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TOP STORY

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Shreyas Iyer returns to Eden Gardens to lead Punjab Kings against Kolkata Knight Riders

Trump says 'Crimea will stay with Russia' as he seeks end to war in Ukraine

Suniel Shetty's intense first look from historical drama 'Kesari Veer' unveiled

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Umran Malik joins KKR camp to continue rehab from injury

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India's Direct Tax Collection Hits Target in 2024-2



MARKET

SENSEX	NIFTY
79212.53	24039.35
-588.90	-207.35
GOLD	SILVER
94,920.00	96,400.00
-992.00	-1,111.00

WEATHER

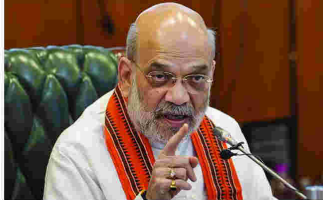
Sunrise	5:46 AM
Sunset	6:54 PM
Moonrise	4:28 AM
Moonset	5:24 PM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	40°C
Minimum	27°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	40°C
Minimum	26°C

Shah asks CMs to ensure no Pakistani stays after April 27

Reinforcing the CCS decisions, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced the immediate suspension of all visa services for Pakistani citizens.

New Delhi
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asked the chief ministers of the states and union territories to identify all Pakistani nationals in their respective jurisdictions and take immediate steps to ensure their prompt return to their country, sources said.

Earlier on Wednesday the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by prime Minister Narendra Modi took the decision to cancel all types of visas, effective



immediately in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26

tourists were killed.

The Centre has mandated that all Pakistani nationals must leave India by April 27, with a brief extension granted only to those on medical visas, who must exit by April 29.

Reinforcing the CCS decisions, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced the immediate suspension of all visa services for Pakistani citizens.

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Pak troops open fire along LoC, Indian Army retaliates

New Delhi

The Indian Army has effectively responded to unprovoked firing by Pakistani military at some places along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir amid sharp escalation of tension between the two neighbours following the dastardly Pahalgam terror attack.

Military sources said the Pakistan military resorted to the firing on Thursday, adding there were no reports of any casualties.

There is no official word from the Indian Army on the Pakistani



firing and the Indian response.

"There were incidents of small arm firing at some places on Line of Control initiated by Pakistan," said a source.

"The firing was effectively responded to," the source added.

As tensions between India and Pakistan rose, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi reviewed the security situation in Srinagar with senior Army commanders.

Pakistan military has been put on high alert following India's assertion that it will hunt down the terrorists involved in Tuesday's Pahalgam strike that killed 26 people.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

Centre tells SC Waqf act upholds core Muslim practices

New Delhi
The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, respects the essential religious practices of the Muslims by leaving matters of faith and worship "untouched", the Centre on Friday informed the Supreme Court.

In a preliminary affidavit filed in the apex court, the government said the reforms introduced serve compelling objectives of transparency, accountability, social welfare and inclusive governance, which are in harmony with the values of the Constitution and public interest.

Seeking dismissal of pleas challenging the validity of the Act, the Centre called the amended law a "constitutionally valid" enactment that "formalised, harmonised and modernised" the pre-existing waqf regime with the fundamental rights to freedom of religion under Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution.

The 2025 Act, it said, was passed with the objective of modernising the management of waqf properties in India through transparent, efficient and inclusive measures.

"Act respects the essential religious practices of the Muslim community by leaving matters of faith and worship untouched, while legitimately regulating the

CONTD ON PAGE-2



भारत सरकार

The new wave of youth empowerment, Shaping the identity of VIKSIT BHARAT



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Rozgar Mela By Prime Minister Narendra Modi

**26th April, 2025 11:00 AM
(Through Video Conferencing)**

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➤ More than 2200 courses available on i-GOT Karmayogi Portal along with "Karmayogi Prarambh" module for training of selected candidates

➤ Lakhs of recruitments in Government jobs leading to significant improvement in citizen services

SC pulls up Rahul Gandhi for 'irresponsible' Savarkar jibe

New Delhi
The Supreme Court on Friday censured Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for "irresponsible" remarks on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar at a rally in Maharashtra but stayed the criminal proceedings against him.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan said, "Let's not mock our freedom fighters." The bench further asked senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Gandhi, whether he knew that even Mahatma Gandhi used the words such as "your faithful servant" in his communications to the Britishers.



When Singhvi argued charges of promoting enmity and public mischief were not made out against Gandhi, the bench retorted, "You are most obedient... does your client know that Mahatma Gandhi also used 'your faithful servant' while addressing the viceroy? Can Mahatma Gandhi be called a 'servant of Britishers' merely because he addressed himself to the viceroy as 'your servant'." Agency



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By Priyanka Saurabh

"Pahalgam attack: When will we learn to identify the real enemy?"

On one hand, India is breaking itself into pieces in the name of castes, sub-castes, ideologies, and beliefs; on the other hand, our enemies are getting organized and attacking our unity. The terrorist attack that happened recently in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, has once again reminded us that the real enemy is not within us but sitting across the border. This attack is not a conspiracy but a bloody expression of the jihadi ideology, which has been trying to drown India in blood for the past several decades.

Innocent civilians were killed in this attack, security forces were injured, and once again the same old scenes returned on TV channels—weeping eyes, blood-soaked pieces of land, and ritualistic reactions of political parties. But the most worrying thing is that this time too many intellectuals, journalists, and political analysts got busy blaming Prime Minister Narendra Modi instead of striking at the roots of terrorism.

What kind of politics is this?

Have we reached that level of mental bankruptcy where silence on enemy bullets and harsh comments on the country's leadership have become fashionable? A question needs to be asked—did Modi invite terrorists to Pahalgam? Did he, as prime minister, encourage such attacks?

In fact, Narendra Modi is the same prime minister who announced India's new military policy by conducting surgical and air strikes on Pakistani soil. This is the prime minister whose government gave a free hand to the "army"—"Go! ka jawab bullet se" became not just a slogan but a strategy.

Political will and security outlook

India's surgical strike after the Uri attack in 2016 and the Balakot strike after the Pulwama attack in 2019 proved that India is no longer a country that only apologizes but has become a country that responds. These actions were not just proof of military prowess but of political will. After this, India's policy against terrorism also got support at international forums.

The recent extradition of 26/11 attack mastermind Tahawwur Rana from the US is also a diplomatic victory of



this government. Pakistan, which earlier used to challenge India, is today on the verge of economic bankruptcy and is pleading on global forums.

All this did not happen by chance. It is the result of a well-thought-out strategy, clear goals, and tough decisions.

But why the criticism anyway?

A large section, which maintains silence after every jihadi attack in the name of 'secularism', attacks the Modi government. For them, it is important to hide the religion of the terrorists, but it is also important to put the government in the dock. This ideology has to understand that terrorism has no religion, but it has its roots in an ideology. And being afraid of naming that ideology is equal to sui-

cide. Those who are waging war against infidels by using a 1400-year-old book as a weapon are insulting any religion. This jihad is not faith; it is the politics of power. And it is not just the army, but the society too, that must recognize and reject it.

Society divided into castes, country unaware of terrorism

It is unfortunate that on one hand our youth are busy in social media reels and casteism debates, and on the other hand our soldiers are facing the bullets of terrorists on the border. On one hand there are debates of 'jobs after asking caste' and 'bread after asking religion'; on the other hand, terrorists are firing bullets after asking religion. This

is not an irony, but a warning.

Today we have to decide whose side we stand with—with those who want to tear this country apart or with those who have the courage to respond to every attack?

It's not Modi but the mindset that is to blame.

Blaming Modi for the terrorist attack is like blaming a doctor for the death of a patient before he has even started surgery. The truth is that the Jihadi mindset, Pakistan, which fosters terrorism, and the global silence, which is keeping mum on this ideology, are responsible for this attack.

Modi has not only responded but has also vowed to bring out the terrorists and their masters from the neth-

erworld. The track record of his government says this. So shouldn't we now stand united against terrorism?

A united India is the solution.

The Pahalgam attack has shaken us once again. This is not the first attack, and perhaps not the last. But if we still do not wake up, if we still keep fighting among ourselves, the enemy is sure to win. We need an India that can identify and confront terrorism, rising above castes, religions, and differences.

Have political differences, but be united on national issues. Criticize, but choose the right target. Silence on the terrorist's bullets and noise on the Prime Minister—this is suicide.

The Pahalgam attack is a warning for us—if we do not wake up even now, the next target will be none other than ourselves. And then perhaps we will not even get time to say, "I wish we had identified the right enemy in time."

About the Author

(Priyanka Saurabh, Research Scholar in Political Science Poetess, Independent journalist and columnist)

Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only correct solution.

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

Solution, Sudoku

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

CONSCIOUSNESS – A SPIRITUAL SOLVENT AND A SCIENTIFIC STARTLER

The 'Hard Problem of Consciousness' is being discussed by scientists as they are trying to explore the cause at the root of creation. They have found that if an atom is broken down further, there is a lot of space that exists between the electrons, protons, neutrons and subatomic particles. This space is not an empty space but is governed by four kinds of forces known as the electromagnetic force, gravitational force, strong nuclear force and weak nuclear force. It is these forces that hold the entire universe together and do not let the atoms collide with each other. These forces are forms of energy that can neither be created, nor destroyed, but they can only change from one form to another. The basic scientific principle that we are aware of is that energy can become matter, and matter can turn back into energy.

While these are the dimensions that science has been able to explore, spirituality has already explained these and more by stating that the energy or force is a 'conscious energy' with its own inherent or latent intelligence. The universe with all its variety and versatility is proof enough to know that there is a supreme intelligent force at play. If not for its conscious presence, who could orchestrate such a



Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai



beautiful bounty in creation that provides everything which sustains life?

There are advanced research institutes that are working on this dimension of science, which is at the cusp of spirituality. The ris-

is of yore understood the highest truth about consciousness through their intuition without having to perform experiments. The basic part is that 'consciousness' is not an experimental exercise but an experiential intuitive knowledge. This is the point to which scientists are slowly reaching. Is there a place in this entire universe bereft of consciousness? The answer is a definite 'No', for any existence exists only because of consciousness; it includes both sentient and insentient objects. The entire creation floats in the sea of consciousness, and there is not a sprinkle of space where it is not present. We exist because there is consciousness in us. Consciousness is the only indestructible, imperishable, eternal presence that truly defines us.

Our connection with our consciousness is our connection with our own true Self. It is only this connection that we are here to tune into. To live in concordance with our consciousness is the most natural, effortless, and cheerful way to lead this life. Think about it!



By Vijay Garg

India's startup surge: A new innovation powerhouse

synergy between intentional policy and organic innovation, unleashing hidden potential across the nation. It demonstrates how focused efforts have transformed ideas into successful businesses, paving the way for India's emergence as a global startup hub.

The exponential growth trajectory of India's startup ecosystem coincides directly with the rollout of key government programmes and visionary leadership that removed roadblocks and actively fostered innovation. Launched in 2016, these initiatives provided a structured framework that catalysed the entrepreneurial surge. Pivotal to this transformation was the launch of the Startup India initiative in January 2016.

Envisioned as a flagship programme, its core objective was to cultivate a startup culture, build a robust and inclusive ecosystem, and fundamentally transform India into a country of 'job creators instead of job seekers.'

India's visionary leadership has transformed the nation from job-seekers to job providers, reflecting its entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to building a self-reliant, job-generating economy. It wasn't just a slogan; it was backed by a comprehensive Action Plan focusing on Simplification, Funding, and Incubation. This framework offered tax exemptions, simplified compliance, and financial support to help early-stage ventures overcome funding and regulatory challenges.

Simultaneously, the Government launched

the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in 2016, which fostered a culture of innovation through initiatives like the Atal Tinkering Labs and Atal Incubation Centres. These programmes not only nurtured young talent but also created a robust infrastructure that supported startups across diverse sectors, including technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. AIM's focus on nurturing creativity and research has played a crucial role in strengthening the ecosystem and preparing it for the future.

In 2024, the Indian Government made a transformative decision by abolishing the angel tax in the Union Budget. Introduced in 2012, this tax had acted as a significant obstacle for investors, discouraging investment by imposing levies on capital raised above fair market value, often hindering critical funding at vital stages. This step has cleared the way for a more investor-friendly environment, fostering growth and opportunity for startups across the nation.

The removal of this tax has been celebrated as a major step towards creating a more investor-friendly environment, helping startups access the funding they need to scale and succeed.

The decision to abolish the angel tax, alongside other reforms, showcases the Government's commitment to providing a conducive atmosphere for entrepreneurship to thrive. The growth of India's startup ecosystem has been far from centralised. While traditional tech hubs like Bengaluru, Hyder-



abad, and Gurugram remain significant, a noticeable shift has occurred as entrepreneurs from smaller cities and towns have begun to make their mark.

This democratisation of innovation has been facilitated by the Government's push for a more inclusive startup ecosystem that is accessible to a broader pool of talent.

Sectors like fintech, healthcare, and agritech have emerged as hotspots for innovation, with over 1,300 active tech startups added in 2022 alone. The Government has played a vital role in fostering growth within these sectors, encouraging investment and providing specialised support to startups that address critical societal needs.

For instance, fintech startups have revolutionised access to financial services, healthcare ventures have improved healthcare delivery, and agritech innovations have brought efficiency to the agriculture sector. Despite facing challenges like funding slowdowns and hiring freezes, the ecosystem demonstrated resilience. In 2023, India added over 1,000 startups, including 400 in emerging areas, underscoring the sector's adaptability.



The journey of our nation from ancient to modern India is a saga of remarkable achievements and milestones. It begins with the wisdom of great sages, progresses through the profound teachings of Swami Vivekananda and the Upanishads, and extends to the strides of modern innovation like the upagrah (satellite) and the evolution from the traditional Kumbh Mela to the Startup Kumbh Mela. Each chapter of this journey stands as a powerful testament to our nation's relentless hard work, groundbreaking innovation, and unwavering self-reliance.

India is now rapidly emerging as a global leader in fostering sustainable, innovative, and thriving startups. As reported by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) on 16 January 2025, the country commemorates nine years of Startup India, a game-changing initiative launched in 2016. National Startup Day marks a key milestone in India's entrepreneurial journey.

Startup India, launched under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has become a cornerstone of national innovation and growth. It has championed the entrepreneurial spirit across the country,

empowering thousands to explore creativity and innovation. As a result, India has become the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world.

India's startup story is a testament to the indomitable entrepreneurial spirit of New India. Since 2016, our vision has been to drive innovation, provide financial support, and nurture budding businesses. In just under a decade, ideas have evolved into industry giants, and dreams have become tangible realities.

Today, India stands tall, not only as a hub for technology but as a beacon of progress across diverse sectors. Our achievements in areas like vaccination further reflect our scientific prowess and societal resilience.

Inspired by the principles of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) and Na Praheshu Kadachana (focus on action, not results), India continues to grow with values at its core. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push for 'Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi' (growth and heritage, hand in hand) defines today's India—which is modern and aspirational, yet deeply rooted in its rich traditions and culture. India's story is not just one of economic expansion, but a journey of purpose, passion, and progress.

About the Author

(Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational columnist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab)

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Youth can overcome drug addiction with support of khaps: CM Saini

Praveen Attre
New Delhi/Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday said 'khaps' can play a key role in helping young people overcome drug addiction, which adversely impacts the entire society.

The chief minister also assured that his government would provide whatever support the 'khaps' (caste councils) need to combat drug addiction.

Addressing khap representatives from Haryana at the PWD rest house in Jind after flagging off a cyclotron event, Saini urged them to launch a campaign to keep the youth away from drugs and support the goal of making Haryana a drug-free state.

"We must save our youth



from the harmful effects of drug addiction. It is crucial to engage as many young people as possible in sports, enabling them to bring home maximum medals and make Haryana proud, both nationally and international-

ly," Saini said.

During their interaction with the chief minister, the khap representative shared their views on various social issues, according to an official statement.

Earlier, Saini flagged off

the state-level 'Drug-free Haryana Cyclotron 2.0' from Jind under the pledge of a drug-free Haryana.

Speaking on the occasion, Saini said the fight against drugs must be won through the united efforts of khap

panchayats, youth, women, teachers, and all sections of society.

"We aim to build a drug-free, healthy and empowered Haryana. This cycle rally represents the commitment to fight the drug menace, raise awareness and eliminate addiction through unity," he said.

The chief minister also said that khap panchayats have been an integral part of Haryana's social fabric since ancient times.

"History is witness to the role these (khap) panchayats have played in resisting foreign forces and making significant decisions. Today, as we battle the social evil of drug addiction, their active participation in this cyclotron proves that khaps are not only guardians of tradition but also pioneers of social change," the chief minister said.

"In the past, too, they've sent a clear message — those who promote drug use will face social boycott, and those who quit drugs will be welcomed," Saini added.

Stating that the money earned from illegal drug trade fuels terrorism across the world, Saini said, "The anti-drug campaign will indirectly help curb terrorism."

"If you see someone trapped in addiction, don't isolate them but help them get back on the right path. Social change begins at home, so let us all take the first step from our homes," the chief minister said. The cyclotron, which began in Hisar on April 5, reached Jind after passing through various districts. It will now proceed to Barwala before culminating in Sirsa on April 27 via Fatehabad.

Five dead as car plunges into Pandoh Dam in Mandi



Rajan Punchhi
Mandi

In a heartbreaking incident, five members of a family lost their lives after a car fell into the Pandoh Dam on Friday afternoon. The victims, including a three-month-old infant and a couple, were returning from a wedding ceremony when the tragedy struck.

According to police reports, the accident occurred around 4:15 pm on the Bakhli Mandir road near Pandoh Dam. The car, bearing registration number HP 31 C-189, is believed to have lost control and veered off the narrow mountain road before plunging into the dam's waters. The vehicle rolled down a steep slope and overturned multiple times before shattering on impact.

Emergency teams from Pandoh Police Station and Mandi Sadar Police Station rushed to the scene along with the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and local residents to carry out the rescue operation. Four people were declared dead on the spot, while the critically injured infant succumbed to her injuries while being transported to the hospital.

All the deceased were reportedly part of the groom's family and were returning to their native villages after attending a wedding at a

All the deceased were reportedly part of the groom's family and were returning to their native villages after attending a wedding at a village above Bakhli Mandir. The groom's brother, who still had mehndi on his hands, was among the victims.

village above Bakhli Mandir. The groom's brother, who still had mehndi on his hands, was among the victims.

The deceased have been identified as Duni Chand (35) and his wife Kanta Devi (30) from village Tauraur Segli, Tehsil Chachiot; Dahlu Ram, son of Thalia Ram from village Naun, Kot Tehsil Chachiot; Meena Devi, daughter of Amar Singh; and a three-month-old baby girl. They hailed from villages in the Gohar sub-division, including Naun, Tauraur, and Lahaul.

The bodies were recovered and brought to the Mandi Zonal Hospital for post-mortem. They will be handed over to the families after necessary procedures.

Superintendent of Police, Mandi, Sakshi Verma, confirmed the incident and said that the cause of the accident is under investigation.

Yash Pratap & Mehak Jaiswal shine bright in fastest UP Board results ever

Lucknow/Prayagraj

The Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP) announced the 2025 High School and Intermediate board examination results on Friday, setting a new benchmark in efficiency by declaring the results in just 43 days. This swift announcement, made possible by the proactive and transparent system under the Yogi Adityanath-led government, marks a significant milestone in the state's educational reforms.

This year's results reflect a strong overall performance across all categories. The pass percentage for High School students stood at an impressive 90.11%, while Intermediate students recorded a success rate of 81.15%. Once again, girls outshone boys in both categories, continuing a consistent trend of academic excellence.

In High School, Yash Pratap Singh from Late Smt. Raskendri Devi Inter College, located in Umri, Jalain district, emerged as the state topper with a remarkable 97.83% marks. In the Intermediate exams, Mehak Jaiswal from Bacha Ram Yadav Inter College in Bhulai Ka Pura, Prayagraj district, secured the first position with 97.20%, becoming a source of inspiration for students across the state.

Breaking down the statistics, the pass percentage among girls in the High School exams was significantly higher at 93.87%, compared to 86.66% among boys — a difference of 7.21%. In the Intermediate category, girls again led with 86.37% pass rate, outpacing boys who stood at 76.60%, showing a 9.77% lead in favor of female students.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended his heartfelt congratulations to all successful students, wishing them a bright and prosperous future. He also praised the efforts of educators and administrative officials for ensuring fair, transparent, and cheating-

free examinations, in line with his vision for a more robust education system in the state.

The 2025 board examinations were conducted from February 24 to March 12 across 8,140 centers in the state. The UP Board ensured the entire process was concluded within just 13 working days. The evaluation of answer sheets was carried out between March 19 and April 2 at 261 evaluation centers, involving a total of 92,394 examiners for High School and 56,066 teachers for Intermediate answer sheets.

The practical examinations for Intermediate students were held in two phases from February 1 to February 21. According to Mahendra Dev, Director of Secondary Education, and Bhagwati Singh, Secretary of UP Board, the smooth and timely execution of the exams and results was made possible due to key reforms introduced in recent years. These reforms included the integration of technology in administration, better coordination among departments, and stricter monitoring protocols.

In a heartening development, inmates from Uttar Pradesh jails also participated in the board exams and achieved commendable results. In the High School examinations, 94 inmates appeared and 91 passed, registering an impressive pass percentage of 96.81%. Similarly, in the Intermediate category, 105 inmates appeared and 91 passed, reflecting a success rate of 86.67%. These figures underscore the transformative role of education in rehabilitation and self-improvement, even behind bars. The 2025 UP Board results not only reflect the academic potential of students across the state but also highlight the significant administrative progress made under CM Yogi Adityanath's leadership in ensuring a fair, fast, and inclusive examination process.

Double engine govt following ideals of Ambedkar to uplift poor: Haryana CM

Komal Ramola
Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday said the "double engine government" of the Centre and the state is committed to uplifting the last person in society by following the path and ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He said various welfare schemes are being implemented to empower the poor, improve the lives of the most backward communities, and ensure justice for all.

The Chief Minister was speaking at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Samman Samaroh and Seminar organized by the Ravidas Temple and Dharamshala in Kurukshetra. On the occasion, he also inaugurated the newly constructed Ambedkar Bhawan and offered prayers at the temple of Sant Shiromani Guri Ravidas Ji, seeking



happiness and prosperity for the people of the state. He announced a grant of ₹21 lakh for the institution. Saini said that Baba Saheb dedicated his life to the cause of social justice and worked relentlessly to eradicate casteism, untouchability, and inequality. "He not only fought for the upliftment of the marginalised but also played a key role in the freedom movement," he added. He further said that Prime

Minister Narendra Modi is walking in the footsteps of Dr. Ambedkar, implementing schemes to uplift every section of society. "In the last 10 years, the state government has given due respect to the poor through schemes like Ayushman Bharat and Chirayu Yojana," he said.

The Chief Minister highlighted the achievements under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, stating that

Prez Murmu to attend IIT Mandi's 15th Anniversary celebrations

Rajan Punchhi
Mandi

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi is all set to commemorate its 15 years of academic, research, and innovation excellence with a grand celebration titled Celebrating Fifteen Years of Achievements (CFA-2025). The event will take place on May 7 and 8, 2025, at the institute's scenic campus nestled in the hills of Himachal Pradesh.

Adding to the prestige of the occasion, the Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, will attend as the Chief Guest, underlining the national significance of IIT Mandi's journey since its inception. As part of the celebrations, the institute will host a multidisciplinary research conclave focusing on emerging front-runner technologies. The conclave aims to spotlight cutting-edge developments in fields such as Artificial Intelli-

gence and Robotics, Semiconductors, Quantum Technologies, Advanced Materials, and Entrepreneurship.

The CFA-2025 conclave is expected to draw some of the world's leading minds in science and technology. Among the eminent speakers scheduled to attend are Prof. Richard Siegel from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA; Prof. Oussama Khatib from Stanford University; Prof. Robert Wille of Technical University of Munich, Germany; Dr. Randhir Thakur, CEO and MD of Tata Electronics; Dr. James McLaughlin from Ulster University, UK; Prof. Ganapati Ramanath from RPI, USA; Prof. Anirban Bandyopadhyay from NIMS, Japan; Prof. Fabien Bretnaker from CNRS, France; Dr. Bikramjit Basu from CGCRI; Dr. Santanu Chaudhury from IIT Delhi; and Dr. Umesh Waghmare from JNCASR.

Yogi Adityanath emphasizes infrastructure standards in Madrasa approval drive

Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday called for major reforms in the state's madrasa education system, directing officials to ensure strict compliance with infrastructure norms before granting recognition to any madrasa. Chairing a high-level meeting to review the current state of madrasa education, the Chief Minister emphasized that madrasas should not remain confined to religious teachings and must provide students access to modern and holistic education.

The Chief Minister asserted that the government's goal is to mainstream madrasa education through innovation and inclusivity, ensuring equal opportunities and quality education for every section of society. "Students studying in madrasas should have access to the full spectrum of modern education," he stated, adding that education should be transparent, qual-



ity-driven, and employment-oriented.

Expressing concern over the challenges posed by the Supreme Court's ruling that declared the Kamil (graduate) and Fazil (postgraduate) degrees of the Madrasa Board unconstitutional, the Chief Minister underscored the urgency to align madrasa recognition and operational standards with those of mainstream educational institutions under the Education Department. He stressed the need to revamp the madrasa curriculum in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and to update the eligibility

criteria for teaching and non-teaching staff accordingly. "The process of teacher selection in madrasas must be made fair and transparent," he added.

In pursuit of these reforms, the Chief Minister announced the formation of a special committee to be headed by the Director of Minority Welfare. The committee will include Special Secretaries from the departments of Basic Education, Secondary Education, Finance, Law, and Minority Welfare. It will be tasked with recommending comprehensive reforms for the effective functioning of

madrasas, job security for educators, and a brighter academic future for students. During the meeting, the Minority Welfare and Waqf Department presented a detailed report on the current status of madrasa education in the state. Officials informed the Chief Minister that there are currently 13,329 recognized madrasas operating in Uttar Pradesh, with a total enrolment of over 12.35 lakh students. Among these, 9,979 madrasas cater to primary and upper primary education (Classes 1 to 8), while 3,350 offer secondary and higher secondary education (Classes 9 to 12).

Of the total, 561 madrasas receive government grants and together serve 2,31,806 students. These grant-in-aid institutions employ 9,889 teachers and 8,367 non-teaching staff, all of whom have been receiving salaries and allowances as per the 7th Pay Commission since January 1, 2016.

It also announced suspending visa services to Pakistani nationals with immediate effect. Pakistani nationals continued to flock the Attari-Wagah border on Friday. A woman, married in Karachi, said she had come to Delhi for 15 days to meet her mother, who is a heart patient. She alleged that she was not being allowed to go back.

Pakistani nationals continue to return home through Attari-Wagah border in Punjab

Chandigarh

Pakistani nationals visiting India continued to return home through the Attari-Wagah land route in Punjab's Amritsar on Friday, after the Centre set a 48-hour deadline for them to leave the country in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack.

However, a few women married in Pakistan but pos-

sessing Indian passports alleged that they were facing problems in going back, despite carrying the required documents.

They said they had come to meet their relatives in India but had to return after the government set the 48-hour deadline for Pakistani nationals to leave the country.

Twenty-six people, most-

ly tourists, were killed and several injured when terrorists opened fire at a meadow near the popular tourist town of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Friday afternoon.

The Centre on Wednesday announced a raft of measures, including expulsion of Pakistani military attaches, suspension of the

Indus Water Treaty of 1960 and immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit point, in view of the cross-border links to the Pahalgam attack.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Pakistani nationals will not be allowed to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) and any Pakistani national current-

ly in India under the scheme had 48 hours to leave the country.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was announced at the meeting that the integrated check-post (ICP) at Attari will be closed immediately and those who crossed over

to Pakistan with valid documents may return through that route before May 1.

The Centre on Thursday announced revoking all visas issued to Pakistani nationals from April 27 and advised Indian nationals residing in Pakistan to return home at the earliest as tensions between the two neighbours escalated following the Pahalgam attack.

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“He always wanted to score runs in Bengaluru”: Dinesh Karthik on Devdutt Padikkal

Shreyas Iyer returns to Eden Gardens to lead Punjab Kings against Kolkata Knight Riders

■ Reuniting with his old Delhi Capitals mentor Ricky Ponting, the duo steadies

Kolkata
The man who led them to glory just a season ago could now stand in the way of Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) playoff qualification when the side hosts the Shreyas Iyer-led revamped Punjab Kings (PBKS) in a high-stakes Indian Premier League (IPL) clash here at the Eden Gardens on Saturday.

Twelve months ago, Iyer had led KKR to their first IPL title in a decade. On Saturday, he returns in opposition colours, at the helm of a rejuvenated Punjab side chasing a playoff spot.

Let go by KKR in one of the most surprising off-season moves, Iyer has found both comfort and purpose in Punjab Kings.

Reuniting with his old Delhi Capitals mentor Ricky Ponting, the duo has steadied PBKS into the top five of the table with five wins from eight games.

The partnership has given Iyer the space to lead confidently and he has tallied 263 runs with three centuries so far. However, he comes into the weekend game, carrying three single digit scores.

Saturday offers him the perfect chance to make a statement—much like KL Rahul did the other against his former franchise Lucknow Super Giants.



ants with a composed 57 not out. Iyer too could have a Rahul-like moment under the Eden lights.

KKR, on the other hand, are in desperate need of momentum. With five defeats in eight matches, another stumble could tighten their already narrow path to the playoffs.

Their top-order remains unsettled, the middle-order erratic, and the spin attack ineffective on a surface they once called their fortress.

KKR's middle-order trio of Russell,

Rinku and Rameendep has failed to deliver the finishing punch this season, prompting calls for a shake-up.

The team may be forced to bring in Caribbean all-rounder Rovman Powell, whose power-hitting and handy pace can add much-needed spark and balance.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi, one of the few bright spots in KKR's batting, might once again look to negotiate the tricky phase when the likes of Arshdeep Singh (Punjab's leading wick-

et-taker with 11 scalps) and Yuzvendra Chahal operate.

Skipper Ajinkya Rahane too will be under the scanner, having anchored the innings well at times but struggled to shift gears and finish games.

He will be wary of Chahal, who dismantled KKR in their demoralising 95 all-out collapse only last week by claiming the wickets of Rahane, Raghuvanshi, Rinku Singh, and Rameendep Singh in a devastating spell.

With Marco Jansen providing the early menace and new find Nehal Wadhwa managing tidy finishes, PBKS certainly look a more confident and well-rounded outfit.

For KKR's bowling unit, Harshit Rana's duel with PBKS opener Priyansh Arya could set the tone. Arya smashed a century against Chennai Super Kings earlier this season.

Despite their troubles, KKR are, however, still alive in the playoffs race.

Winning five of their remaining six games could be sufficient, but anything less would leave them dependent on other results.

For this to happen, KKR must fix their home record, which is just one win from four matches here.

The much-publicised friction with Eden curator Sujay Mukherjee over pitch preparations has drawn un-

wanted attention and debates over spin-friendly surfaces, fairness, and even calls from commentators to consider shifting base.

Despite it being slow and grippy, which is exactly what KKR wanted, Sunil Narine has taken just two wickets at the Eden. Varun Chakravarthy (4) has been marginally better, while Moeen Ali has failed to strike in two matches.

Teams (from):
KKR: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Rinku Singh, Quinton de Kock (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Rovman Powell, Manish Pandey, Luvnith Sisodia, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Moeen Ali, Rameendep Singh, Andre Russell, Anrich Nortje, Vaibhav Arora, Mayank Markande, Spencer Johnson, Harshit Rana, Sunil Narine, Varun Chakravarthy and Chetan Sakaria.

PBKS: Shreyas Iyer (c), Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Nehal Wadhwa, Glenn Maxwell, Vysakh Vijaykumar, Yash Thakur, Harpreet Brar, Vishnu Vinod, Marco Jansen, Lockie Ferguson, Josh Inglis, Xavier Bartlett, Kuldeep Sen, Pyla Avinash, Suryansh Shedge, Musheer Khan, Harnoor Pannu, Aaron Hardie, Priyansh Arya, Azmatullah Omarzai. Match starts: 7.30pm.

Umran Malik joins KKR camp to continue rehab from injury



Kolkata
Indian pacer Umran Malik rejoined the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) camp for a "return to cricket" programme as he continued his rehab to recover from an injury which ruled him out of the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

The official X handle of KKR made the announcement, posting that Umran has not joined as an official playing member, but to work with the team and support staff to get back to his best after his injury. KKR posted, "Umran Malik has joined the squad in Kolkata to continue his rehab and 'return to cricket' programme with KKR for the remainder of the season. He's not joining as an official playing member of the squad, but will work with the team and support staff to get back to his best! Welcome to the family, Umran."

Ahead of the season in the IPL Mega Auction last year, Umran was roped in by KKR for his base price of Rs 75 lakhs. However, an injury ruled him out, making the defending champions announce Chetan Sakaria as his replacement in March before the start of the season.

Umran, who had a four-year stint with Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) rose to fame as 'Jammu Express' due to his ability to hit the 150 kmph mark while bowling. In his stint with SRH from 2021-24, Umran took 29 wickets in 26 matches at an average of 26.62 and an economy rate of 9.39, with best figures of 5/25.

His peak as an IPL player was the 2022 season, where he took 22 wickets at an average of 20.18, with best figures of 5/25 and an economy rate of 9.02. He finished as his side's top wicket-taker and overall at fourth that season.

These numbers earned him an Indian team call-up in June 2022 against Ireland. Since then, he has played 10 ODIs and eight T20Is for Men in Blue, taking 13 wickets at an average of 30.69, with best figures of 3/57 in the 50-over format. While in the shortest format, he took 11 wickets at an average of 22.09, with best figures of 3/48.

His last match in Indian colours was an ODI during July 2023 against West Indies, in which he took 0/27 in three overs.

His last professional cricket match was the IPL clash for SRH against Mumbai Indians (MI) last year in March.

KKR is currently at the seventh spot in the points table with three wins and five losses, having suffered a loss to the Gujarat Titans by 39 runs in their previous game.

Barcelona, Real Madrid to face off in Copa del Rey 2024-25 final



Sevilla
Spanish giants FC Barcelona (FCB) and Real Madrid (RM) are set to clash in the Copa del Rey 2024-25 final on Sunday at the Estadio La Cartuja in Sevilla, as per Olympics.com.

The Copa del Rey is Spain's top domestic cup competition, run by the Royal Spanish Football Federation.

Barcelona, currently leading the La Liga table, reached the final after a 5-4 win on aggregate over Atletico Madrid (ATM) in the semi-finals. However, they will be missing key players – Robert Lewandowski and Alejandro Balde are both out with hamstring injuries, while Marc Casado is sidelined with a knee problem.

Real Madrid, second in La Liga, also made it to the final after edging past Real Sociedad 5-4 on aggregate. They too have injury concerns, with Dani Carvajal and Eder Militao ruled out due to knee injuries. Star forward Kylian Mbappe is doubtful after suffering an ankle knock.

This will be the third El Clasico of the season. Barcelona have won both previous meetings – a 4-0 victory in La Liga and a 5-2 win in the Supercopa de Espana final in January.

In total, the two sides have faced each other 259 times. Real Madrid have won 106 matches, Barcelona 102, and 51 games have ended in a draw.

Barcelona hold the record for the most Copa del Rey titles with 31, while Real Madrid have lifted the trophy 20 times. Last time when Real Madrid won a Copa del Rey final was in 2023. Brazilian youngster Rodrigo rose to the occasion with a 2-1 victory against Osasuna as his brace secured the 20th title for Real Madrid.

The game had barely got underway when the Los Blancos established their dominance in the game and took the lead. Within two minutes into the game, Vinicius Junior picked the ball on the left flank and slipped past Osasuna defenders as he turned them inside out on the byline and served a goal on the plate to Rodrigo with his pinpoint pass inside the box.

The Brazilian made no mistake to

find the back of the net with his left-foot shot. After suffering an early setback Osasuna players tried to find a response and bring the game back on level terms. They were able to create an opening six minutes later, but Real Madrid's header didn't pose a threat to Thibaut Courtois. A few moments later Aimar tried to open the scoreline for Osasuna but his effort was saved by Madrid's goalkeeper.

Real Madrid continued their domination with possession play and Osasuna tried to neutralize the threat by creating chances. However, their lack of sharpness in the attacking front kept the score in favour of Real Madrid in the first half.

The second half began as Osasuna made their intentions clear by pressing for an equaliser. They found their moment of glory as Torro drilled in a low shot with 58 minutes on the clock and brought the game back on level terms.

After suffering a setback which was always on the cards, Benzema took charge as he crossed the ball from the left and Valverde's volley from the penalty spot narrowly missed the target.

Ancelotti's side finally went back in front in the 70th minute of the game after creating a goal which had similar traits to their first goal. Vini Jr. got past two defenders to reach the byline and he pulled back for Kroos and the ball fell to Rodrigo who stabbed home from close range. As the Brazilian walked back to the dugout after watching his number come up on the substitution board, he received a standing ovation from the spectators in the 89th minute of the game.

In the next few minutes, it seemed as if Real Madrid was destined to materialise the third goal as Vinicius raced through against Herrera, but his pass to Benzema fell just short and the Osasuna shot-stopper was able to smother the ball. In the end, Real Madrid managed to hold onto their lead to ensure they would lift their third trophy of that season, following the European Super Cup and the Club World Cup.

Tim Seifert joins San Francisco Unicorns for 2025 MLC season

New Delhi
New Zealand wicketkeeper-batter Tim Seifert is all set to play in Major League Cricket (MLC) for the first time after being signed by San Francisco Unicorns for the 2025 season. The 30-year-old will reunite with his New Zealand opening partner Finn Allen and former Northern Districts teammate Corey Anderson at the franchise, as per ESPNcricinfo.

Anderson had led the Unicorns to a runners-up finish in the 2024 edition of the tournament.

Though both Seifert and Allen don't currently have central contracts with New Zealand Cricket, they've committed to playing in all of New Zealand's T20 series leading up to the 2026 T20 World Cup. The pair was recently recalled to the national team for the T20 series against Pakistan and impressed with their explosive starts at the top of the order. They've been nicknamed New Zealand's 'bash brothers' for their aggressive batting style. At present, both are also playing in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

"I've been following MLC from afar over the last couple of seasons, particularly keeping a close eye on some of the Kiwi contingent," Seifert said, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

"I can't wait to get started this summer and add some more firepower with a team that is already stacked with talent and in a great position to take things one step further than last year."

Several other New Zealand players have also been picked by MLC franchises. All-rounder Michael Bracewell, who was a key part of New Zealand's journey to the Champions Trophy final in March, has joined MI New York (MINY). He'll team up with fellow Kiwi star Trent Boult, who is already part of the Mumbai Indians setup across MLC, SA20, and Indian Premier League (IPL).

Daryl Mitchell has re-signed with Texas Super Kings (TSK) after missing the 2024 season due to injury. Last year, in his absence, TSK brought in Afghan spinner Noor Ahmad, who has been retained for 2025 alongside Devon Conway. Fast bowler Adam Milne, who played for Washington Freedom in 2023, will join Mitchell and Conway at TSK. Milne is familiar with TSK coach Stephen Fleming, having worked under him at CSK in the IPL.

TSK have also strengthened their squad by signing South African players Nandre Burger and Donovan Ferreira, both of whom play for Joburg Super Kings (JSK) in SA20.

Meanwhile, New Zealand great Ross Taylor has been named the Seattle Orcas' ambassador for the upcoming season. He previously worked as their batting coach. Former England batter Ian Bell will now take over that role.

In a major step, New Zealand Cricket has become the first national board to invest directly in an overseas T20 league. It will help launch a new MLC team when the league expands in 2027.



he added. "We look for both quality cricketers and quality personalities when bringing players into the Unicorns fold, and Tim definitely checks both those boxes." Unicorns head coach Shane Watson said, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

"His skills with the gloves will also be a major asset this year, especially with the new wickets in Oakland and Fort Lauderdale offering something of an unknown for spin bowling. He's also coming in with impressive form with the bat, adding to an already dominant top order alongside Finn (Allen), Shorty (Matt Short), and Jake (Fraser-McGurk)," he added.

Several other New Zealand players

Getting hate and abuse for inviting Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem to NC Classic: Neeraj Chopra

New Delhi
Indian javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra on Friday said he has been bombarded with "hate and abuse" for inviting Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem to next month's NC Classic in Bengaluru, clarifying that the Olympic champion's presence was "completely out of question" in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack.

The Tokyo Olympics gold-medallist and Paris Games silver-winning star from Haryana said he was deeply hurt to see his and his family's integrity being questioned in abusive social media posts.

Chopra invited Nadeem, who defeated the Indian in Paris last year to win gold, for the inaugural Neeraj Chopra Classic to be held in Bengaluru on May 24.

"After all that has taken place over the last 48 hours, Arshad's presence at the NC Classic was completely out of the question. My country and its interests



will always come first," Chopra, who is a Subedar Major in the Indian Army, said in a lengthy post on X.

"To those that are going through the loss of their people, my thoughts and prayers are with you. Along with the entire nation, I am both hurt and angry at what has taken place," said Chopra.

"I am confident that our country's response will show our strength as a nation and justice will be served," he added. Nadeem had declined to come citing other commitments.

The 27-year-old Chopra said he is well aware of the chatter surrounding his invitation to Nadeem after the Pahalgam

attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were gunned down by terrorists.

"...most of it has been hate and abuse. They haven't even left my family out of it," said Chopra.

"I usually am a man of few words, but that doesn't mean I will not speak up against what I think is wrong. More so when it comes to questioning my love for our country, and the respect and honour of my family," he wrote.

Chopra said invites for NC Classic were sent out on Monday, a day before the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

"The invitation I extended to Arshad was from one athlete to another—nothing more, nothing less. The aim of NC Classic was to bring the best athletes to India and for our country to be the home of world-class sporting events.

UK PM Starmer speaks to Modi over 'devastating' Pahalgam terror attack

London: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday and said he was "horrified" by the terror attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people.

According to a readout of the call from 10 Downing Street, Starmer expressed his deep condolences on behalf of the British people, and both leaders agreed to stay in touch.

"The Prime Minister (Starmer) began by saying he was horrified by the devastating terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, which saw the tragic loss of 26 innocent lives," a Downing Street spokesperson said.

"He expressed his deep condolences on behalf of the British people to all those affected, their loved ones, and the people of India. The leaders agreed to stay in touch," the spokesperson said.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Starmer conveyed his sincere condolences on the innocent lives lost in the "heinous terror attack on Indian soil".

"He strongly condemned the barbaric terror attack and expressed that the UK stands with the people of India in this hour of tragedy," MEA spokesperson Ran-dhi Jaiswal said on X.

On Thursday, the Pahalgam terror attack was raised in the House of Commons by Opposition Conservative Party MP Bob Blackman, Chair of the Backbench Business Committee, who called for a parliamentary statement by UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

Trump says 'Crimea will stay with Russia' as he seeks end to war in Ukraine

Kyiv: US President Donald Trump said in an interview published on Friday that "Crimea will stay with Russia," the latest example of the US leader pressuring Ukraine to make concessions to end the war while it remains under siege.

"Zelenskyy understands that," Trump said, referring to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, "and everybody understands that it's been with them for a long time."

The US president made the comments in a Time magazine interview conducted on Tuesday. Trump has been accusing Zelenskyy of prolonging the war by resisting negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Crimea is a strategic peninsula along the Black Sea in southern Ukraine. It was seized by Russia in 2014, while US President Barack Obama was in office, years before the full-scale invasion that began in 2022.

"They've had their submarines there for long before any period that we're talking about, for many years. The people speak largely Russian in Crimea," Trump said.

"But this was given by Obama. This wasn't given by Trump."

Meanwhile, Russia has continued its bombardment. A drone struck an apartment building in a southeastern Ukraine city, killing three people and injuring 10 others, officials said Friday, a day after Trump rebuked Russia's leader for a deadly missile and drone attack on Kyiv.

A child and a 76-year-old woman were among the civilians killed in the nighttime drone strike in Pavlohrad, in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region,



scale invasion that began in 2022.

"The war could be approaching a pivotal moment as the Trump administration weighs its options. Senior US officials have warned that the administration could soon give up attempts to stop the war if the two sides do not come to an agreement. That could potentially mean a halt of crucial US military aid for Ukraine."

Amid the peace efforts, Russia pounded Kyiv in an hours-long barrage Thursday, killing at least 12 people and injuring 87 in its deadliest assault on the Ukrainian capital since July.

the head of the regional administration, Serhii Lysak, wrote on Telegram.

Russian forces fired 103 Shahed and decoy drones at five Ukrainian regions overnight, Ukraine's air force reported. Authorities in the northeastern Sumsy and Kharkiv regions reported damage to civilian infrastructure but no casualties.

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Iran offers help in restoring India-Pakistan relations

Tehran: Iran on Friday offered its help in mending relations between India and Pakistan, amid flared tensions after the Pahalgam terror attack.

Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said Tehran stands ready to use its good offices in Islamabad and New Delhi to "forge greater understanding at this difficult time."

Araghchi had condemned the Pahalgam attack "strongly and unequivocally" two days ago.

Terrorists opened fire in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019. The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for the attack.

In a post on X, Araghchi drew attention to how India and Pakistan are "brotherly neighbours" of Iran, enjoying relations rooted in centuries-old cultural and civilizational ties and how, like other neighbours, Iran considers the two of them as "our foremost priority."

"Tehran stands ready to use its good offices in Islamabad and New Delhi to forge greater understanding at this difficult time."

Earlier on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, describing "this heinous act as a grave crime, in flagrant violation of all international legal and humanitarian norms."

He extended condolences to the government and people of India and wished a swift recovery for the injured. He underscored the urgent need to strengthen cooperation and coordination at regional and international levels to prevent and combat terrorism, and to ensure the prosecution and punishment of its perpetrators and sponsors.

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BUSINESS

MATTER accelerates national rollout of AERA — World's first geared electric motorcycle



New Delhi: After a successful debut in Bengaluru, EV startup MATTER has announced the national rollout of its groundbreaking electric motorcycle, the AERA — the world's first geared electric motorcycle. Over the next 45 days, MATTER will launch the AERA in eight major Indian cities: Pune, Delhi, Chennai, Coimbatore, Mumbai, Jaipur, Surat, and Raipur.

The AERA, equipped with MATTER's proprietary HyperShift technology, combines electric innovation with the thrill of manual gear shifting — a first-of-its-kind globally. The bike has already garnered praise for its distinctive design, cutting-edge features, and dynamic riding experience tailored for Indian roads.

In a statement, Mohal Lalbhai, Founder and CEO of MATTER, said, "Bengaluru's response was nothing short of phenomenal. With this next wave of city launches, we're making AERA accessible to riders across India — delivering a product that's not just high-tech, but deeply relevant to Indian roads and aspirations. Bookings are open — the future of riding is one click away."

Pre-bookings are now live on www.matter.in and Flipkart, with special early bird pricing and bundled benefits for first-time buyers. Customers in the launch cities will gain access to exclusive Experience Hubs that offer up-close interactions with the AERA, real-time test rides, and priority delivery for online pre-orders.

Road safety experts, automotive industry leaders, and representatives from global vehicle safety bodies have strongly advocated for dedicated two-wheeler lanes and stringent enforcement of traffic regulations to enhance road safety across India. Speaking at a two-day workshop on Vehicle and Fleet Safety, organised jointly by the Global New Car Assessment Program (GNCAP) and the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE), participants emphasised the urgent need to address the alarming rate of accidents involving powered two-wheelers (PTWs), which constitute 44% of all vehicles in the country.

India's Direct Tax Collection Hits Target in 2024-2025

New Delhi: The provisional net direct tax collection for the 2024-25 financial year has met the set target, growing 13.57 per cent to over Rs 22.26 lakh crore with the income tax department issuing the highest-ever amount of refunds ever delivered, official data showed Friday.

The government set a target of Rs 22,07,000 crore for the direct tax administration as per the budget receipt of July 2024 and revised it to Rs 22,37,000 crore during the budget presented this February.

Direct taxes include revenue collected by the Union government under the corporate taxes and non-corporate taxes category (earlier personal income tax). The non-corporate taxes category includes taxes paid by individuals, firms, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), local authorities, artificial ju-

ridical persons etc.

According to official data, the provisional gross (before adjusting for refunds) direct tax collection for the 2024-25 fiscal that ended March 31 stood at Rs 22.02 lakh crore, a growth of 13.57 per cent when compared to the

gross collection of Rs 23,37 lakh crore during the 2023-24 fiscal.

Similarly, the provisional figures for net (after issuing refunds) direct tax collections for the 2024-25 fiscal stood at Rs 22.26 lakh crore, an increase of 13.57 per cent as compared to Rs

19.60 lakh crore in the preceding 2023-24 fiscal, the data shows.

The provisional net direct tax collections are 100.78 per cent as per the July receipt budget target (Rs 22,07 lakh crore) and 99.51 per cent of the revised estimate target presented during

the event was the grand Award Ceremony, which honored 60 acclaimed doctors for their outstanding contributions to homeopathy. The awards were presented in the presence of special guests Eoin Morgan, former captain of England's World Cup-winning cricket team, and Bastian Bernhagen, Member of Parliament from Köthen.

Dr. Nitish Dubey, speaking at the summit, praised the Indian

Government's efforts to promote AYUSH systems on a global platform. "The initiative taken by the Modi Government to elevate AYUSH systems is commendable. This summit is a concrete step in the same direction. We are deeply grateful to our key partners—Wiss Homeopathy, the European Library of Homeopathy, the House of Hahnemann, and Dr. Stefanie Jahn—for their immense support," he

stated. In a gesture of cultural and professional exchange, the Scientific Society for Homeopathy in Köthen hosted a special luncheon in honor of the international delegates. Attendees also had the opportunity to visit the ancestral home and clinic of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, followed by a collaborative roundtable at the European Library of Homeopathy.

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Suniel Shetty's intense first look from historical drama 'Kesari Veer' unveiled



Mumbai
Actor Suniel Shetty, who is gearing up for his upcoming period drama 'Kesari Veer', shared the first look of his character Vegdaji on Friday.

Taking to his Instagram, Suniel dropped a fierce poster of himself dressed as a powerful warrior.

Along with the poster, he wrote, "#Vegdaji, ek mahan yodhaa and a fearless warrior of the battle of mighty #Somnath #HarHarMahadev. Releasing worldwide in cinemas on 16th May, 2025."

Makers on Friday also shared a poster of Vivek



Oberoi, who plays Zafar Khan in the film.

Apart from Shetty and Vivek, the film also stars Sooraj Pancholi in a key role. Helmed by director Prince Dhiman, the film is produced by veteran producer Kanu Chauhan.

As per a press note, Kesari Veer delves into the inspiring tale of unsung warriors who fought and sacrificed their lives to protect the Somnath Temple from invaders in the 14th century AD.

Sharing his passion for the project, producer Kanu

Chauhan said that the story was deeply personal to him and that it was a dream to bring this lesser-known chapter of history to light. Director Prince Dhiman described how the narrative moved him emotionally, sparking thorough research to ensure every detail reflects historical accuracy.

The period drama, which was originally scheduled to release on March 14, is now set to hit theaters on May 16.

In the coming months, Suniel will also be seen in various projects, including The Legend of Somnath, Welcome to the Jungle, a show titled Nanda Devi with Lionsgate, and Hunter 3.

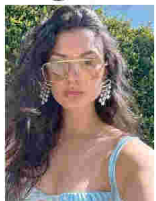


Charlie Puth, Brooke Sansone share their official wedding video

Washington
Months after saying "I do" to each other, popular singer Charlie Puth and Brooke Sansone have given fans a special look of their official wedding video on social media.

On Thursday, Puth, who tied the knot with Sansone last year, took to his Instagram account to share a beautiful clip that showed adorable, never-before-seen moments from their ceremony. The video also captured the happy couple celebrating with family and friends, enjoying champagne, delicious food, and lots of laughter. However, the highlight of the video was the part where Puth can be seen wiping away happy tears as Brooke walks down the aisle.

Charlie Puth and Brooke Sansone tied the knot on September 7 of last year in a small, private ceremony at Puth's family home in Montecito, California. The couple,



who have known each other since childhood, celebrated their love with an intimate gathering.

Last year, during an interview with People magazine, the 32-year-old singer-songwriter recounted how he had prepared meticulously for the moment.

"I had practiced it so many times, and I was reading it with such confidence. I thought I sounded like Barack Obama reading a speech," Puth joked. However, the reality of the moment hit him hard. "I got up there, and I was trembling and crying, but I was just so happy. I think my happiness overtook me."



Tom Cruise's 'Mission Impossible Reckoning' to release a week early in India

Mumbai
Tom Cruise fans in India have a reason to celebrate, as the Hollywood star's highly awaited action-packed film, 'Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning', is set to hit Indian cinemas on May 17, a full six days before its global release.

Paramount Pictures India announced the exciting news on Friday, sharing the new release date along with a poster on Instagram. "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning now releases early in India. New date - 17th May," read the official caption.

Directed by Christopher McQuarrie, the film's screenplay is co-written by McQuarrie and Erik Jensen.

The makers of the highly anticipated film unveiled an intriguing new trailer earlier this month.

Apart from Cruise, the cast also includes Simon Pegg as Benji Dunn, Ving Rhames as Luther Stickell, Vanessa Kirby as Alanna

Mitsopolis, Hayley Atwell as Grace, Esai Morales as the antagonist Gabriel, Shea Whigham as Jasper Briggs, Greg Tarzan Davis as Degas, and Pom Klementieff as the assassin Paris, according to Variety. Newcomers to the Mission: Impossible franchise include Ted Lasso star Hannah Waddingham, Nick Offerman, Lucy Tulu-garjuk, Katy O'Brian, Tramell Tillman, and Stephen Oyong, Variety reported.

Cruise had earlier hinted at the thrilling action fans can expect in The Final Reckoning, which features an underwater submarine sequence and a scene where he hangs from a plane. "When you stick your face out [of an airplane], going over 120 to 130 miles an hour, you're not getting oxygen," Cruise said in an interview with Empire. "So I had to train myself how to breathe. There were times I would pass out physically; I was unable to get back into the cockpit," Variety reported.



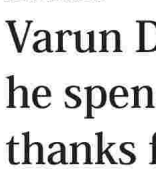
Tusshar Kapoor, Shreyas Talpade starrer Kapkapiii teaser released

Mumbai
Actor Tusshar Kapoor and Shreyas Talpade are set to reunite on the big screens after six years for the horror-comedy 'Kapkapiii'. The makers dropped the teaser of the film on Friday.

The film is directed by the late filmmaker Sangeeth Sivan, who is known for his works like 'Kya Kool Hain Hum' and 'Apna Sapna Money Money'.

Makers have finally released the teaser of the film, which is a treat for the fans of the horror-comedy genre.

The teaser offers a peek into the life of a group of friends who, on one night, decide to play a game with a Ouija board to make contact with the otherworldly spirits.



On Friday, Varun posted some pictures of himself where he is looking handsome in a beige outfit. "Thank you for all the birthday wishes sorry if I couldn't reply to everyone. Felt very lucky that I got to spend a working birthday," he captioned the post.

Varun also gave an update of his shooting schedule for 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai'.

He wrote, "kick off our outdoor schedule of Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai."

Being helmed by veteran filmmaker David Dhawan, the film stars his son Varun alongside Pooja Hegde. The actors recently finished an adventurous sequence in Rishikesh.

Apart from the leading pair

of Varun and Pooja, 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' features Murali Thakur, Manish Paul, Jimmy Shergill, Mouni Roy, Chunky Panday, Rakesh Bedi, and Ali Asgar in key roles.

A lot of combination scenes, leading to chaos on screen, will be shot in this film.

Being helmed by veteran filmmaker David Dhawan, the film stars his son Varun alongside Pooja Hegde. The actors recently finished an adventurous sequence in Rishikesh.

Scotland. The conclusion of the Scotland schedule will lead to a film wrap, notwithstanding a couple of songs and some patchwork sequences," the source shared.

Produced by Ramesh Taurani under the Tips banner, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai sees Varun Dhawan return to his signature comic flair.

Talking about how he celebrated his birthday, Varun chose to celebrate his special day with his fans in Mumbai.

The 'Baby John' actor took to his Instagram to share a video from his meet-and-greet event at a local restaurant.

In the video, Varun can be seen cutting his

birthday cake with photographers, posing for pictures, and later meeting fans inside the cafe. The actor also recreated some of his popular dance moves, leaving fans excited. In the video, a fan can be heard saying,

"After my parents, he (Varun) is the one I love the most."

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Rajkummar Rao's 'Maalik' release postponed

Mumbai
Rajkummar Rao is all set to take on the role of a lifetime in the upcoming action-packed entertainer 'Maalik'.

The film, directed by Pulkit and produced by Tips Films and Northern Lights Films, is scheduled to release in cinemas on July 11, 2025, having been previously slated for a release on June 20.

In 'Maalik', Rajkummar Rao transforms into a ruthless gangster with a striking new intensity.

The actor shared the update with his fans on Instagram, writing, "Raub, Rutba, aur RAJ hoga Maalik ka, 11 July se. Aa rahe

hain #Maalik, 11 July se sirf cinemagharon mein." The film has been generating buzz since its announcement on August 31, 2024.

Rajkummar Rao shared a poster from the film, showcasing his intense look as Maalik, with a gun in hand and a bold statement: "Paeda nahi huve toh kya, ban toh sakte hai (What if we aren't born that way but we can become)." "Maalik" is currently in post-production, with Tips Films and Northern Lights Films presenting the film.

Kumar Taurani and Jay Shewakramani are producing the film under their respective banners.

Varun Dhawan feels "lucky" as he spends working birthday, thanks fans for wishes

Mumbai
Actor Varun Dhawan, who turned 38 on Thursday, has thanked his fans for lovely birthday wishes and also gave an update for his upcoming film 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai'.

On Friday, Varun posted some pictures of himself where he is looking handsome in a beige outfit.

"Thank you for all the birthday wishes sorry if I couldn't reply to everyone. Felt very lucky that I got to spend a working birthday," he captioned the post.

Varun also gave an update of his shooting schedule for 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai'.

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Apart from the leading pair

of Varun and Pooja, 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' features Murali Thakur, Manish Paul, Jimmy Shergill, Mouni Roy, Chunky Panday, Rakesh Bedi, and Ali Asgar in key roles.

A lot of combination scenes, leading to chaos on screen, will be shot in this film.

Being helmed by veteran filmmaker David Dhawan, the film stars his son Varun alongside Pooja Hegde. The actors recently finished an adventurous sequence in Rishikesh.

Scotland. The conclusion of the Scotland schedule will lead to a film wrap, notwithstanding a couple of songs and some patchwork sequences," the source shared.

Produced by Ramesh Taurani under the Tips banner, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai sees Varun Dhawan return to his signature comic flair.

Talking about how he celebrated his birthday, Varun chose to celebrate his special day with his fans in Mumbai.

The 'Baby John' actor took to his Instagram to share a video from his meet-and-greet event at a local restaurant.

In the video, Varun can be seen cutting his

birthday cake with photographers, posing for pictures, and later meeting fans inside the cafe. The actor also recreated some of his popular dance moves, leaving fans excited. In the video, a fan can be heard saying,

"After my parents, he (Varun) is the one I love the most."

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