laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, and Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act. His efforts laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society, challenging deeply entrenched social hierarchies and advocating legal reforms that aimed to protect the marginalised across caste, gender, and class lines. Ambedkar’s legacy continues to inspire movements for social justice and equality in contemporary India and beyond.

Ambedkar and Gandhi

History notes ideological differences between Ambedkar and Gandhi. Ambedkar did not participate in the freedom struggle (Gandhi’s domain), but fought for equality, eradication of discrimination, and socio-economic justice. He believed liberty without equality cannot yield justice-a truth, since equality and liberty complement each other. Even expelling the British for self-rule without social equality would barely differ from subjugation. Gandhi, on the other hand, prioritised spiritual and moral awakening through non-violent resistance, emphasising unity but favouring personal reform over structural change. Though both approaches mattered, Ambedkar’s assertion of “social consciousness” uniquely addresses the call for structural transformation to achieve a just society.

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Lebanon’s tragic transformation



BALBIR
PUNJ

As the Middle East teeters on the edge between fragile peace and the looming threat of devastating war, Lebanon — a once thriving beacon of modernity and prosperity-frequently makes headlines for all the wrong reasons. Here lies a compelling story that highlights how demographics can ultimately shape a nation’s destiny.

The country’s decline from the “Paris of the Middle East” to a scene of repeated death and destruction is not only a regional tragedy but also a warning to vulnerable civilisations. Recent events, including Israel’s increased strikes against Hezbollah during the ongoing Gulf crisis-one of which reportedly killed over 300 people-have once again brought global focus to a nation that once symbolised cultural elegance, economic strength, and diverse harmony.

To understand the gravity of Lebanon’s current situation, one must look back at its history. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Lebanon was recognised for its progressive character within the Arab world. Beirut was not just metaphorically but genuinely the “Paris of the Middle East” — a centre of intellectual debate, artistic achievement, and cosmopolitan life. Its universities drew students from across the Arab region, its banking sector matched international standards, and its society represented a unique blend of tradition and liberalism. All that is history.

Beneath this veneer of prosperity lay structural weaknesses. Lebanon’s political architecture was based on a fragile demographic balance, institutionalised through a confessional system that distributed power along religious lines. The presidency was held by a Maronite Christian, the premiership by a Sunni Muslim, and the speakership of Parliament by a Shia Muslim.

This arrangement was a breakthrough, functioning smoothly while the demographic balance remained steady. But as conditions shifted, it collapsed, plunging the country into the chaos we see today. Warning: systems built on such patchwork solutions are destined to fail in the long run.

Over the decades, differential fertility rates, particularly among Shia Muslims, coupled with sustained emigration of Christians, altered Lebanon’s demographic composition. What was once a Christian-majority state gradually transformed into a Muslim-majority society. This shift was not merely numerical; it fundamentally eroded the legitimacy of the existing power-sharing framework.

The consequences were both immediate and catastrophic. The influx of Palestinian refugees in



the 1970s-welcomed under humanitarian impulses-introduced new fault lines. Jihadi elements embedded within refugee populations brought with them ideologies and conflicts that Lebanon was ill-prepared to absorb. By 1975, the nation was engulfed in a brutal civil war that lasted fifteen years, leaving deep scars on its social and political fabric.

The rise of Hezbollah and other jihadi organisations further entrenched instability. What began as a struggle for political representation increasingly morphed into armed radicalism. International reports have, in recent years, described Lebanon as a sanctuary for various terrorist groups, underscoring the extent to which the state’s sovereignty has been compromised.

Lebanon’s story underscores a sobering reality: when even a fraction of a society succumbs to radical extremism, the silent majority-however peace-loving-risks becoming irrelevant. Institutions weaken, governance falters, and the very identity of the nation is redefined by forces antithetical to its founding ethos.

This transformation is neither ancient nor abstract; it has unfolded within living memory. The Lebanon of today stands in stark contrast to the Lebanon of just a few decades ago. History does not merely recount; it warns.

It is, therefore, imperative for nations, particularly those with diverse and pluralistic societies, to draw lessons from this trajectory. Vigilance against destabilising forces-whether demographic, ideological, or geopolitical — is not an act of intolerance but of preservation.

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REGRESS/PROGRESS

Three insights stand out from the latest Oxfam analysis of tax-related recommendations by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the various nations. The first is that in the past few years, India received the highest number of the so-called ‘regressive’ inputs. According to a media report, of nearly 300 such proposals issued to more than 40 nations, India accounted for 126, or 44 per cent. This sounds quite unbelievable, and implies that despite lauding India on various fronts, the IMF believes that the nation’s tax system needs several changes to evolve a stable and uniform system. Indeed, it thinks that the Indian tax system is highly uneven and fragmented, and the regressive policies will lead to more uniformity, and expand the tax base. The fact is that there are huge sections of people, firms, and institutions that do not pay, or under-pay, taxes for several social, economic, and political reasons. The measures to expand and enhance the base were only partially successful, which is evident from what experts contend.

However, the flip side of regressive, or uniform taxation, especially in low- and middle-income nations like India, is that these are “likely to exacerbate inequality in these countries, by placing the bulk of the tax burden on middle- and low-income people while leaving the wealthiest unscathed.,” states the Oxfam report. As taxes become uniform, and the focus is to stretch them across sections, rather than force the wealthy to pay more, those who do not pay because of low incomes get dragged into the tax net. In the past, India’s measures to link PAN with bank accounts, and Aadhar, or nudge people for digital payments, which can be tracked and monitored, and impose GST have expanded the tax base, claims that are confidently and proudly espoused by the policy-makers. But, in effect, some of these regressive policies put more burden on the lower-income groups, compared to the rich and wealthy. Oxfam feels this is unfair in an environment where the wealth of the wealthiest across the globe surged by 81 per cent since 2020.

India is not alone. According to Oxfam, regressive tax proposals are regularly imposed on the low- and middle-income nations by the IMF. Of the 1,049 recommendations to 125 nations that were examined, 59 per cent of the tax advice to the above nations were regressive. In comparison, 52 per cent of them to the high-income nations were progressive. Indeed, these countries did not receive a single regressive recommendation, according to a media report. “A progressive tax system ensures that those who have higher income, and more wealth pay proportionally more taxes than those who have less,” states the Oxfam report. The proposals to South Asian nations were “by far the most regressive,” followed by those suggested for Latin America, and the Caribbeans, and sub-Saharan Africa. In Chile, for example, the IMF proposed higher tax rates for low- and middle-income brackets, and to leave the tax rates for the rich untouched. In Nigeria, where a third lives in poverty, it wanted a higher value-added tax. In Hungary, it did the unexpected, and advised against a windfall tax on energy firms, something that everyone now wants to be imposed across the globe.

Taxing the wealthy was low on priority, according to Oxfam. Of the 1,049 proposals, a mere 30, or three per cent, pertained to net wealth taxes, and tax on income from wealth like capital gains. Rich nations like the US, the UK, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, and Netherlands got the highest progressive inputs. Surprisingly, such nations included China, Angola, Botswana, and Kazakhstan. In New Zealand, the IMF felt that the corporate tax was too high “compared to peer advanced economies,” and wanted it to be lower. In Sweden, it wanted lower taxes on ‘deferred capital gains’ to address ‘distortions in the housing market.’ In the Philippines, the IMF wanted to rationalise exemptions in value-added tax. Hence, according to Oxfam, there was the use of “double standard” as the IMF gave progressive advice to wealthy nations, and regressive ones elsewhere. “The Fund may provide equally progressive tax advice to all members, or admit its commitment to tackling inequality is merely rhetorical,” said Kate Donald, head, Oxfam. This calls into question the “evenhandedness it holds as a core principle.”

Hence, Oxfam’s advice to the IMF is to “systematically place inequality at the heart of all fiscal advice,” with a default to adhere to revenue-raising policies that ‘enhance the progressivity of national tax systems.’ The over-reliance on consumption taxes needs to be discouraged, and so does on the other regressive measures that over-burden the poor. The idea is to significantly broaden the proposals to further tax high net-worth individuals, as well as wealth, which is at the heart of the inequality debate across the globe. The need is to curb tax evasion, and avoidance, which are practiced by the rich, and not to embrace the poor in the tax net, given their inability to pay. There should be some threshold limits for the wealthy to pay more, as there should be some floor limits for the poor not to pay taxes, or get exemptions, like India’s policy to have zero tax on personal income up to ₹12,00,000 a year.

The Pioneer

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BUSINESS

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Is it obsolete or is it operational?

An IT opportunity in the gap between innovation and adoption

Over the past couple of years, and especially in the recent past, Indian IT is on the back foot, with its back firmly against the wall. Valuations have dropped, margins squeezed, and even topline rattled. Look at TCS, the most prominent firm. In 2025-26, it reported a more than two per cent decline in annual revenues, the first time since it was listed more than two decades ago. The stock price is down by a third compared to the high in 2025. Since February this year, it shed almost ₹750, or more than 20 per cent. Yet, TCS seems optimistic.

In a media interview, the firm rejected the predictions that the IT sector may become obsolete by 2030 due to artificial intelligence (AI). Its CEO, K Krithivasan, instead claimed that some experts wrote several obituaries against the industry over the past decade. Yet, Indian IT proved to be “resilient,” and thrived rather than survived. This is because it has moved from a mindset of mere cost arbitrage to one where it has acquired a “depth of skill sets” to move on with the times. In the age of AI, clients will need it, either more, or less.

According to a senior TCS executive, there is invariably a gap that exists between tech innovation and adoption, which is true for AI. This presents huge opportunities for Indian IT to help clients to both incorporate and integrate AI into their existing systems. Of course, the latter can do it on their own, given the enormous potential of AI. But this is where past skills and costs will matter. Indian firms will do this faster, more efficiently, and cheaper. If they can incorporate AI in their processes and systems, they will be able to help the clients better. This window, or

maybe a door, will continue to exist for years.

Post-adoption, there are questions related to scaling up, extracting value, and keeping up with the constant tech changes and disruptions to decide what is the next best bet or move. This is where Indian IT can help the foreign clients. Just the deployment of AI is not enough. It does not logically and automatically lead to results and outcomes. One needs skills to extricate value out of AI across processes, workloads, operations, and firms’ hierarchies. Different managers and departments need different approaches. This is where external, insightful, and professional advice will matter.

As a media report indicates, TCS views the developments in advanced systems like Claude Cowork and Claude Mythos as “opportunities rather than threats... as generative AI is enabling legacy modernisation, particularly for older systems such as mainframes, allowing companies to reduce technology debt.” In simple terms, users will aim to reduce the huge capital costs, even if they are one-time expenses, to shift to new tech. They will opt for changes to the existing tech to make it modern, and capable of better performances with the right inputs, patches, and band aids to manage the change.

Thus, there will emerge, at least over the next several years, two separate layers of AI adoption. There will be a set of firms, or some departments within a firm, that will co-opt new AI tools immediately in an urgent fashion. Costs will not matter, only changes will. But there will be another set of firms, or departments within, that will do

patchwork to modernise and upgrade, rather than shift. The huge costs of new tech will dissuade them. Thus, the gains will matter. Unless they are in the range of 50-100 per cent, they may be side-stepped.

Despite the annual revenue decline, TCS is confident about the future, due to its highest-ever total contract value of nearly \$41 billion in 2025-26, and \$12 billion in January-March 2026 quarter. “Customers are actually becoming more confident in investing in their projects, and the decision-making cycle is improving,”

Krithivasan told a newspaper. Despite the geopolitical conflicts, including the war with Iran, there were no delays in deal closures in the recent past. Large deals were signed in March, despite the war, which showed the clients’ appetite for AI-led projects, which they cannot undertake on their own.

Changes in Indian IT work processes, and internal systems are visible in the hirings and layoffs. TCS claimed that it hired 44,000 freshers, or trainees, in 2025-26, and issued 25,000 offers for the next hiring cycle. Yet, its employee count, at the end of January-March 2026 quarter, was more than 23,000 lower than a year ago. The firm is shedding huge numbers, and hiring maybe lower numbers, but a different set of people. This reflects a churn in the skill sets that may be required in the future. Since outcomes and results will matter, not people deployed in a project, one needs people who can work faster, longer, and have AI skills.

As far as hirings and layoffs go, different IT firms may adopt different strategies. Some may focus on senior and middle-level experience and multi-level management skills to use and deploy AI efficiently. Others may look at freshers, and younger people, who are generally better equipped to handle new tech, especially AI. Some may focus at the cutting and innovative edge, and others at fixing legacy tech. The so-called uniformity in Indian IT, or the seeming-similarities, are likely to vanish within 24 months, if not 12 months. Firms may even experiment with different strategies and visions to see what works for them.

Hence, there will be a churn in projects, clients, and nature of work. Gains in productivity may lead to “deflation” in contracts. This is the most obvious scenario, which will chip at the topline, and undercut the margins. But benefits at the clients’ end can easily be adopted by Indian IT if it embraces AI in a big way. If the clients understand that AI-led changes can be outsourced, as tech work was, there will be only a changeover pause for Indian IT. This is what happened during the process changes from onshoring, offshoring, to outsourcing.

Of course, knowing what Indian IT does best, it will need to give a sharp, precise, crisp, and attractive branding to it. Outsourcing clicked at the end of the last millennium and the tech crash. Maybe it is merely a case of AI-In, AI-Out IT. AI-In is more expensive, and will need time to re-skill the existing employees at the clients’ end. AI-Out will be cheaper, faster, and more efficient and effective. Or will it?

OUR TAKE

For 21 hours, the world waited with baited breath. Whatever time it was in whichever part of the globe, even as the sunrises touched Iran on Sunday, the message was clear. One swallow does not make a summer, and one round of talks does not bring Tehran any closer to a peace accord with Washington. The highly-anticipated face-to-face discussions concluded without an agreement in Pakistan’s capital. It was back to the status quo, albeit in a new form. The Strait of Hormuz was blocked, this time by the US, not Iran, as economies braced for the worst. Equities were down, so was gold, oil zoomed, and so did the dollar.

Global crude prices went up to over \$100 a barrel, yet again for the umpteenth time in the past six weeks, and Indian Sensex was down by nearly a per cent. Natural gas markets tightened, and the so-called contagion spread to shipping, insurance, commodities, currencies, agriculture, and other sectors. It was back to the old predictions that global recovery to the pre-crisis “normal” may take 18-36 months, even if the escalations stop, and longer if it spreads, as was pointed out by several experts, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

“Beyond its painful human toll, the war has caused serious disruption to the economies... including damage to their infrastructure and industries that could become long-lasting. Although these countries are resilient, their short-term growth prospects will be negatively affected,” stated an earlier blog on the IMF website. “Meanwhile, large energy importers... are bearing the brunt of higher fuel and input costs: About 25 to 30 per cent of global oil, and 20 per cent of liquefied natural gas pass through the Strait of Hormuz.... Economies heavily dependent on oil imports in Africa and Asia are finding it increasingly hard to access the supplies they need, even at inflated prices,” the blog stressed.

In an April 2026 report, the World Bank warned, “Economic Growth to Slow in Europe and Central Asia as Risks Rise.” Its update added, “Economic growth in the developing countries of Europe and Central Asia is likely to slow substantially... because of the impact of the conflict in the Middle East, geopolitical tensions, and trade fragmentation.” According to its assessment, regional growth

Darkness came the day after

The aim was to open the Strait; now, the Strait is blocked

is expected to weaken to 2.1 per cent in 2026, growth in Russia is expected to slow to 0.8 per cent, and the pace of expansion elsewhere is likely to ease to 2.9 per cent due to energy costs and investment uncertainty.

“Growth in China, the region’s largest economy, is projected to decelerate from 5 per cent in 2025 to 4.2 per cent in 2026, and 4.3 per cent in 2027,” added the report. Overall, aggregate global losses may accrue up to even hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Multilateral institutions stress that the shock is global but asymmetric, and the energy importers and poorer countries will suffer the most. Even before the war, uncertainty was writ large over the outcome of the US-Iran talks, given the long-standing distrust, tension, and freeze.

As is now well-known, the Iran/West Asia conflict has impacted India across energy, economy, and security dimensions. Almost half of India’s crude oil and 90 per cent of LPG imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz, where uncertainty possibly returns with a greater force following the talks’ failure. India faces pressure on the imports of crude and fertilisers, and analysts warn of higher subsidy burdens. Crisil estimates a potential

₹20,000-25,000 crore rise in the fertiliser subsidy if disruptions persist, and domestic production falls 10-15 per cent. Food prices will of course be directly affected.

The World Bank Group has stated in its twice-a-year regional outlook that the growth in South Asia is expected to slow to 6.3 per cent in 2026, down from 7 per cent in 2025. Released this month, the South Asia Economic Update stated that “despite the near-term slowdown, South Asia continues to grow faster than other emerging-market and developing economies. The growth outlook is driven primarily by India’s performance, underpinned by robust domestic demand as well as tariff cuts and recent trade agreements

(like with the European Union).” However, “Given the region’s reliance on imported energy, South Asia’s outlook is vulnerable to spillovers from the current conflict in the Middle East, and is

exceptionally uncertain. A prompt resolution would lift growth prospects, while further dislocation in global energy markets could raise inflation, necessitate monetary policy tightening, and dampen remittances.” The Bank’s “India Development Update” projected growth at 6.6 per cent in FY27, or lower

than estimates by the Reserve Bank of India. “But even with the slowdown, India remains among the fastest-growing major economies in the world,” it states.

“The conflict in the Middle East has disrupted critical maritime routes, and placed pressure on global supply chains, energy markets, and both imports and exports. Indian companies are experiencing downstream effects, from shipment delays to constraints in key energy inputs, as well as emerging shortages in essential raw materials and intermediates across several sectors that rely heavily on timely cross border flows,” said CII director general, Chandrajit Banerjee. “India, however, entered this period from a position of strength, supported by sustained reforms and the emphasis on Atmanirbharta, which have significantly enhanced the economy’s self-resilience,” he added.

FICCI highlighted the emerging risks, and outlined a roadmap for coordinated action by industry and government. Its report, based on consultations with industry stakeholders, provided a structured assessment of the evolving situation, and its cascading impact on the economy. It indicated early signs of visible stress across sectors, which needed proactive measures to mitigate risk as well as to build long-term resilience. It felt that the ongoing crisis presented an opportunity for India to accelerate structural reforms. Though published before the Islamabad talks, the FICCI report explained that it was imperative for businesses to prepare for multiple scenarios, ranging from the best-case short-term disruptions to worst-case prolonged instability.

Despite the several official proactive steps to mitigate the impact of the crisis, there was a greater need to focus on agriculture, apart from manufacturing. While fertiliser availability is crucial, this is probably the time to promote adoption of bio-fertilizers, and precision agriculture to ensure long term input resilience. This is a sensitive area, and fertiliser markets have been hit by supply disruptions, and higher feedstock costs, like natural gas, ammonia, and phosphate. This will threaten crop yields, farm incomes, and food prices.

(The author has more than three decades of experience across print, TV, and digital media)

AI agents can cause ‘10x the damage in 1x the time’ of humans, says Rubrik CTO

As Indian enterprises race to deploy autonomous AI systems, security experts warn that governance frameworks to manage them safely are lagging dangerously behind



GYANA SWAIN

Walk into any large Indian bank or IT services firm today and chances are an AI agent is already at work. These are not chatbots but autonomous systems that send emails, manage databases, and make decisions without human intervention. The competitive pressure to deploy them is intense. But security experts warn that enterprises are handing significant power to systems they do not yet fully know how to control. “These are probabilistic entities. You cannot exactly predict what they will do,” said Arvind Nithrakashyap, co-founder and CTO of US-listed cybersecurity company Rubrik, and an IIT Madras alumnus. “Agents are fast. They can cause 10x the damage in 1x the time of humans.”

A race without guardrails

Gartner estimates that 40%

threat intelligence unit found that approximately 80% of cyberattacks originate from credential compromise and that attackers typically spend up to six months inside a network before causing visible damage. An AI agent on stolen credentials could replicate that damage in minutes.

Yet even organisations that manage credentials carefully may be exposed through a vulnerability they are less likely to have considered: the technical plumbing that connects agents to their systems.

A vulnerable connector

Most AI agents connect to enterprise tools through the Model Context Protocol, or MCP, a universal standard allowing any agent to plug into any enterprise system. It was designed for ease of adoption, but its security foundations have not kept pace.

A survey of over 2,600 MCP deployments by Endor Labs found that 82% contained vulnerabilities allowing attackers to access



of enterprise applications worldwide will be integrated with AI agents by end of 2026, up from less than 5% last year. Yet the firm predicts that more than 40% of those projects will be abandoned by 2027 because organisations lack the risk controls to run them safely. Neil Shah, VP for research and partner at Counterpoint Research, says the root cause is a tension inside boardrooms everywhere. “The gap is between CEOs and CIOs with the urgency to deploy an AI strategy, versus CSOs making sure systems are secure before handing over the keys of the kingdom to AI agents,” he said. “It can quickly become a Wild West.”

Nithrakashyap frames the challenge across three dimensions: visibility into what agents are accessing, the ability to enforce policy on non-deterministic systems, and a way to reverse damage when something goes wrong. “You may say an agent should never send emails to external customers,” he said. “But how do you prevent a hallucination from doing that?”

Much of that vulnerability, experts say, begins with something as basic as a password.

The password problem

Most organisations give AI agents the same login credentials as the employee they work for rather than creating restricted accounts.

A compromised agent therefore carries the full access rights of its human counterpart, reaching emails, financial records, and internal systems without restriction. Research by Rubrik’s

The author is a Freelance Journalist

The silicon shackle: Why Pax Silica cannot become India’s digital zamindari



NISHANT SAHDEV

As Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri concludes his high-level deliberations with US Under Secretary Jacob Helberg in Washington this week, the official communiqué reads like a triumph of “Managed Interdependence.” India’s deepening role in Pax Silica—the US-led techno-security alliance formalized in February 2026—is being framed as the ultimate insurance policy against Chinese supply-chain coercion. For those tracking structural shifts in global power, the meeting signals something far more consequential: the formalization of an Algorithmic Monroe Doctrine.

In 2026, Washington’s version is more pervasive. Under the guise of “shared democratic values,” the United States is carving out a sphere of cognitive influence over the Global South. The risk for New Delhi is that by joining this silicon shield to escape the “Great Firewall” of the East, we are signing a long-term lease on our own national intelligence. India may soon find itself paying rent simply to count its own citizens.

The Census-as-a-Service Trap

The most immediate laboratory for this capture is the 2026 Digital Census, launched on April 1. For the first time, the Republic is being audited through a fully “paperless” process. While the interface is designed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), the underlying “engine”—the massive scale of compute required to verify and infer from the data of 1.4 billion people—is increasingly migrating to a Census-as-a-Service (CaaS) model.

The vulnerability is not “storage” of data—India has robust localization laws—but “Inference Control.” India’s Government cloud market, currently valued at \$2.1 billion, is dominated by US hyperscalers: AWS, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud.

Even when data is localized in Mumbai, the proprietary Large Action Models (LAMs) used to process that data are frequently hosted on “black box” architectures governed by Silicon Valley. When the state utilises AI to redraw electoral boundaries for the 2026-27 Delimitation or to identify populations for welfare, it relies on models whose logic is not transparent to the Indian state.

If the software layer that dictates how an AI categorizes Indian



reality resides in Northern Virginia, the Indian state is no longer the final arbiter of its own domestic facts. We risk an “Administrative Hallucination”: a digital image of India that fits foreign algorithmic parameters but fails to capture the high-variance reality of the Indian street.

The Macroeconomics of the “Token Tax”

Beyond the administrative risk lies a structural economic drainage: the “Token Tax.” By 2026, the global AI economy has moved past simple chatbots into the age of “Agentic AI”—autonomous systems that execute financial transactions, optimize power grids, and manage national logistics. These agents are the new primary labor force of the digital economy.

According to the NITI Aayog 2026 Strategic Outlook, AI-integrated sectors are projected to drive \$1.47 trillion of India’s GDP by 2035. However, if the underlying compute remains a leased asset, nearly 20% of that growth could vanish into external service fees and infrastructure “rent.”

Every time an Indian startup or Government department runs an inference on a foreign-governed model, Indian capital leaks outward.

This is the new mercantilism: India provides raw data—the “ore” of the 21st century—only to buy back refined intelligence at a premium. We are building world-class highways through our Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), but under the Pax Silica framework, we are essentially renting the cars and fuel from a landlord

across the Atlantic. This “Strategic Ceiling” ensures that while India grows, it never grows beyond the capacity permitted by its technology providers.

The Discovery-Deployment Divide

While New Delhi celebrates onboarding 38,000 GPUs under the IndiaAI Mission, we are ignoring a widening divide. Washington’s strategy, punctuated by the recent launch of the Genesis Mission, is to monopolize the “Atomic Layer” of AI: fundamental discoveries in material science and energy.

These are the foundations of 21st-century power. In the Pax Silica

framework, India is incentivized to remain a “Trusted Deployment Node.” We build the apps and manage the data, while the US retains the “Discovery Engine.”

If New Delhi continues to prioritize “deployment” (the rails) over “fundamental discovery” (the core intelligence), we will remain a perpetual downstream consumer. Yet, single private entities in Silicon Valley already operate clusters five times the size of our national target.

By joining Pax Silica without massive acceleration of domestic hardware ownership, we enter a “Managed Interdependence” where our growth is determined by foreign export licenses. We are providing the testing ground for their frontier models while failing to build our own.

Operationalising Epistemic Sovereignty

As US Secretary of State Marco

Rubio prepares for his upcoming visit to New Delhi in May, India’s leverage is at its zenith. Washington needs India to provide the demographic scale to prove that democratic AI can out-compete the “Great Firewall” of China. However, this leverage must be converted into Epistemic Sovereignty—the right to know ourselves through our own machines. New Delhi must demand the “Atomic Transfer of Technology.” This includes joint ownership of the logic layers of the next generation of processors, not just assembly plants in Sanand.

To move beyond abstract strategy, MeitY must implement two operational shifts. First, the Sovereign Inference Mandate: High-stakes administrative projects—specifically the Census and the Delimitation—must run on a Sovereign Inference Stack.

This requires models hosted on clusters physically and legally governed by the NIC, with zero external API dependencies. A census verification “handshake” should never require a trip to a server in a foreign jurisdiction. This ensures the data-cleaning process for the Delimitation is not influenced by foreign algorithmic biases.

Second, the “Weights and Biases” Audit: Any foreign-origin AI model utilized in Indian public policy must undergo a mandatory Structural Audit.

India must demand source-level access to the training parameters of any AI that is given authority over national resource allocation. If a model is a “black box,” it is a threat to the Republic.

We must use our status as the world’s largest data provider to demand that the Intellectual Property of the logic

layers is shared with Indian state auditors.

Reclaiming the National Mind

Pax Silica is a necessary exit from a dangerous dependence on Eastern supply chains, but it is not a sufficient entry strategy for a global power.

If we allow our administrative backbone—the very way we see and count our people—to become a leased asset, we are merely trading one form of vassalage for another. True power in 2026 is the ability to write your own equations, on your own machines, for your own people.

As we redraw the maps of our democracy through the Delimitation, we must ensure the intelligence redrawing those lines is not owned by a foreign landlord. Anything less is a surrender of the national mind.

This is the most critical strategic challenge facing the Ministry of Electronics. The roadmap for the future must be hardened: India must not just be a consumer of the intelligence revolution, but its primary, independent architect.

The 2026 Census is more than a count; it is a test of whether the Indian state still possesses the eyes to see itself clearly, or if it is content with a vision provided by a foreign lens.

True strategic autonomy is not found in an alliance communiqué; it is found in the local server rack. We must move beyond being the world’s back-office and reclaim our right to compute our own destiny for the next century.

Author is a theoretical physicist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a columnist on AI, infrastructure, and global systems

From margins to mainstream: Bridging futures with AI



ABHISHEK KUMAR SINGH

In an era where technology is steadily redefining governance, India’s minority welfare framework is undergoing a quiet yet consequential transformation. Under the leadership of Minister Kiren Rijiju, the Ministry of Minority Affairs is leveraging digital innovation to move communities from the periphery to the center of development. The rollout of AI-driven tools and platforms signals not just administrative efficiency, but a deeper intent to democratise access and opportunity in line with the broader vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Viksit Bharat 2047, these initiatives reflect a governance model that is both tech-savvy and people-centric.

From smart monitoring systems to multilingual AI chatbots, the State is scripting a new language of inclusion—one where algorithms quietly bridge long-standing gaps. In this unfolding narrative, technology is not merely a tool, but a catalyst for trust, transparency, and transformation.

AI and Governance

In recent years, Governments across the world have increasingly turned to Artificial Intelligence to make public administration more efficient and responsive.

For a country like India - with its vast population, linguistic diversity, and complex federal structure - AI holds particular promise. It can process large volumes of data in real time, identify gaps in service delivery, and interact with citizens in their own language, something no traditional bureaucratic system could do as scale.

More importantly, AI shifts governance from a reactive model to a proactive one: rather than waiting for complaints to surface, AI-enabled systems can flag problems before they escalate. The NITI Aayog’s National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence frames this as “Artificial Intelligence for All” - using



technology not as a privilege of the few, but as a tool to reach the last mile. When applied to welfare schemes and minority development, as the Ministry of Minority Affairs is doing, AI can ensure that benefits actually reach those they are meant for.

NIGRANI App for Infrastructure Monitoring

The NIGRANI App, introduced under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJKV), a flagship program for minority concentration areas, blocks, and districts - is a key component for the digital push. It enables real-time tracking of infrastructure developments like roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, helping close developmental gaps across India.

The app ensures accountability, minimizes delays, and optimizes resource allocation through instant monitoring by officials,

States, and communities, with features like geotagging, photo uploads, and progress reports.

Success stories from states like Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Tripura show how these tools address infrastructure deficiencies in tribal and minority areas, aligning with Atmanirbhar Bharat objectives. Recent data from the Ministry’s portal shows thousands of beneficiaries empowered, with digital dashboards providing live updates on approvals and disbursements.

AI Chatbots for Citizen Services

The Ministry’s AI Chatbots offer multilingual, 24/7 support for queries on scholarships, skill programs, and welfare schemes. Powered by natural language processing and machine learning, they simplify applications, provide

eligibility checks, and guide users through portals like UMEED, reducing bureaucratic hurdles. Using predictive analytics, the chatbots anticipate demands such as NMDFC loan statuses or scholarship deadlines, ensuring inclusivity for India’s six minority communities: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, and Jains.

Haj Wrist Band for Pilgrim Safety

The Haj Wrist Band advances digital modernization for the Haj Committee of India, founded in 1959. This wearable device provides GPS tracking, SOS alerts, health monitoring, and translation features, safeguarding over 1.25 lakh pilgrims expected for Haj 2026.

It integrates with the Committee’s digital ecosystem for easy registration, lodging, and welfare services in Saudi Arabia, including recent developments like virtual orientation and e-passports. The focus is on public-private partnerships with Saudi authorities to ensure tech-driven safety amid growing pilgrim numbers.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs’ digital initiatives and AI integrations exemplify a tech-forward approach to equitable development. From NIGRANI’s oversight to AI chatbots’ responsiveness, Haj innovations, and waqf digitisation, these tools foster Jan Bhagidari, accountability, and efficiency. They propel Reform, Perform, Transform, Inform, realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Viksit Bharat 2047 through inclusive, transparent governance, empowering minorities in a united, developed India.

As India advances toward Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Viksit Bharat 2047, technology is becoming the backbone of inclusive governance. The Ministry’s AI-led initiatives reflect a shift toward data-driven, citizen-centric delivery that aligns with global digital governance trends.

If guided by accountability and ethics, this model can position India as a leader in using AI not just to digitise systems, but to humanise governance and drive equitable nation-building.

Dy Director, Minority Affairs Department, Govt of India

FROM THE WORLD

PAKISTAN

Gunmen kill Hazara traders

Two people belonging to the Shia Muslim Hazara minority community were shot dead in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province. The incident took place in Balochistan's capital Quetta on Saturday, police said. Unidentified gunmen on two motorcycles opened fire on the vehicle of the Hazara men, who were travelling from the Hazara Town to the Hazarganjh market to purchase vegetables for their businesses, senior police official Khair Sumalani said. While two men belonging to the Hazara minority community died in the firing, three others were injured, he said. "It appears to be a targeted killing," the police official said. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. Soon after the incident, the Hazara community blocked the Western Bypass to protest the attack, disrupting traffic.

USA

Strikes on drug boats kill 5

The US military said Sunday that it blew up two boats accused of smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing a total of five people and leaving one survivor, as the Trump administration pursues its campaign against alleged traffickers in Latin America while preparing a naval blockade of Iranian ports. The attacks on Saturday bring the number of people who have been killed in boat strikes by the US military to at least 168 since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in early September. As with most of the military's statements on the dozens of strikes in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean Sea, US Southern Command said it targeted the alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. The military did not provide evidence that the vessel was ferrying drugs.

Indian in Moscow pays tributes to Asha Bhosle

VINAY SHUKLA ■ Moscow

The Indian community based in Russia on Monday expressed great shock at the demise of legendary singer Asha Bhosle and paid warm tributes to her while remembering her "immortal music".

"This is a great shock to all of us, it is the end of an era. Asha ji left for heavenly abode on the day the Russians were celebrating Orthodox Easter as the symbol of victory of eternal life over death, she will forever live among us due to her immortal music," President of Hindustani Samaj-Russia, Kashmir Singh said."Asha Bhosle ji, was



one of the most iconic and versatile voices India has ever known," Rameshwar Singh, President of Indo-Russian Friendship Society "Disha" said. Her extraordinary musical journey, spanning decades, enriched our cultural heritage and touched countless hearts across the world. (PTI)

Pope says he does not fear Trump, citing Gospel as he pushes back in feud over West Asia conflict

WILL WEISSERT/JOSH BOAK / NICOLE WINFIELD ■ Washington

US-born Pope Leo XIV pushed back Monday on President Donald Trump's broadside against him over the US-Israel war in Iran, telling reporters that the Vatican's appeals for peace and reconciliation are rooted in the Gospel, and that he doesn't fear the Trump administration.

"To put my message on the same plane as what the president has attempted to do here, I think is not understanding what the message of the Gospel is," Leo told AP aboard the papal plane en route to Algeria. "And I'm sorry to hear that but I will continue on what I believe is the mission of the church in the world today."

History's first US-born pope stressed that he was not making a direct attack against Trump or anyone else with his general appeal for peace and criticisms of the "delusion of omnipotence" that is fuelling the Iran wars and other conflicts around the world.

"I will not enter into debate. The things that I say are certainly not meant as attacks on anyone. The message of the Gospel is very clear: Blessed are the peacemakers," Leo said.

"I will not shy away from announcing the message of the Gospel and inviting all people to look for ways of building bridges of peace and reconciliation, and looking for ways to avoid war any time that's possible"

Speaking to other reporters,

and its outskirts with rockets, artillery, and exploding drones.

According to the group's statements, the Israeli troops were positioned near a school, a hospital, and juncture that surrounds the heart of Bint Jbeil. The Israeli military said it attacked Hezbollah forces.

The town overlooks the UN-mandated Blue Line that divides Israel and Lebanon, just over 2 miles away, making it a strategic point for the Iran-backed group.

The US blockade of Iranian ports could prompt the Iranian-backed Houthis rebels in Yemen to disrupt transit through Bab el-Mandeb Strait, an analyst has warned. "If the US moves to impose a block-



Workers remove the rubble as rescuers keep searching for a missing woman and girl at a destroyed building that was hit on April 8, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut, Lebanon

AP

Russia's Lavrov to visit China for talks on Iran-US conflict, Hormuz blockade

KJM VARMA ■ Beijing

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will arrive in Beijing on Tuesday for talks with the Chinese leadership on the escalation of the West Asia conflict and the American blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, amid a deepening global energy crisis.

Lavrov will visit Beijing at the invitation of Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at a media briefing here.

His two-day visit comes in the immediate backdrop of US President Donald Trump's announcement of the block-



ade of the Strait of Hormuz in a bid to cripple Iran's oil supplies to China and other countries. China and Russia have a "no limits partnership" as described by their leaders - Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin - and have

maintained strong political alignment on global and regional issues. They have also maintained strategic and military ties with Iran.

China has been importing substantial amounts of Iranian oil over the years, dis-

regarding US sanctions, and Trump's move to impose a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is expected to impact Beijing in the long run.

During Lavrov's visit, the foreign ministers of the two countries will exchange views and coordinate positions on the development of bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields, as well as international and regional issues of common concern, Guo said. On China-Russia ties, Guo said in recent years, both countries have continuously deepened their good-neighbourliness and friendship, expanded comprehensive strategic coordination. (PTI)

France, UK to convene talks on Hormuz navigation mission

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Paris

France and the UK will organise a conference with partners ready to contribute to a peaceful multinational mission to help restore navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, President Emmanuel Macron said.

In a post on X, Macron stressed "the need to restore free and unimpeded navigation through the Strait of Hormuz as quickly as possible". He called for a "peaceful multinational mission," adding: "This strictly defensive mission, separate from the warring parties to the conflict, is intended to be deployed as soon as circumstances permit."

France and the UK have in recent years been working to



set up an operation that would allow ships to cross the Strait of Hormuz once the fighting ends. Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday said

Britain will not be part of a US blockade of Iranian ports in response to the closing of the Strait of Hormuz. Starmer told BBC radio that "we're

not supporting the blockade" and "we're not getting dragged into the war".

He said UK efforts remain focused on reopening the key shipping route, whose closure has sent prices for oil and other commodities soaring.

Starmer spoke after US President Donald Trump said Britain would send minesweepers to the Strait.

Britain said it might help with mine-clearing in the waterway, but only after the fighting stops. Starmer said all Britain's military capability is focused on getting the Strait "fully open".

The UK is working with dozens of other countries on plans to restore security to shipping through the key oil route after the conflict.

ASEAN URGES MORE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Jakarta: Southeast Asian countries urged the United States and Iran on Monday to keep going with peace negotiations, enforce a ceasefire and restore the safe passage of ships, seafarers and aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz. The foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations made the urgent plea as they held an emergency video conference, the second in recent weeks, to assess the impact of the war in the Middle East, including soaring fuel prices, and how they could cooperate in the face of global crises.



Vice President JD Vance arriving to speak at a news conference after meeting with representatives from Pakistan and Iran

AP

Vance-led talks helped build goodwill with Iran: Report

SAGAR KULKARNI ■ Washington

US Vice President JD Vance-led talks for peace with Iran may have been unsuccessful, but the 21-hour-long discussions helped build goodwill with the new leadership in Tehran, according to a media report.

The Washington Post, quoting unnamed US officials, reported that the measure of goodwill established during the talks in Islamabad has made Washington believe that Iran may accept their terms to end the deadly and costly war.

It said that President Donald Trump's announcement of a US blockade of the Strait of Hormuz could force Iran to agree to a deal.

"A US official with knowledge of the negotiations, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door talks, said Vance was keenly aware going into the negotiations of the mistrust and risk of misunderstanding between the United States and Iran," the report said.

The official said Vance and the Iran negotiators had developed rapport and became warmer with each other.

Trump appeared to share the assessment. "We had a very intensive negotiation, and toward the end, it got very friendly," he told Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures". "And we got just about every point we needed except for the fact that they refuse to give up their nuclear ambition," he said.

The Post report said it became clear to the US team once talks began that the Iranians did not fully appreciate the far-reaching nature of the Trump administration's insistence that any deal must centre on prohibiting Iran from ever obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Iran has insisted for decades that it does not intend to build a nuclear weapon - a pledge that Trump and his allies, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have claimed cannot be taken at face value. (PTI)

Colorado; and in Britain, where two people were killed at a Manchester synagogue on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

The report also tracked an increase in antisemitic attacks that resulted in physical harm, including beatings and stone throwing.

The study found that 2025 was the deadliest year for antisemitic attacks since 1994, when the bombing of a Jewish community center in Argentina killed 85 people and wounded more than 300. An Argentine court has blamed Iran and its Hezbollah proxy for the attack. (AP)



Uriya Shavit, the chief editor of the widely cited annual report. Deadly antisemitic attacks were recorded on three continents, according to the report. Fifteen people

were killed at the holiday event at Sydney's Bondi Beach in December. There were additional fatalities in two antisemitic attacks in the US in Washington, DC,



Israel war in Iran. While it's not unusual for popes and presidents to be at cross purposes, it's exceedingly rare for the pope to directly criticise a US leader - and

Trump's stinging response is equally uncommon, if not more so. "Pope Leo is WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy," the president wrote in his post,

adding, "I don't want a Pope who thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon."

He repeated that sentiment in comments to reporters, saying, "We don't like a pope who says it's OK to have a nuclear weapon."

Later, Trump posted a picture suggesting he had saint-like powers akin to those of Jesus Christ. Wearing a biblical-style robe, Trump is seen laying hands on a bedridden man as light emanates from his fingers, while a soldier, a nurse, a praying woman and a bearded man in a baseball cap all look on admiringly. The sky above is filled with eagles, an American flag and vaporous images. All of that came after Leo presided over an evening prayer service in St Peter's Basilica

on Saturday, the same day the United States and Iran began face-to-face negotiations in Pakistan during a fragile ceasefire.

The pope didn't mention the United States or Trump by name, but his tone and message appeared directed at Trump and US officials, who have boasted of US military superiority and justified the war in religious terms.

Leo, who is on an 11-day trip to Africa starting Monday - has previously said that God "does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them."

He's also referenced an Old Testament passage from Isaiah, saying that "even though you make many prayers, I will not listen - your hands are full of blood." (AP)

Why India-US trade talks matter more than ever in 2026



**SURJIT
SINGH
FLORA**

In April 2026, India and the United States are trying to turn a fragile trade truce into something more durable. An interim agreement reached in February stopped a sharper break, and fresh talks are set to resume in Washington after weeks of delay.

At the same time, contact between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump has helped keep the wider relationship from sliding further. That matters because this dispute is no longer only about customs duties.

It now touches trust, supply chains, energy buying, defence links, and each side's view of the other as a long-term partner.

Several rounds of talks have already taken place, yet the hard choices remain. The immediate crisis has eased, but the real test lies ahead. The interim deal bought time after a period of sharp friction.

In early February, both Governments announced a framework that paired Indian tariff cuts and large US purchases with a planned reduction in US duties on Indian goods, from 25 percent to 18 percent. That calmed markets and gave exporters some relief. Still, the truce never settled the deepest disputes.

The signing slipped after a US Supreme Court ruling cast doubt on parts of Trump's emergency tariff framework. New investigations by the Trump administration, including subsidy-related action on Indian solar cells, added to the confusion.

By April 10, India had decided to send another delegation to Washington to seek clarity before moving further.

The February framework changed the mood first. It lowered immediate pressures and created a path toward a broader trade pact. India also signaled a willingness to buy more US goods over five years, including energy, aircraft parts, and technology.

That gave Washington a visible gain, while New Delhi secured at least a temporary easing of tariff pain. Yet the framework remained only a bridge.

The implementation slowed because Washington's tariff rules were no longer fully clear after the court ruling. India wanted to know which rates would

apply, and when. That question remains open in April. There is also no final date for signing a full agreement. Piyush Goyal had earlier suggested the pact could be operational by April. That deadline has passed.

So, the interim deal prevented a rupture, but it did not deliver closure. Why uncertainty still hangs over the negotiations Washington's message has been mixed. On one side, US officials have sounded upbeat.

The White House has said it is still working with India on

finalizing a deal, and recent meetings with US Trade Representative Jameson Greer were described as productive. On the other side, extra duties, new probes, and sector-specific penalties have stayed in play. That gap between tone and action has fed Indian frustration. New Delhi has held back from public anger, but the patience has limits. Goyal's line has been simple, if the United States is satisfied, it should sign.

Until then, optimism will remain thin. Warm statements have kept the relationship afloat, but policy uncertainty has kept the deal unfinished.

Trade tensions now bleed into foreign policy. That is why the hardest issues have proved harder than tariff bargaining alone. India wants closer economic ties with the United States, but it does not want those ties to narrow its choices on energy, regulation, or diplomacy. Russian oil became the biggest test of political trust US pressure over India's purchases of Russian crude turned trade talks into a test of sovereignty.

Reports around the February framework suggested India would reduce reliance on Russian oil while buying more US energy. For



Washington, that looked like a strategic win. For New Delhi, it raised a sharper question, who decides India's energy mix? India's answer has stayed consistent.

It will engage the United States closely, but energy decisions must serve domestic needs first. That line reflects both economics and politics. India is a major importer, and price matters.

A sudden shift imposed from outside would carry costs at home. The timing of

Vladimir Putin's visit to India added another layer. It reminded Western Capitals that India still values long-standing ties with Russia, even while expanding defense and technology links with the United States. In that sense, oil became more than a commodity. It became a measure of whether Washington can accept India's independent choices. The most stubborn fights are often hidden behind technical rules. Tariffs make headlines, but licensing systems, product standards, customs procedures, and regulatory barriers can block trade just as effectively.

That is why the April talks are expected to cover non-tariff barriers, Section 232 and 301 issues, and disputes around medical devices. Medical devices are a good example because they sit at the meeting point of public health, pricing, and market access.

Technology goods raise similar tensions. The United States wants fewer restrictions and clearer rules. India wants room to protect domestic firms, manage prices, and avoid opening politically sensitive sectors too fast.

Other issues also sit on the table, including customs rules, services, and intellectual property. These are harder to solve than one tariff cut because they reach into domestic law and State policy.

They ask each side to change how its system works, not simply how much tax it collects at the border. Even after months of strain, neither side can afford to give up on the relationship.

The United States remains India's top export market, and both Governments still talk about lifting two-way trade sharply by 2030.

For India, that means jobs, factory orders, and investor confidence. For the United States, it means access to a large market and a partner that matters in supply chains, defence production, and Asia strategy. The numbers explain the urgency.

A long tariff fight in 2025 was estimated in Indian policy circles to have shaved 60 to 80 basis points from growth. In plain terms, that means slower output, weaker export momentum, and less confidence among firms planning new investment.

That drag matters because India's export sectors, from apparel and leather to seafood and gems, rely heavily on access to the US market. Even a modest rise in tariffs can reduce margins fast. Meanwhile, prolonged uncertainty makes companies wait before adding capacity or hiring workers. So, the case for a deal is not abstract. It sits in factories, ports, and boardrooms.

On the other hand — India's foreign policy is built on multi-alignment, not bloc politics. It is pursuing talks with the European Union, keeping a limited diplomatic opening with China, and maintaining ties with Russia.

At the same time, it continues to deepen defence and technology cooperation with the United States.

That mix is not a passing tactic. It is the core of India's external strategy. The real test for Washington is whether it can work with India as an independent partner, rather than treat trade access as a tool for broader political obedience.

If it can, the relationship will grow on firmer ground. If it cannot, each round of trade friction will spill into larger mistrust. The interim agreement, and the Modi-Trump channel behind it, have stopped a bad stretch from turning into a deeper rupture.

Yet the strain remains because trade, energy, and geopolitics are now tied together far more tightly than before. That leaves the relationship at an awkward middle point. Bilateral ties are still strong enough to absorb shocks, but not yet stable enough to rise above them.

The next phase will depend less on upbeat language and more on whether both Governments can convert a temporary patch into a durable bargain that respects each side's core interests.

The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton Canada



program depending on what the Pakistani ships would offer for the training exercises.

Two ships from Pak arrive in Sri Lanka for bilateral exercise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 Colombo

Two ships from Pakistan have arrived in Colombo to take part in a bilateral naval exercise, the Sri Lankan Navy said on Monday.

Two Pakistani naval ships, Taimur and Aslat, reached the port of Colombo on Sunday and will remain in the island nation until April 26, Commander Buddika Sampath, a spokesman for the Sri Lanka Navy, said.

Sampath said that the training ships from Pakistan are on a "goodwill visit" to the country and will "take part in a bilateral Naval exercise themed Lion Star V with the Sri Lanka Navy."

 बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र Bank of Maharashtra भारत सरकार का उपक्रम	JABALPUR ZONAL OFFICE, WRIGHT TOWN, JABALPUR PH: 0761-2480065,67,68	PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE		
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.				
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Bank of Maharashtra, the possession of which have been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Maharashtra, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" & "WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS" on 30.03.2026 , for recovery of the balance due to the Bank of Maharashtra from the Borrower (s) and Guarantor(s) as mentioned in the table. Details of the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s, amount due, Short description of the immovable property and encumbrances known thereon, possession type, reserve price and the earnest money deposit are also given as under-				
Name & Address of Borrower / Guarantor	Outstanding Dues for Recovery of which Property are being sold	Description of properties	Type of Possession	Reserve Price EMD Amount Bid Increase Amount
1) Branch - Asset Recovery Branch, Jabalpur M/s Shree Nakoda Ginning and Pressing Factory Through its Directors/Guarantors/ LRs 1. Mr. Sushil Doshi 2. Mr. Premchand Doshi 3. Mr. Sawan Doshi 4. Mr. Anand Doshi (Deceased) Through its LRs Mrs. Puja Jain & Pahal Jain 5. Mr. Mridul Doshi Guarantors - 1. Mr. Sushil S/o Mr. Amolakchand Doshi 2. Mr. Premchand S/o Amolakchand Doshi 3. Mr. Sawan S/o Praveen Doshi 4. Mr. Anand S/o Prakash Jain (Deceased) through its LRs Mrs. Puja Jain & Pahal Jain (Natural Gurdian - Puja Jain) 5. Mr. Mridul S/o Sushil Doshi 6. Mr. Amolakchand S/o Gulabchand Doshi (Deceased) through its LRs Mr. SusilKumar, Prakash Chand & Premchand 7. Mrs. Hukumbai W/o Mr. Amolakchand Doshi (Deceased)Through its LRs Mr. SusilKumar, Prakash Chand & Premchand 8. Mrs. Chandrakanta W/o Late Mr. Praveen Kumar 9. Mr. Prakash S/o Mr. Amolakchand Doshi 10. Mrs. Pankunwar Bai W/o Mr. Sushilkumar Doshi 11. Mrs. Mamtabai W/o Mr. Premchand Doshi 12. Mr. Praveen S/o Amolakchand Doshi All R/o.- Gram:- Padliya, Near Karahi, Tehsil:- Maheshwar, Dist. Khargone (M. P.)	Rs.18,77,43,542/- + Unapplied interest on contractual rate w.e.f. 01.11.2019 + penal interest thereon and other charges and expenses	PH no.56, Survey No. 56/1/1, village Padliya Khurd, Tehsil Maheshwar Dist. Khargone area 0.30 hect. Owner: Mrs. Chandrakanta W/o Praveen Kumar Doshi, Mr. Sawan S/o Prveen kumar Doshi and Mrs. Sonam W/o Piyush Kumar Doshi All the pieces of land and building constructed on plot (House)no. 270, Padliya Khurd, Tehsil Maheshwar Dist. Khargone admeasuring 235.79 sq.mtr. Owner: Mr. Prakash Chandra, Mr. Sushil, Mr. Premchand, Ms. Vijaya, Mrs. Chandrakanta, Mr. Gaurav, aman and Ms. Priyal PH. no. 57,(Old PH N. 56) S.No. 3/11 and S.No. 3/10 village Aakhapura, Tehsil Maheshwar Dist. Khargone.area admeasuring 0.675 +0.659 hect. Total area - 1.334 Hectare @ 13340.00 Sqm. Owner: Mr. Prakash Chandra, Mr. Sushil, Mr. Premchand, Ms. Vijaya, Mrs. Chandrakanta, Mr. Gaurav, aman and Ms. Priyal	Symbolic Symbolic Symbolic	Rs.9690000/- Rs.969000/- Rs.10000/- Rs.5227000/- Rs.522700/- Rs.10000/- Rs.14174000/- Rs.1417400/- Rs.10000/-
2) Branch - Asset Recovery Branch, Jabalpur Borrower - M/s. Ruchi Traders Proprietor: Mr. Suraj Singh s/o Mr. Fateh Singh Address:1 Imaliya Swaroop, Berasia, Laxminarayan Krishi Upaj Mandi, 80 feet road, Bhopal (M.P) Pin 463106, Address2: Village Ramgada, Tehsil Berasia, Bhopal (M.P) Pin 463106	Rs.1,26,05,017.70/- (Rupees One Crore Twenty Six Lakh Five thousand Seventeen rupees and Seventy Paise only) + Unapplied Interest Rs. 3,09,621.88/- upto 24/01/2024 + penal interest @ 2% and other expenses w.e.f. 25.01.2024	(A) All those pieces and parcel of property with construction & fixtures there being & lying at diverted commercial land & Building on Khasra No. 3/1/1/3/kha/2/ka (Re no Kh No. 3/1/1/3/2/1 area 0.40 Hect or 1.00 Acre situated at village Imaliya Swaroop, patwari Hika No. 53/25, adjacent to main Berasia to Narsingh Garh Road, R.N.M. 02, Tehsil Berasia, Distt -Bhopal (M.P.) (Owned by Mr. Suraj Singh) (B)All those pieces and parcel of property with construction & fixtures there being & lying at diverted commercial land & Building on Khasra No. 3/1/1/3/kha/2/kha (Re no Kh No. 3/1/1/3/2/2 area 0.405 Hect or 1.00 Acre situated at village Imaliya Swaroop, patwari Hika No. 53/25, adjacent to main Berasia to Narsingh Garh Road, R.N.M. 02, Tehsil Berasia, Distt -Bhopal (M.P.) Owned by - Mr. Suraj Singh	Physical	Rs. 12441000/- Rs. 1244100/- Rs.10000/-
3) Branch - Asset Recovery Branch, Jabalpur Borrower - M/s. LKT HI Tech Hospital Proprietor: Dr. Kunj Lata Richharia D/o Shri. Ramesh Chandra Richharia, Address1: LKT HI Tech Hospital, Mugaliya Hat, Bhopal (M.P) Pin 462024, Address2: LKT HI Tech Hospital, ward No 8, Vidisha By-Pass road, Near Police station, Ashok Nagar (M.P) Pin - 473331	Rs.71,95,005.70/- (Rupees Seventy One Lakh Five thousand Seventeen rupees and Seventy Paise only) + Unapplied Interest Rs. 3,09,621.88/- upto 24/01/2024 + penal interest @ 2% and other expenses w.e.f. 25.01.2024	All those pieces & parcel of property with construction & fixture there being & lying at Flat No. MIG G 001, Ground floor, Silver Inn Homes, Old Ashoka Garden, Northern part of plot no 95,96,97, ward No. 69, Distt - Bhopal (M.P.) admeasuring area 436 Sq. ft/ 40.52 Sqm.	Physical	Rs.990000/- Rs.99000/- Rs.10000/-
4) Branch - Asset Recovery Branch, Jabalpur Borrower - M/s Sharmila Singhai B-16, Manisha Market, Shahpura, Bhopal- 462016 Guarantor : 1. Smt. Sharmila, W/o: Shri Prashant Singhai 2. Shri Prashant Singhai, S/o: Shri M.M Singhai All R/o.- B-16, Manisha Market, Shahpura, Bhopal- 462016	Rs.2,01,27,048/- + Unapplied interest on contractual rate w.e.f. 01.01.2019+ penal interest thereon and other charges and expenses	1. Open land/plot situated at Khasra no. 309 admeasuring 0.10 hect (1000 Sq. Mt.). At Nayapura, Kolar Road, PH no. 38/28 R.N.M.-03 ,Vikas Khand Fanda Tahsil Huzur, Bhopal 2. Open land/plot situated at Khasra No. 307 admeasuring 0.10 hect (1000 Sq. Mt.). At Nayapura, Kolar Road, PH no. 38/28 R.N.M.-03 ,Vikas Khand Fanda Tahsil Huzur, Bhopal Total Plot area 1000+ 1000 = 2000sq.mtr. Owner: Ms.Sharmila Singhai, Shri Prashant Singhai	Symbolic	Rs.3,24,00,000/- Rs.32,40,000/- Rs.10000/-
5) Branch - Asset Recovery Branch, Jabalpur Borrower - M/s Gurukripa Dehydrated Vegetables Through its Proprietor Mr. Narendra Hammad (Deceased) s/o Shri. Laxman Hammad Through its Lrs (1) Mrs. Pooja Hammad w/o Late.				

▼PROSPECT

ACA announces ₹25 lakh reward for ground staff after 3 successful IPL matches

The successful hosting of three matches of the Indian Premier League at the ACA Stadium in Guwahati has highlighted the quiet but crucial role played by the ground staff of the Assam Cricket Association.

Working under challenging weather conditions, the curator and groundsmen ensured that the pitches were prepared and maintained to the highest standards.

Their efforts were central to the smooth conduct of the matches and helped uphold the venue's growing reputation on the national stage.In recognition of their contribution, the association has announced a reward of ₹25 lakh for the curator and grounds men.

Association president Taranga Gogoi and honorary secretary Sanatan Das praised the team's professionalism and commitment, stating that their dedication was instrumental in the seamless execution of the matches.

The association also expressed its appreciation for the ground staff, describing them as the backbone of match operations whose work often goes unnoticed but remains vital to the game.



Empowering future warriors with cutting-edge drone technology at Mizoram

In a significant initiative aimed at inspiring and educating the next generation of leaders, the Territorial Army, in collaboration with the Drone Lab under the aegis of 23 Sector Assam Rifles, conducted an engaging lecture-cum-demonstration for young NCC students inunglei on 10 April 26.

The session provided cadets with a unique opportunity to witness and understand the advanced drone technologies employed by security forces in modern operations. The live demonstration showcased the capabilities, applications, and strategic importance of unmanned aerial systems in contemporary warfare and surveillance.

The cadets displayed immense enthusiasm and curiosity, actively engaging with the presenters and gaining valuable insights into emerging defense technologies. The interactive nature of the session fostered a deeper appreciation for innovation in the armed forces.

This initiative marks a proud moment in nurturing young minds and equipping them with knowledge of future warfare domains. Such exposure not only broadens their horizons but also motivates them to contribute meaningfully to the nation's security landscape.



TCS Nashik case: NITES approaches labour ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai/New Delhi

IT sector employees' body NITES on Monday approached the Ministry of Labour and Employment seeking a detailed audit of POSH compliance in Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and batted for a wider State-level audit across tech and ITES companies, especially large multinational organisations in Maharashtra. The letter to Labour Ministry comes in the backdrop of charges of sexual harassment and allegations on forced religious conversion by eight female employees at TCS' office in Nashik — an incident that has drawn sharp scrutiny and raised serious concerns.

NITES urged the Ministry to take "immediate and decisive action" by directing a comprehensive and time-bound audit and inspection. India's largest IT services company had, on Sunday, said the firm has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form for a long time, confirming the suspension of employees allegedly involved in sexual harassment at its Nashik office.

Nascent Information Technology Employees Senate (NITES), in a letter to Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, has pushed for a detailed audit of POSH — Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the workplace — compliance in TCS across all its establishments, including constitution, independence, and functioning of internal committees.

The IT employees' body has also demanded examination of all complaints of sexual harassment received, pending, or disposed of within the organisation (TCS) over the past several years, along with action taken, while



Accused persons remanded to police custody

calling for assessment of the role and accountability of Human Resources personnel and senior management in handling complaints and ensuring a safe workplace.

The Nashik City Police have registered nine FIRs, arrested seven accused officials and formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the claims, which reportedly span several years. It may be noted that the first case was reported in 2022 and then Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had ordered a detailed probe. It took four years for the Nashik Police to gain control over this scandal, which had been ongoing unabated in one of the country's most prestigious consultancy companies.

The case has drawn significant attention due to the involvement of TCS, allegations of workplace coercion blending sexual misconduct with religious pressure. Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had then publicly described the incidents as shocking and emphasised that such acts would not be tolerated.

The victim Hindu women had

submitted written complaints to Nashik Police and accused a group of senior employees, primarily team leads of targeting vulnerable junior colleagues, many of them young Hindu women.

It has also been revealed that the Muslim employees of TCS Nashik had created WhatsApp groups and discussed their plans to target vulnerable women. Sources indicated the group allegedly targeted Hindu employees with financial incentives or influence to facilitate conversions.

The victims have alleged that there were repeated inappropriate touching, obscene remarks about physical appearance and personal life, molestation and in some cases, maintaining physical relations under false promises of marriage.

Victims alleged that complaints to higher-ups, including the HR department, were ignored. Police investigation has found that the HR head identified as Nida Khan was complicit and did not pay heed to the repeated complaints. Nashik Police described complaints as involving a group operating within the workplace.

The named accused who have been arrested are; Asif Ansari, Shafi Sheikh, Shah Rukh Qureshi (also referred to as Shahrukh Qureshi), Raza Memon, Tausif Attar and Danish Sheikh. The arrested persons were produced in court and remanded to police custody initially.

According to the police, on April 10, 2026, the investigating officer recorded the statement of the company's HR manager, who resides in Pune.

Victims had allegedly complained to her earlier, but no action was reportedly taken at the time. She was issued a notice to join the probe further.

Tata Group says allegations at TCS Nashik anguishing, orders probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran on Monday termed allegations at TCS Nashik as "gravely concerning and anguishing", and announced an investigation into the matter under a senior executive. "The complaints and allegations emerging from the Nashik branch of TCS have been gravely concerning and anguishing," Chandrasekaran said in a statement.

He also announced that a thorough investigation is underway under TCS' Chief Operating Officer Arathi Subramanian to establish the facts and identify individuals responsible for the situation.

There have been allegations of sexual harassment and forced religious conversion by eight female employees at the multinational company's office in Maharashtra's Nashik.

"This incident is being treated with utmost seriousness. Action has already been initiated against the accused employees, and the company is extending its full cooperation to the ongoing investigations," Chandrasekaran, who was leading TCS as its chief executive and managing director before his appointment as the group chairman, said.

He added that the salts-to-software group maintains a "zero-tolerance policy" towards any form of coercion or misconduct by its employees.



Appropriate and stringent action will be taken against those found guilty in the investigation, he said, adding that process improvements or other corrective measures will be promptly implemented and strictly enforced.

Last week, police formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the complaints lodged by eight employees, who claimed that senior colleagues mentally and sexually harassed them, and the human resources department turned a deaf ear to their complaints.

Police have since arrested seven people, including the company's female HR manager. In its first comments, TCS had on Sunday affirmed its commitment on zero tolerance in cases of harassment and informed that staff members have been suspended.

"TCS has a long-standing zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form. We have always ensured the highest standards of safety and well-being of our employees at workplace. As soon as we were made aware of the matter in Nashik, we took swift action," it had said.

Govt imposes import curbs on Glufosinate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government on Monday imposed curbs on imports of Glufosinate and its salts, a herbicide used in agriculture sector, for six months.

"The import of Glufosinate and its salts... shall be restricted where the combined amount of the CIF (cost, insurance, freight) value and



applicable anti-dumping duty, calculated on a per kilogram basis, is less than ₹1,154," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Tulip garden in Srinagar to be closed as bloom season ends

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Srinagar

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, a major tourist attraction in Kashmir in the spring season, will be closed to the public as bloom season comes to an end, an official said here on Monday.

The decision to close the garden on Thursday, located on the banks of Dal Lake here, was taken based on the recommendation of a team of experts, the official said. The



garden was thrown open to the public by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on March 16, a week ahead of schedule due to a

sudden rise in temperature leading to early tulip bloom. The garden was among 44 destinations closed for tourists last year following

the Pahalgam terror attack in April that killed 26 people. It reopened this year after a security audit.

The garden was added to the tourist spots of Kashmir in 2008 by then chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to attract tourists to the valley in the lean spring season.

More than 70 varieties of tulips were on display at the garden as the floriculture department increased the density of bulbs to give a richer look to the garden.

DAILY SUDOKU

				9	2			
	9		6			5		
5	2					8		
	8				9	7	6	3
		9				2		
6	7	1	3				4	
		8					7	1
		4			8		5	
			1	3				

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

HOW TO SOLVE IT

Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you fill a 9x9 grid so that numbers 1 to 9 appear once in every row, column, and 3x3 box, using elimination and logical deduction—no maths involved.



SOLUTION (13.04.26)								
9	6	4	1	7	5	3	8	2
8	1	7	6	3	2	4	9	5
3	2	5	4	9	8	7	1	6
2	5	9	3	4	1	6	7	8
7	8	6	2	5	9	1	3	4
1	4	3	7	8	6	2	5	9
5	7	2	9	6	3	8	4	1
4	9	1	8	2	7	5	6	3
6	3	8	5	1	4	9	2	7

DOUBLE CROSSWORD
TUESDAY | APRIL 14, 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		9					
10					11		
				12			
13		14				15	16
17					18		
			19				
20	21					22	23
24				25			
		26					
27					28		
			29				
30						31	

ACROSS

- One's own little drug-store (5)
- Granted, it's a wicked deed by Charlie (5)
- Art or craft of the snooker player? (7)
- Strange argot no longer in use (5)
- Didn't exactly rush to escape! (5)
- Footwear a drunkard got out for a sailor (5)
- Pretend to be discerning? (4,3)
- Vehicle needed in one's job, usually (3)
- She lets in the light (4)
- The blockhead gets these sorted, by order! (6)
- Punished, some fine day (5)

DOWN

- Sour, hard-hearted, fearsome fellow (6)
- Replacements for broken spears (6)
- Very good house for the titular head (3)
- Beastly article tots are upset about (5)
- Bent on a career in crime? (7)
- One islet or eight? (4)
- Be sure to wander in the darkness (6)
- Nominal issue, perhaps (5)
- Questionable strength? (5)
- Near St. Pancras, they get cross! (5)
- It's hairy, having to carry a deadhead! (5)
- Such radio you can get to be mates

- Beat down the old woman with the bad leg (6)
- Fair maid's forename (4)
- It's changed, but not significantly (3)
- Realm of Rex and Dominic? (7)
- He has seniority and will perform for money (5)
- No major figure in a centre for divorcees (5)
- Directors sounding bored (5)
- Not one can be found therein! (7)
- Written, perhaps, by a non-U deputy (5)
- Cuddly boy? (5)

with (5)

- Start to live on drink (5)
- Baffled, again, when there's all that water about (7)
- How the RAF man is apt to shoot a line (6)
- Overlook the admixture of gin with mineral (6)
- Tied up, being low on wine (6)
- His minced steak is sheer poetry! (5)
- Many an individual gets cheated (4)
- In between, it can easily be lost (3)

NBCC-HUDCO alliance marks big leap in asset monetisation push

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In the august presence of Sanjay Kulshrestha, Chairman & Managing Director, HUDCO, and Dr KP Mahadevaswamy, Chairman & Managing Director, NBCC (India) Limited, two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed on 11 April 2026. The MoUs were executed by Radha Roy, Executive Director, HUDCO; Bhushan Kumar, Executive Director (Business Development), HUDCO; and Pradeep Sharma, Executive Director (Business Development), NBCC. Functional Directors and senior officials from both organisations were also



present on the occasion.

The MOU was signed for Redevelopment of leasehold plot at Block No. 25, August Kranti Bhawan, Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi and providing funds by HUDCO for ongoing and upcoming projects of NBCC's self-sustainable model on mutually agreed terms and conditions.

This will give boost to NBCC's redevelopment pro-

jects on self-sustainable model as funds would be availed on reasonable terms and conditions which will not only expedite the start of projects but also increase the profit margins to the valuable clients.

The partnership is expected to expedite project execution, enhance asset value, and contribute to urban infrastructure development.

BALCO deploys India's first humanoid AI for safer smelters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO), India's iconic aluminium producer and a Vedanta Aluminium unit, has deployed ALAISA (Aluminium AI Support Agent) — a first-of-its-kind humanoid, AI-powered assistant — to boost shop-floor capability, operational efficiency, and industrial safety.

Operational at BALCO's Chhattisgarh smelter complex, ALAISA serves as an on-ground training, knowledge, and decision-support interface for shop-floor teams. It integrates conversational AI with plant-specific intelligence to provide real-time guidance on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Standard Maintenance Practices (SMPs), and safety protocols — at the point of operation.

Commenting on the deployment, Rajiv Kumar, CEO of Vedanta Aluminium, said, "Digitalisation is fundamentally reshaping manufacturing. At Vedanta Aluminium,



we are embedding advanced technologies into core operations. ALAISA reflects our commitment to intelligent, future-ready systems that enhance human capability. By combining AI insights with shop-floor expertise, we are

strengthening safety, process reliability, and workforce confidence."

In its initial phase, ALAISA has trained over 100 employees via structured modules, real-time query resolution, and assessment-driven evaluations.

Uday Chauhan, PGT at BALCO, shared his experience: "Before rollout, I underwent safety training on SOPs via ALAISA. It was remarkable. Despite being a robot, it matched human-trainer effectiveness."

E-Tender Notice
GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR
SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of Tractors, Gas Chromatography Unit (GCMS) System, Paddy/Rice Transplanter, Supercritical CO2 Dyeing Machine, Bench Top Powder X-Ray Diffractometer, Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer, Ion Chromatography, Refrigerators and Computers be submitted online latest by 28/04/2026 upto 4:00 p.m. Detailed information can be obtained from website www.eproc.punjab.gov.in. Any corrigendum/Addendum related to these e-tender will be uploaded, if required, on Punjab Govt. website: eproc.punjab.gov.in
Director of Research

2426/12/2026-27/10423 Dated CHD :- 13/04/2026



भारत के संविधान निर्माता, भारत रत्न

डॉ. भीमराव अम्बेडकर को कोटि-कोटि नमन

न्याय, समानता और
समरसता के मूल्यों से
सशक्त होता मध्यप्रदेश



136^{वीं} जयंती समारोह

14 अप्रैल, 2026

डॉ. अम्बेडकर नगर (महू)
जिला इंदौर

मुख्य अतिथि

डॉ. मोहन यादव

मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

“भारत रत्न डॉ. भीमराव अम्बेडकर के समाज कल्याण के लिए किए गए योगदान को कभी भुलाया नहीं जा सकता बाबासाहेब की न्याय, समानता और समरसता की विरासत हमें हमेशा प्रेरित करती रहेगी।”

-डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री

डॉ. भीमराव अम्बेडकर के सपनों को समर्पित विकास

आस्था से जुड़ाव

बाबासाहेब से जुड़े महू, दिल्ली, नागपुर, मुंबई और लंदन में स्थित 5 ऐतिहासिक स्थल मुख्यमंत्री तीर्थ दर्शन योजना में शामिल

वैश्विक आस्था और अध्ययन का केंद्र महू

स्मारक, संग्रहालय, सभागार, स्वागत द्वार एवं अंतर्राष्ट्रीय रिसर्च सेंटर का विकास

सम्मान का प्रतीक नामकरण

महू रेलवे स्टेशन का नाम 'डॉ. अम्बेडकर नगर'

युवा स्व-रोज़गार उद्यम को नई उड़ान

डेयरी इकाई के लिए कामधेनु योजना में ₹42 लाख तक ऋण

आर्थिक कल्याण योजना में ₹1 लाख तक अनुदान

संत रविदास स्व-रोज़गार योजना में ₹1 लाख से ₹50 लाख तक सहायता

उद्योग उदय योजना के माध्यम से MSME को वित्तीय सहयोग

शिक्षा में उत्कृष्टता का सम्मान

डॉ. भीमराव अम्बेडकर मेधावी विद्यार्थी पुरस्कार योजना 10वीं-12वीं में प्रोत्साहन पुरस्कार

उच्च शिक्षा एवं अंतर्राष्ट्रीय अध्ययन हेतु अम्बेडकर फेलोशिप

पर्यावरण और विरासत का संगम

सागर में 25वां डॉ. बी.आर. अम्बेडकर वन्यजीव अभयारण्य घोषित



सीधा

प्रसारण



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jansamparkMP