

## IN BRIEF

### Two brothers among 3 drown at Srivardhan beach in Raigad

Kolhapur / Raigad, April 19 (UNI) : In an unfortunate incident, three youths, including two brothers, were drowned in sea off Velas beach in Srivardhan tehsil of Raigad district on Saturday.

According to a report, three youths went for a swim in the sea, moved into deep waters and drowned.

Upon receiving information of incident, locals rushed to the spot and tried to save three youths with the help of staff of water sports firm but without success. They later fished out their bodies. Police, who rushed to the spot, have identified deceased youths as Avdhut Santosh Patil (26), his brother Mayuresh (23) and Himanshu Patil (21), (relative, all from Gondghar village).

### Minister issues notices to 57 sand depots on noticing irregularities

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Saturday issued notices to all 57 sand depots in the state after noticing alleged irregularities, malpractices and violation of rules.

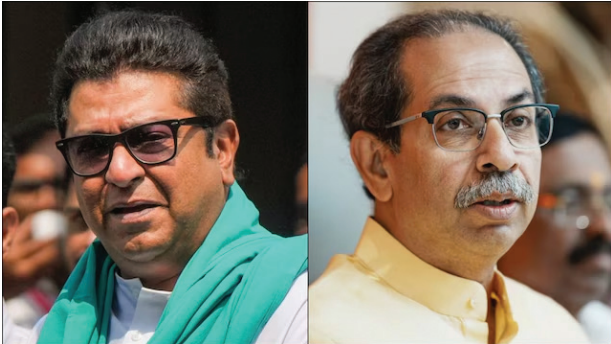
Upon receiving complaints from public such as non-compliance with rules regarding sand transportation, lack of CCTV system and evasion in sand received from the depot, he has ordered to take immediate action on irregularities in sand depots and has warned of cancelling the depots that do not comply with the rules. Following complaints, 10 depots in Nagpur have been temporarily suspended for violating the rules. These depots have been instructed to make improvements within seven days, otherwise a decision will be taken to close them permanently, the minister said. Furthermore, the concerned divisional commissioners have been instructed to submit a report within three days to review the operation of all depots and the sub-divisional officers have been asked to inspect the depots in person and submit a report to the district collector within three days, he added.

## Warring Thackeray cousins agree to work together in interest of Maharashtra

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : After exactly two decades of bitterness and anger, fresh signs of a possible tie-up have emerged between two warring cousins -- Shiv Sena (UBT) president and former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray.

Indications have been given by both the Sena (UBT) and MNS on Saturday that they have initiated steps for a potential unity or a formal alliance -- though both also warn that it is still too early to make any concrete statements.

Ahead of upcoming Mumbai municipal elections, the Thackeray cousins have separately expressed their openness to set aside past differences in the larger interests of Maharashtra and the Marathi identity. During a question hour session in a podcast with filmmaker Mahesh Manjrekar, which was released on Saturday, Raj Thackeray said he can set aside minor disputes for



bigger interests of Maharashtra and can work with his estranged cousin and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray if the latter is ready for it.

"Compared to greater causes, the disputes and disagreements between us are minor. Maharashtra is far bigger than our personal issues. These matters are trivial in the fight for the existence of the Marathi identity," Raj Thackeray said.

He further emphasised, "Coming together or working together isn't a difficult thing—it's only a matter of will. And it's not just about me. I believe all Marathi people across political parties should unite and form a single front."

In response to a question by Manjrekar that if both Thackeray brothers would come together, Raj said, "For me, the interest of Maharashtra is bigger and everything else is secondary before it. For that, I can set aside minor disputes and I'm ready to work with Uddhav. Only question if he too is ready for it."

Responding to the statement of MNS chief while speaking at a function of his party's trade union wing, Bhartiya Kamgar Sena, Uddhav Thackeray said he too is ready to set aside disputes for Marathi language and Maharashtra.

He, however, put a condition that in that case he (Raj Thackeray) should

not host anti-Maharashtra people and parties anymore, and take the oath in front of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj."

Political observers believe that joint efforts by the Thackeray cousins could present a strong Marathi-centric front against the rising influence of other parties in Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, reacting to news of possibility of alliance between MNS president Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) in coastal Sindhudurg district of Konkan region, state minister and BJP leader Nitesh Rane said on Saturday that the coming together of Thackeray cousins--Uddhav and Raj, was only for one's own existence and not for Maharashtra or Hindutva.

He challenged the Thackeray cousins to first make it clear whether their proposed alliance was for Hindutva, Marathi people or to strengthen 'Jihadi' Muslims.

## UBT appeals to citizens to participate in month-long agitation over water problems

Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, April 19 (UNI) : As part of the 'Labadano Paani Dya' month-long public agitation over the water crisis launched by the Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray (UBT) Shiv Sena party, roadside meetings were held at various places across the city on Saturday. UBT leader and Leader of Opposition in the State Legislative Council Ambadas Danve and Shiv Sena leader and former MP Chandrakant Khaire met and interacted with the citizens over the issue. Danve interacted with the citizens of the city who came for a morning walk at Siddharth Udyan, Marathwada Cultural Mandal Maidan, Khadkeshwar and Sambhajanagar Caves on the water issue. Appealing for

### Expedite leakage prevention work of Dudhganga-Kalamawadi dam at earliest: Minister

Kolhapur, April 19 (UNI) : Maharashtra and District Guardian Minister, Prakash Abitkar, on Saturday instructed Water Resources department to plug leakage from Dudhganga-Kalamawadi dam at earliest before onset of the monsoon season.

He gave this instruction during an inspection tour of the Dudhganga-Kalamawadi dam, which supplies water to Kolhapur and neighbouring Karnataka.

He said that for many years, farmers and citizens have been demanding that the leakage from this dam be repaired.

The state government has provided funds to prevent this leakage and the work of leakage prevention is under way, he added and instructed to expedite this leakage prevention work at earliest before onset of the monsoon season.



### BJP govt giving protection to dominant, feudal people ...

Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government is giving protection to the dominant and feudal people, who are attacking Dalits, backward, and minorities. After meeting SP MP Ramji Lal Suman and his family members during his Agra visit, Akhilesh said, "These people know that whatever they do, the government will not take any action against them. The BJP government is trying to scare the PDA by attacking it. The attack on the house of MP Ramji Lal Suman in Agra has happened as a part of a well-planned strategy and conspiracy," he said.

(See on page 2)

### In an open letter to the people, Bengal CM Mamata appeals ...



Amid incidents of unrest and communal violence in several parts of West Bengal following protests against the amended Waqf Act, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in an open letter on Saturday, launched a scathing attack on the BJP and the RSS while appealing for the restoration of peace in the state.

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### Russian President Putin declares Easter truce in Ukraine conflict



Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday declared a unilateral Easter truce for the ongoing conflict with Ukraine, media reports said. The truce will start from 6:00 p.m. local time (1500 GMT) on Saturday and last until midnight on Sunday into Monday (2100 GMT on Sunday).

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### Alcaraz to face Rune in final of Barcelona Open



Top seed and home favorite Carlos Alcaraz will play Holger Rune in the final of the Barcelona Open on Sunday after beating seventh-seeded Arthur Fils of France 6-2, 6-4 on Saturday. Fils had taken Alcaraz to three sets in the quarterfinals of the recent Monte Carlo Open, including winning the opening set,

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## Six killed, 20 injured as building collapses in North-East Delhi



Rescue operation underway after a multi-storey residential building collapsed, at Dayalpur area, in New Delhi on Saturday.

New Delhi, April 19 (UNI) : A four-storey building collapsed in North-East Delhi's Mustafabad locality under the Dayalpur police station area, killing six people and injuring 20 others on Saturday, police said. Many people are

feared buried in the debris, officials said. The incident took place around 3 am, and rescue work involving teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Delhi Fire Services and Delhi Police were launched, senior police officer Sandeep

Lamba said. The area is located at Shakti Vihar Gali Number One. The injured have been admitted to GTB Hospital. Relief and rescue operations are going on, police said. Clearing debris is limited as the area is too congested, police added.

## Cong to launch 'Samvidhan Bachao Rally' nationwide

New Delhi, April 19 (UNI) : The Congress on Saturday announced to launch 'Samvidhan Bachao Rally' across the country from April 25 to May 30, with the objective of advancing social, economic and political justice.

Addressing a press conference here, after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge chaired a meeting of AICC general secretaries and in-charges and heads of frontal, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said, "The main

purpose of today's meeting was to take forward the proposal adopted in Ahmedabad".

Stating that Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had continuously been discussing social justice, Ramesh said, "The proposal we have adopted had three important points, which are social, economic and political justice".

He said that there are three demands regarding social justice which includes caste census, SC-ST and

OBC reservation in private educational institutions and removal of 50 percent limit in reservation.

With regards to the economic justice, Ramesh said the demand of the Congress is to provide MSP as per Swaminathan formula, farmer loan waiver and focus on closed MSMEs in the country.

Alleging that the Constitution of the country was being attacked, Ramesh claimed that institutions like "ED were being misused and the masterminds behind

this are two people who have a criminal mindset".

Accusing the government of attacking its leadership by misusing ED, Ramesh said, "Our leaders will hold a press conference on this issue between April 21 and 24".

He said, "We refute the false propaganda being carried out by the BJP against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case. This has become a completely political issue and it is the political

vengeance, harassment, threats and intimidation, but we are not going to be afraid or retreat".

Ramesh said that in today's meeting the resolution passed in Ahmedabad, "Nyay Path: Resolve, Dedication, Struggle" was discussed.

He mentioned that Rahul Gandhi has started the 'Organisation Creation Campaign' in Gujarat. The purpose of this campaign is to make the party's district president stronger.



# Punjab police foil major terror plot, bust two ISI-linked terror modules, recover arms cache

Chandigarh, April 19 (UNI) : Punjab Police foiled a major conspiracy to create disturbance in the state by successfully busting two separate ISI-backed terror modules being operated by Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) from abroad and recovered huge amount of arms and explosives including two rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) including one launcher, DGP Punjab Gaurav Yadav here on Saturday.In two separate intelligence-led operations, Counter Intelligence (CI) Jalandhar and District Police Batala have dismantled both the modules effectively arresting 13 accused persons, including one minor.The terror modules, sponsored by the Pakistan-based ISI, were being controlled by BKI, with two key operational nodes, France-based Satnam Singh alias Satta and Greece-based Jaswinder Singh alias Mannu Agwan, said the DGP, adding that their role earlier also figured in various operations, and accused Satnam’s role came into notice in 2010 in the IED and RDX recovery case.He said that apart from recovering two RPGs including one launcher, police teams have also recovered two Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) each weighing 2.5 kg, two hand grenades with detonator, 2 kg of RDX along with remote control device, five pistols, including Beretta and Glock along with six magazines and 44 cartridges and one

wireless communication set, besides impounding their three vehicles. DGP Yadav said that with busting of these modules, Punjab Police has foiled the Pak-ISI masterminded conspiracy to disturb peace and harmony in the border state. The first module, AIG CI Jalandhar Navjot Singh Mahal said that in an intel-based operation, police teams arrested Jagroop Singh of Basti Amritsarian in Hoshiarpur, Jatinder Singh alias Honey of Daburji in Kapurthala, Harpreet Singh of Dharamkot Hoshiarpur and Jagjeet Singh of Kapurthala, and recovered arms and explosives from their possession. He said that preliminary investigations revealed that these accused were working on the instructions of France-based Satnam Satta. Further investigations are being conducted to unearth this entire network and efforts are being made to discover the previous crimes committed by the accused, he added.The second module, SSP Batala Suhail Qasim Mir said that in a week-long intelligence led operation, police teams have arrested nine persons including a 17-years-old juvenile. The other eight arrested persons have been identified as Pawanpreet Singh, Balbir Kumar alias Varun, Gomji alias Gotta, Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi, Ajaypal Singh, Rahul alias Bhaia and Johanson, all residents of Batala and Jatinder, a resident of Kapurthala.

## PM Modi to pay two-day visit to Saudi Arabia from April 22

New Delhi, April 19 (UNI) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Saudi Arabia from April 22-23, on the invitation of the Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. This will be the third visit of Prime Minister Modi to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has previously visited Riyadh in 2016 and 2019. The visit follows the State Visit of Prince Mohammed bin Salman to New Delhi in September 2023 to attend the G20 Summit, and co-chair the first meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council, a statement said.

India and Saudi Arabia share close and friendly ties with a long history of socio-cultural and trade contacts. As strategic partners, the two countries share strong bilateral relations across various areas including political, defence, security, trade, investment, energy, technology, health, education, culture and people-to-people ties. India’s relations with the Kingdom have evolved into a stronger and enduring partnership in the past decade, expanding into many strategic domains, with growing investment commitments, broadening of defence cooperation and intensive high-level exchanges across sectors. The visit of Prime Minister Modi reflects the importance India attaches to its bilateral relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It will provide an opportunity to further deepen and strengthen our multi-faceted partnership, as well as to exchange views on various regional and international issues of mutual interest, the statement added.



Congress workers stage a protest over the alleged rape of an 11-year-old deaf-and-mute girl in UP's Rampur, in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

# BJP govt giving protection to dominant, feudal people: Akhilesh

Agra (UP), April 19 (UNI) : Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government is giving protection to the dominant and feudal people, who are attacking Dalits, backward, and minorities. After meeting SP MP Ramji Lal Suman and his family members during his Agra visit, Akhilesh said, "These people know that whatever they do, the government will not take any action against them. The BJP government is trying to scare the PDA by attacking it. The attack on the house of MP Ramji Lal Suman in Agra has happened as a part of a well-planned strategy and conspiracy," he said. He said, "The attack on Ramji Lal's house was not sudden but a conspiracy. His house was vandalised, naked swords were openly waved in Agra. Death threats were given. The government's funding is behind the Agra violence. The BJP government is not working according to the

Constitution. There is no rule of law in Uttar Pradesh."The SP chief said, "I am standing with my Dalit MP Suman and I am getting threats of being shot. After all, who is behind this? The government itself should take cognisance of such threats but no action has been taken. Even if the people of SP are complaining, FIR is not being registered." He said that no matter what threat BJP people give, no matter what they write on social media, no FIR is lodged against them. "No action is taken," he said.Akhilesh said that the BJP government is working on the basis of caste. "On the birth anniversary of Emperor Ashoka, whom the Kushwaha, Maurya society considers like God, a person cut the cake with a sword in a cordial ceremony and action was taken against him, but BJP people waving swords under the surveillance of drones are given full respect. No action is taken against them," he said.

He said that the so-called show of power in Agra was born out of the power struggle between the people of Delhi and Lucknow. He said that the era of arbitrary 'mansabdari' will not continue now. He said, "Now there is the Constitution of Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. The Constitution will remain supreme. The people of Agra should come forward and oppose violent politics. If the peace of Agra is disturbed and it is discussed in the world, then the image of Agra will be tarnished at the international level. Tourists will refrain from coming, which will have a direct impact on the business of Agra. The local economy will be affected." The SP President said that whatever happened in Agra recently was done to humiliate the PDA family and Ramji Lal Suman. "It happened at the behest of the BJP government to hide failures and spread poison in the society. India is a democratic country. No one

can wave naked swords under the rule of the Constitution. No one can threaten in this way," he said.He said, "When the statement made by MP Ramji Lal Suman was expunged from the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha, then how was it spread on social media. Many things have been said in the House earlier also. It is also the responsibility of the government that the matter which was expunged from the proceedings should not spread. But the BJP government deliberately wanted to take political advantage by making innocent people puppets." Akhilesh said that the PDA family has become aware. "The BJP government will not succeed in its conspiracy. We socialist people take a pledge that the people of the PDA family will continue to work together to establish the rule of justice and social justice. A lot of injustice and atrocities have been done to the PDA under the BJP

government," he said. He alleged that the BJP government is against the reservation of the PDA. "The intention of the BJP is not right. No one is getting justice under the BJP government," he said. The SP chief said that in the Samajwadi government, allegations were made on the basis of caste. "Fake news was circulated. What is the situation in Agra's police stations today? How much is the PDA? Out of 15 police stations in Mainpuri, 10 are from the Chief Minister's caste. Out of 10 police stations in Mahoba, 6 are there. Most of the 10 police stations in Chitrakoot are from the same caste. In UP STF, 21 officers are mostly from the CM's caste. There are only three PDAs," he claimed. He said that those who do politics of hatred changed the name of the Mughal Museum but did not take that work forward. "Agra was to be made a smart city but the BJP government got it stuck in traffic jams.

# Carrier Midea India Signs Rashmika Mandanna as MIDEA HVAC Brand Ambassador

(Standard Post Bureau) Gurgaon, April 19: Carrier Midea India, a leading name in the Indian air conditioning industry, has announced the onboarding of actress Rashmika Mandanna as the brand ambassador for its Midea brand in the HVAC category. This strategic partnership aims to strengthen Midea HVAC’s positioning in the competitive Indian air conditioning market, expand its consumer outreach, and drive engagement through a comprehensive marketing approach. The collaboration comes at a time when the Indian air conditioning segment is witnessing significant growth, driven by rising urbanization, increased disposable income, and a heightened focus on energy-efficient cooling solutions. The sector is projected to grow at a healthy CAGR over the next five years, intensifying competition among both global and domestic players. Midea HVAC, known for its advanced technology and superior cooling performance, is poised to capture a larger market share. The association with Rashmika



Mandanna is expected to serve as a key differentiator, helping the brand connect more deeply with a diverse consumer base. Speaking on the collaboration, Mr. Sanjay Mahajan, Chairman and Managing Director, Carrier Midea India, stated, “The Indian air conditioning industry is evolving

rapidly, and consumers are seeking brands that offer not only superior products but also an emotional connection. Rashmika Mandanna’s association with Midea air conditioners will amplify our presence and strengthen our commitment to providing smart, sustainable, and high-performance air

conditioning solutions. With this partnership, we aim to significantly increase our market share over the next few years.” Rashmika Mandanna, celebrated for her charm, relatability, and wide appeal, aligns seamlessly with Midea HVAC’s brand values of innovation, high performance, and modern living. As the face of Midea air conditioners, she will headline a nationwide multimedia campaign spanning television, digital platforms, print media, and retail touchpoints. The campaign aims to reinforce brand recall and strengthen consumer trust in Midea’s smart and efficient cooling solutions. Expressing her enthusiasm for the partnership, Rashmika Mandanna said, “I am happy to partner with Midea air conditioners, a brand that truly understands the importance of smart and efficient cooling in today’s homes. With rising temperatures and increasing energy concerns, Midea air conditioners are setting new benchmarks with their technology-driven solutions. I look forward to being part of this journey and sharing its vision with millions of Indian consumers.”

## Judiciary last hope for secular, inclusive India: Mehbooba Mufti

Srinagar, April 19 (UNI) : Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday said that the judiciary remains perhaps the last and most critical institution capable of upholding the secular and inclusive spirit of the Indian Constitution. She made the remarks a day after the Supreme Court stayed the demolition notice to Hazrat Saatpeer Sayed Baba dargah in Nashik, “The Supreme Court’s stay on the demolition of the Nasik Dargah came at a crucial intervention in the wake of the Bombay High Court’s failure to fix a time for hearing the case. This delay created an opening for the local administration to begin demolishing part of the Dargah sparking tensions and clashes in the area,” Mufti said in a post on X. The PDP president said these Dargahs are not just physical structures — they are spiritual spaces where both Hindus and Muslims come together in shared reverence.

## Modern campuses for SSFs to be build in Prayagraj, Mathura

Lucknow, April 19 (UNI) : The Uttar Pradesh government is fast-tracking the construction of modern campuses for new UP Special Security Force (UPSSF) battalions in order to bolster security infrastructure, official sources said here on Saturday. Sources said that residential and non-residential facilities will be built for the third battalion in Prayagraj and the fourth in Mathura in line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision. "In Prayagraj, 42.03 acres of land have been identified in the Arai area, with 22 acres in Deoria village and 19 acres in Bhaipur village earmarked for the campus. The total estimated cost for the construction and development work here is Rs 198 crore (excluding GST)," they said. Sources said that similarly, in Barhata village in Mathura, 40.03 acres have been identified for the fourth battalion campus, with a projected cost of Rs 197 crore (excluding GST). "Preparations are also being made to fast-track the long-pending construction work for the Women PAC Battalion campus in Badaun. This project will involve an expenditure of Rs 177.30 crore. All these infrastructure projects will be carried out on an EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) mode, for which the Planning Department has already prepared the blueprint," they informed.Sources said that as per the Planning Department's blueprint, all construction work for the Prayagraj and Mathura battalion campuses is targeted for completion within 18 months, with a 36-month defect liability period. A detailed master plan is being prepared, including concept designs, 3D views, animated walk throughs, soil testing and other technical reports to guide the process," they said.Sources further said, "The campus will be designed with future requirements in mind, including residential and non-residential blocks, STP (Sewage Treatment Plant), green areas, sports facilities, barracks and other amenities."Sources said that the process to complete the under-construction Women PAC Battalion campus in Saijani, Badaun, is being accelerated. "As per the Planning Department's blueprint, a one-year timeline has been set for completing the construction and development work," they said.

## Two arrested for possession of heroin in Dehra

Dharamshala, April 19 (UNI) : Dehra police on Saturday arrested two people under different sections of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and seized heroin from their possession near Pragpur Nakki Khad, falling under Rakkar police station in the district, police said. Under campaign being run by the District Police, accused Rajat Dhiman (resident Garli of Kangra district) and Abhishek Kumar (resident of Pragpur also in Kangra) were arrested and seven grams of heroin was recovered from their possession. Police have registered a case under NDPS Act against the duo.

## Police arrest youth for rape of his minor cousin in Amroha

Amroha (UP), Apr 19 (UNI) A 20-year-old youth was arrested by the police on Saturday for sexually assaulting his 10-year-old cousin sister in Hasanpur area of Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh, a senior officer said here. Superintendent of Police (SP) Amit Kumar Anand said that the youth, a resident of a village in Hasanpur police station area, raped his cousin. "The incident took place late on Friday evening. Based on the complaint of the family, a case has been registered under relevant sections. The accused youth has been arrested by the police. Further legal action is underway," he said. Police sources said that during strong winds and storm on Friday evening, the youth took his cousin from home to the forest on the pretext of putting tarpaulin on the straw lying in the field. "It is alleged that the youth took the teenager to the forest and raped her," they said.



# Mahayuti government committed to fulfilling election promise of Rs 2,100 for sisters: Dy Speaker

Sangli, April 19 (UNI) : Deputy Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, Neelam Gorhe, said here today that the Mahayuti government is committed to fulfilling its commitment of giving Rs 2,100 subsidy to women in the state, amid criticism by the opposition of not fulfilling its election promise.

Addressing a large women gathering at Sangli, which received a huge response from the women workers, Gorhe said that the Shiv Sena Eknath Shinde group was committed to fostering respect for sisters, building the party organisational strength among women and a strong women's leadership.

Gorhe enlightened women about the various schemes of the Mahyuti government, especially the Ladki Bahin Samman Yojana. She appealed to the government to provide a list of banks supporting women's self-help groups.

In her speech, Gorhe mentioned the contribution of Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray, Meenatai Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and MP Shrikant Shinde towards strengthening the party, and said, "Some people refer to Shiv Sena as the Shinde group, but Shiv Sena is ours, now it is necessary for every worker to impress this in their minds." Gorhe provided

information about free health check-up camps for women, from hemoglobin, calcium, iron tests to the importance of creating awareness about uterine health.

Along with this, she also appealed for organisational preparations to provide opportunities to the Scheduled Caste-Tribe and OBC women in Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad, and other local self-government bodies.

Encouraging women to actively participate in the party organisation, she appealed to them, "Every sister should register at least 20 new members since the party's strength will increase only when local leadership will emerge," she said.

# Bengal doctor held in baby-selling racket, toddler rescued

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : In a breakthrough in a child trafficking case, Mumbai Police rescued two minor children and arrested a woman doctor from Hooghly in West Bengal, official said here on Saturday. The accused was identified as Reshma Santoshkumar Banerjee (43). Police said the case goes back to August 5, 2024, when a 65-year-old man, Amar Dhiren Sardar, lodged a missing person complaint about his son-in-law Anil Purvayya and his two-year-old grandson.

During the investigation, the police discovered that Anil Purvayya had allegedly sold his minor son for ₹1.6 lakh with the help of three individuals -- Asma Shaikh, Sharif Shaikh, and Asha Pawar.

Anil and Asma were arrested in Mumbai, and their interrogation revealed Asha Pawar's involvement. She was arrested in Hyderabad and confessed that on July 9, 2024, the child was sold at Bhubaneswar railway station to a doctor named Reshma,

with assistance from the other accused, police said.

Technical analysis traced Reshma to various hospitals in Bhubaneswar, including Hi-Tech Dental Hospital and SUM Hospital, but she had left both jobs by the time police arrived.

Her location was tracked to Hubli, Kolkata (West Bengal) and a team of Mumbai police arrested her with the trafficked child and another unidentified 3-year-old girl, police said.

She was presented before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate in Serampore, and a transit remand was obtained. The rescued children were produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in Hubli. One child was handed over to the Mumbai Police team, while the unidentified girl was placed in a shelter home. In Mumbai, the accused was produced before a local court that remanded her in judicial custody.

# Cultural programme to pay tribute to Dr Ambedkar in Mumbai on April 20

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : On occasion of Samvidhan Amrit Mahotsav and 134th birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, a special musical tribute programme has been organised by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra, on April 20 at 630 PM at Gateway of India, here. An official media statement issued on Saturday by Vibhishan Chavare, director of the Cultural Affairs Department, stated that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar, Assembly Speaker Advocate Rahul Narvekar, Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar, Lok Sabha

MP Arvind Sawant, Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik, Additional Chief Secretary Vikas Kharge will be the chief guests in this programme. Artists Suresh Wadkar, Vaishali Samant, Urmila Dhangar, Adarsh Shinde, Milind Shinde, Nandesh Umak, Avadhoot Gupte and Shahir Raja Kamble will participate in this programme. This programme will be moderated by Subodh Bhavse. Songs, dramas and dances based on the life of Dr Ambedkar will be presented in this programme. This programme is open to all, and the admission tickets will be distributed at Shivaji Natya Mandir and Rabindra Natya Mandir on a 'first come, first served' basis, he added.

# Uniform for Govt school under consideration

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : Uniform for the teachers in government-run schools in Maharashtra is under consideration, and the state government will shortly issue a directive in this regard, sources in the state education department said here on Saturday. In this regard state School Education Minister Dada Bhuse had earlier indicated that the School Education department was considering such a move where district authorities can decide dress for teachers in government schools. While no decision has been taken yet, Bhuse said, "We are looking at the possibility of bringing such a policy.

# MCOCA court allows Baba Siddique's wife to be intervener in his murder case

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : In a significant development in NCP leader Baba Siddique murder case, a special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court here on Saturday allowed slain leader's wife, Shehzeen Siddique, to intervene in the proceedings of the case. Shehzeen Siddique had filed an intervention application last month before special Judge B D Shelke, stating that she has suffered an "irreparable loss" and stressed the necessity of presenting the "true and correct facts" to the court. In her plea, she also said that the accused carried out a pre-meditated killing and the murder caused physical and emotional harm and urged the court to give due consideration to several important aspects of the case. Baba Siddique, a three-time Congress MLA who later joined the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, was shot dead on October 12, 2024. The alleged attack took place outside the office of his son, then-MLA Zeeshan Siddique in Mumbai's Bandra. Police said two arrested shooters and one absconding suspect had been monitoring the location for weeks before firing six rounds at him.



People take part in a protest march against demolition of a Jain temple at Vile Parle area, in Mumbai on Saturday.

# WHT NOW launches nationwide programme to tackle rising cyber crime

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : In a bold step towards tackling alarming rise in cyber crimes across India, WHT NOW, a digital safety movement, announced on Saturday the launch of its National Youth Ambassador Programme in collaboration with universities and colleges across the country.

The initiative aims to train over 5,000 students by the end of 2025 to serve as digital first responders on campus, a much-needed effort amid growing cases of sextortion, cyberbullying, identity theft and online

harassment.

Recent data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reveals a 24.4 percent surge in cyber crimes in 2025, with over 65,000 FIRs (first information reports) registered.

"This effort is not just an initiative; it's a national movement," said Neeti Goel, founder of WHT NOW.

"We are witnessing an epidemic of silence around online abuse. Our aim is to equip the youth with knowledge, courage and community because only they can change the digital

narrative from fear to empowerment."

Each Youth Ambassador will undergo training in cyber law, reporting mechanisms, psychological first-aid and digital ethics. The programme includes hands-on workshops, mentorship from cybersecurity experts and legal professionals and the creation of on-campus Digital Safety Cells to support peers and drive awareness campaigns.

Akshat Khetan, co-founder and legal strategist, added, "Over 40 academic institutions have already

expressed interest in partnering with WHT NOW and pilot chapters have been initiated. The programme will officially roll out in phases starting May 2025, with a pan-India tour of awareness sessions, university MoUs and the release of a digital toolkit."

To support victims and concerned individuals, WHT NOW recently also launched a dedicated national helpline, providing immediate assistance, guidance and referral support for cases related to cyber abuse, harassment and online threats.

# Ekatma Manav Darshan Diamond Festival to be held in Mumbai from Apr 22: Minister

Mumbai, April 19 (UNI) : Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha on Saturday informed that 'Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Ekatma Manav Darshan Diamond Festival' will be celebrated from April 22 to 25 at Ruia College here.

In April 1965, Pandit Upadhyay had first presented the ideas of 'Ekatma Manav Darshan' and 'Antyodaya' at Ruia College, which were the spirit, culture and direction of India's progress. After 60

years, on the same day, at the same place, the programme will be organised to celebrate the ideas, he informed in press conference today.

This programme will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi will be the special guest.

He said Pandit Deendayal brought a unique ideological stream to Indian politics. By proposing concepts like

'Ekatma Manav Darshan' and 'Antyodaya', he tried to develop the last segment of the society. Today, the influence of Ekatma Manav Darshan is clearly visible in the works of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, claimed Lodha. Today, Pandit Deendayal's values are reflected in all the schemes being implemented both at the national level and in

Maharashtra, he further claimed. "Our government is working to ensure that the needs of food, clothing, shelter, education and protection of citizens are met by the last person in the society. Pandit's thoughts not only presented a philosophical position but also showed the way of action for upliftment of the common man. Today, while reviving those thoughts, our aim in organising this festival is to reflect them in our actions," added Lodha.

# Every party should contest Maha local elections their own: IAC President

Pune, April 19 (UNI) : India Against Corruption (IAC) National President Hemant Patil said here on Saturday that the local body elections in Maharashtra have been delayed and are likely to be held after Diwali this year.

However, it is seen that political parties have already started preparing for the elections and have started putting pressure on each other. Each political party will decide to contest these elections on its own according to its political strength, added Patil.

The Shiv Sena (Shinde group) in the grand alliance has tried to put pressure on the BJP and NCP by declaring that there will be no alliance except in a few selected cities. Party leaders are saying that they do not want an alliance in other places except Mumbai and Thane. However, it is unlikely that the Shinde group will benefit the BJP much, said Patil.

In such a situation, even if Shinde's people are not with BJP in Mumbai and Thane, BJP will not suffer any loss, said Patil.

In Mumbai and Thane, BJP will face Shiv Sena (UBT) in the local body elections. BJP will benefit from Shinde's group in Thane. BJP's position is strong in other metros.

"Mumbai Metropolitan Municipality is going to enter the election fray this year with the determination to hoist BJP's saffron flag. It is not possible to say how much Shinde will help BJP. On the contrary,

it cannot be ruled out that UBT will aggressively campaign by focusing on Shinde.

In such a situation, it would be better if BJP adopted the formula of 'Ekla Chalo Re' rather than a grand alliance in Mumbai. BJP will prefer to contest elections on its own in other metros and district councils," he added.

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
**PROVISION OF SIDE PATHWAY ON BRIDGE**

Dy. CE (Bridge-Line), Western Railway, Dadar, invites **Tender Notice No.: DYCE-BR-DDR-2025-07, Date: 16.04.2025.**  
**Name of Work:** Provision of Side pathway on Bridge No. 135, 143, 192, 166, 203, 230, 239, 264, 288, 336, 339, 340, 352, 358, 359, 400, 401, 411, 419, 428 & 440 UP/DN in SAH-ST Section & Br. No. 31, 76, 94, 98 DN and 110, 52A UP/DN in Udhna - Jalgaon section in the jurisdiction of ADEN (Bridge) BL of Mumbai Division.  
**Approximate cost of the work:** ₹ 10,65,92,796.35. **EMD:** ₹ 6,83,000/-. **Date and time for submission of e-tender:** Till 15.05.2025, 15:00 Hrs. **Date and time for opening of e-tender:** On 15.05.2025 at 15:30 Hrs. For further details please visit our website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) 0057  
Like us on : facebook.com/WesternRly

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
**VARIOUS WORK**

Divisional Railway Manager(WA), Western Railway, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400008, invites **Sr. No.: 1. E-Tender Notice No.: BCT/25-26/19, Date: 17.04.2025. Work and location:** (i) Joravas - Surat Section: Maintenance of track in connection of Virar-Surat-TRR(P)-3.416Tkm & TSR(P)-9.882Tkm. (ii) Joravas - Ukai Section: Providing Judge Diesel Pumps to pump out monsoon water at various location under SR/DEN/Central Section. **Approx. cost of work:** ₹ 2,56,17,621.12. **EMD:** ₹ 2,78,100/-. **Sr. No.: 2. E-Tender Notice No.: BCT/25-26/20, Date: 17.04.2025. Work and location:** Virar - Ukai Songhad Section: Supply, installation commissioning and operating (5 years) track-based rail Gauge Face Lubricators (Electronic type and carry down effect up to 1 km) between Virar to Ukai-Songhad section. **Approx. cost of work:** ₹ 1,92,16,458/-. **EMD:** ₹ 2,46,100/-. **Date and time for submission of both tender:** Till 13.05.2025, 15:00 hours. **Date and time for opening of both tender:** On 13.05.2025 at 15:30 hours. For further details please visit our website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) 0065  
Like us on : facebook.com/WesternRly

# AIM International Digital Short Film Festival Concludes in Pune

(Standard Post Bureau) Pune, April 19 : The 2nd AIM International Digital Short-Film Festival concluded successfully with a special screening at a local auditorium in Pune, Maharashtra (on 19th April 2025). This marked the festival's second phase, following its first screening held in December 2024 at Kalyani in Nadia, West Bengal.

The festival showcased a rich collection of short films of all genres from across the world, featuring entries from India, Afghanistan, The Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Chile, Thailand, Malaysia and others. Each film offered a unique narrative, reflecting a wide range of social, cultural, and emotional themes.

Providing details about the event, Prabuddha Ghosh, Director of the Festival, emphasized the need for promoting meaningful cinema and the role such festivals play in connecting audiences with thoughtful storytelling. He urged for greater public participation to strengthen the independent filmmaking community.

The event was organized by a non profit organization of Pune, Art Insight Medium (AIM) with the patronage of UNICA, an international federation for non-commercial filmmakers. UNICA acts as the global representative for national film organizations under the umbrella of the United Nations, supporting initiatives that uphold creative freedom and cultural exchange.

Ajay Jadhav, President of AIM, highlighted the vital importance of short films in today's rapidly changing global context, noting their power to inspire, provoke thought, and drive social dialogue in compact formats. The festival was warmly received, with the audience appreciating the opportunity to experience a diverse range of films from different cultures and artistic traditions. The AIM International Digital Short-Film Festival continues its mission to celebrate meaningful cinema across borders.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY		
E-(IREPS) TENDER NOTICE NO. 02 UBL		
2025-26 Date : 15.04.2025		
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.		
SN	Name of work	Approx.Value
1	Hubballi Division: Rs. 2,39,78,969.00	
Londa-Belagavi LD-BGM) Section: Rebuilding of Br No. 91 & 112 ( U Line) on account of ORN 3 with Precast RCC segmental Boxes/Box pushing method in Desur-Belagavi (DUR- BGM) section		
2	Hubballi Division: Rs. 3,75,62,272.00	
Sub work-I) Proposed Foot Over bridge near Road Over Bridge 6/A @ Km.611/355 in Londa-Miraj (LD-MRJ) section.Sub work-II) Proposed Foot Over bridge near ROB 26/A @ Km.613/326 in Londa-Miraj (LD-MRJ) section		
3	Hubballi Division: Rs. 44,08,063.00	
Improvements to Laying of water pipe line at Gadag Colony.		
4	Hubballi Division: Rs. 2,89,89,116.00	
Khanapur : Construction of 450 meter platform shelter and separate gents and ladies waiting rooms at Khanapur(KNP) Railway Station.		
5	Hubballi Division: Rs. 8,63,35,377.00	
Annual Track Maintenance under SSE/ P.Way/GDG (ML) Jurisdiction for a period of one Year.		
Last date for Submission of bids : <b>Upto 11.00 hrs on 14.05.2025</b> For details log on : <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>		
Senior Divisional Engineer/Co-Ordination, Hubballi		
PUB/53/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2024-25		
South Western Railway - SWR  SWRRIL  SWRRLY		



STANDARD POST

Data Users' Conference to boost evidence-based policy formulation, effective governance

In a bid to boost evidence-based policy formulation and effective governance, the government on Saturday announced to organise a "Data Users' Conference" in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR) in Mumbai.

In line with its continued efforts to strengthen engagement with data users and other stakeholders, the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), is organising the conference at the IGIDR campus, Goregaon (East) in Mumbai, on April 21.

The "Data Users' Conference" will be chaired by Dr Saurabh Garg, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The event will host approximately 250 participants, comprising researchers, academicians, Economists, industrial associations, policymakers, representatives from international organisations, private survey agencies, as well as esteemed institutions from academia. Experts and members of the National Statistical Commission (NSC) and technical committees will also be present.

The ministry conducts large-scale sample surveys to generate key economic indicators in critical areas such as employment and unemployment, consumption expenditure, and industrial statistics.

It also produces essential macroeconomic indicators, including National Accounts and Price Indices. These data sets form the foundation for evidence-based policy formulation and effective governance in India. According to the ministry, the conference is being organised to promote dialogue between data producers and data users, fostering knowledge exchange and discussions on the latest developments in the field. The technical sessions on National Sample Surveys will provide an overview of the sampling design, computation of multipliers, and estimation of parameters in NSS household surveys. The sessions will also highlight key lessons from the conduct of the Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys (HCES) for 2022–23 and 2023–24, with insights drawn from the latest data releases. In addition, recent changes in the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) methodology will be presented to enhance users' understanding and ensure clarity in interpretation, said the ministry.

Chandrababu Naidu @75: The Statesman Who Built Tomorrow

A salute to the Visionary Leader of Modern Andhra Pradesh



(By Ravi Kumar Boppana)

As Nara Chandrababu Naidu celebrates his 75th birthday on April 20, 2025, it marks not just the journey of a seasoned politician but the life story of a transformational leader who changed the course of governance in Andhra Pradesh and set benchmarks for the rest of the nation. Known for his futuristic thinking, administrative acumen, and tech-savvy leadership, Naidu redefined the way governments engage with people, industries, and global institutions.

Pioneering the IT Era in India

In the late 1990s, when information technology was still in its infancy in India, Chandrababu Naidu foresaw its potential as a game-changer. At a time when other leaders were hesitant, he reached out to tech giants such as Microsoft, IBM, and Oracle, urging them to establish a presence in Hyderabad. His meeting with Bill Gates led to Microsoft opening its first development center outside the United States, right in India. This pivotal move catapulted Hyderabad onto the global IT map, leading to the creation of thousands of jobs and fueling unprecedented economic growth.

Building Cyberabad and the Rise of HITEC City

Naidu didn't stop at policy advocacy—he built the infrastructure to support his vision. He conceptualized Cyberabad, an exclusive IT zone with modern planning, and laid the foundation for HITEC City, which rapidly became a hub for technology and engineering excellence.

These developments brought Hyderabad to the forefront of the digital revolution, attracting international talent and investments that continue to flourish even today.

Infrastructure as the Foundation of Progress

Understanding that growth must rest on strong physical infrastructure, Naidu modernized the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, improved road connectivity through national projects like the Golden Quadrilateral, and spearheaded critical power sector reforms. These steps elevated Andhra Pradesh's logistics, transportation, and energy ecosystem, making the state a preferred destination for businesses and a model for other regions to follow.

Leading India into the Age of E-Governance

Long before digital governance became a nationwide priority, Naidu introduced e-Seva centers across the state, allowing citizens to access services efficiently. In 2017, he established the Real-Time Governance Centre (RTGC) in Amaravati, integrating big data, satellite analytics, and IoT technology to monitor government schemes, disaster response, and public feedback. This tech-enabled administration positioned Andhra Pradesh as one of the most advanced and responsive states in the country.

The Dream of Amaravati: A World-Class Capital

Following the state bifurcation in 2014, Naidu took on the challenge of creating a new capital. Inspired by cities like Singapore, he envisioned Amaravati as a smart, sustainable, and green city with international partnerships. Plans were drawn for iconic government buildings, infrastructure corridors, and urban planning based on global standards. Although political disruptions slowed its progress, the ambition and vision of Amaravati remain

a symbol of Naidu's forward-looking leadership.

Transforming Agriculture for the 21st Century

While he is known for his affinity for technology, Naidu never lost sight of agriculture. His government supported drip irrigation, distributed soil health cards, and empowered farmers with real-time data. The launch of the "Polam Pilusthondi" program strengthened field-level engagement with farmers. Water conservation through rainwater harvesting and micro-irrigation became key pillars of his rural policy, aiming to make agriculture more sustainable and economically viable for future generations.

Attracting Investments and Driving Industrial Growth

Naidu has always been a champion of industry and entrepreneurship. By hosting global investment summits and establishing Special Economic Zones, he opened the doors for manufacturing, IT, pharmaceuticals, and services to thrive in Andhra Pradesh. His transparent and investor-friendly policies improved the state's image on the international stage and generated large-scale employment and industrial output.

Crisis Leadership: Hudhud and Beyond

Leadership during adversity reveals character, and Naidu's response to Cyclone Hudhud in 2014 showcased his decisiveness and compassion. He personally relocated to Visakhapatnam, oversaw the restoration process, and used real-time technologies to coordinate relief efforts. His swift and tech-enabled approach saved lives, minimized disruption, and reinforced the trust of the people.

Recognized by the World for Reform and Innovation

Naidu's efforts have earned him accolades from



across the globe. In 1999, Time magazine named him "South Asian of the Year," and global leaders like Bill Gates and Tony Blair have praised his reformist vision. His regular participation at the World Economic Forum in Davos signaled his standing as an international voice in smart governance and innovation.

A Technocrat in Politics

Naidu's unique style sets him apart in Indian politics. With a focus on analytics, accountability, and results, he operates more like a corporate CEO than a traditional politician. From his structured approach to planning to his communication style and tech-first mindset, he has redefined what leadership can look like in the 21st century.

WhatsApp Governance: Taking Services to the People

In 2024, Naidu introduced one of the most citizen-centric reforms in recent Indian politics—WhatsApp Governance, branded as "Mana Mitra." Citizens can save the number 95523 00009 to

Amaravati Drone Summit: A New Frontier in Tech Leadership"

Under Naidu's guidance, the Amaravati Drone Summit 2024 positioned Andhra Pradesh at the forefront of drone technology in India. With more than 6,900 participants and a record-breaking drone show featuring 5,500 drones, the summit set five Guinness World Records. It aims to attract ₹2,000 crore in investments and generate ₹6,000 crore in revenue over five years, making AP a new hub for drone innovation, manufacturing, and research.

Global Alliances for a Digital Future

Further cementing his global outlook, Naidu's government signed a landmark MoU with the Gates Foundation to drive digital transformation across critical sectors like health, agriculture, and education. The collaboration focuses on leveraging artificial intelligence to solve complex problems and strengthen governance. It also signals Andhra Pradesh's renewed positioning as a destination for innovation and investment.

A Legacy Still in the Making

At 75, N. Chandrababu Naidu's influence remains as powerful and relevant as ever. His blend of vision, discipline, and forward-thinking has transformed lives and institutions. He doesn't just govern—he anticipates, adapts, and builds. His life's work has created blueprints for smart cities, modern agriculture, and digital democracy. And while many leaders react to the future, Naidu continues to shape it.

(The author is a senior journalist and information analyst consultant, who previously served as the Chief Public Relations Officer to Hon'ble governor at the Andhra Pradesh Raj Bhavan and media liaison officer to Hon'ble speaker at the AP Legislative Assembly.)

In an open letter to the people, Bengal CM Mamata appeals for peace

Kolkata, April 19 (UNI) : Amid incidents of unrest and communal violence in several parts of West Bengal following protests against the amended Waqf Act, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in an open letter on Saturday, launched a scathing attack on the BJP and the RSS while appealing for the restoration of peace in the state.

Referring to a recent incident at Sandeshkhali where ten people were injured following clash allegedly between Trinamool Congress and BJP, the Chief minister wrote, "The BJP and their associates have become extremely aggressive towards West Bengal. They want to bring ED, CBI, and CRPF into Bengal."

"Among their allies,

there is also the RSS. I used to avoid naming the RSS earlier, but now I must say that the RSS is deeply involved in spreading false propaganda across the country.

"The BJP is using it to do politics. They want to play a dirty game," Banerjee wrote.

The Chief Minister alleged that the BJP and RSS had intended to create unrest during the Ram Navami celebrations, but since the state government was well-prepared and the festival passed peacefully, they are now attempting to exploit the Waqf movement for their political gain.

Urging all communities to maintain peace, the Chief Minister said, "Please be patient and stay calm. We are fighting a battle for peace and justice. The

criminals hiding behind the curtain must be identified and punished.

"But at the same time, we must resist the central agencies being used as political tools against us. We have to work unitedly with the people, the police administration, and all democratic institutions to counter the misinformation and protect our state's dignity and harmony," she said.

Highlighting the rich history, progressive mindset and cultural heritage of Bengal, the Chief Minister wrote, "In Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and many other BJP-ruled states, many people have been killed in riots. Thousands upon thousands were rendered homeless. There is no end to their violence. Assam

and Tripura are also severely affected."

"When we witness incidents of rape, murder, and inhumane actions in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, we feel deeply ashamed. But West Bengal stands as an exception amidst such situations. In terms of law and order and administrative performance, our state holds a leading position," she added.

"Historically, Bengal has always been a progressive state in every sense. In India's socio-cultural and freedom movements, Bengal was the first to raise its voice and led the charge against British rule. The country's first revolutionaries were born in Bengal. This progressive identity is our pride, and we must protect

and uphold it through all our efforts," the chief minister wrote.

The Chief Minister firmly stated that criminals have no religion and would be punished, emphasising that, in order to maintain law and order and protect people's lives and dignity, security forces had been deployed, senior officers assigned to sensitive areas, and police efforts intensified with additional reinforcements being sent.

She urged people to trust the administration and leadership, remain united, and support the government's efforts, cautioning them not to believe those attempting to defame Bengal for political gain.

"To everyone in the state, I make this appeal: Be

brave, stay calm, stay united. Do not be misled by false communal narratives. We have always lived in harmony, and we will continue to do so. We must fight back against the propaganda of hate. We must spread the light of unity and peace," the chief minister wrote.

The Chief Minister concluded by quoting famous lines from Janaganaman Adhinayak by Rabindranath Tagore:

Aharah tobo ahoban procharito, shuni tobo udar bani

Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Parsi, Muslim, Christian

Purob poshime ase, tobo sinhason pase

Premhar hoy gantha Jonogon-oikyo-

bidhayak, joyo he Bharatbhagyabidhata



## Iran Ready to Help Syria from inclusive govt : Foreign Minister

Tehran, April 19 (UNI) : Iran does not oppose the current government of Syria and is ready to help form an inclusive government if necessary, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday.

"We do not oppose the Syrian government, nor do we take any action against it. We are waiting for them to complete their work to establish security, peace and economic prosperity and to establish a legitimate and inclusive government of all ethnic groups in Syria. If and when we are asked for help, we will do so," Araghchi said in an interview with RT.

Iran does nor interact with the current Syrian government, and there is no rush to establish such relations, Araghchi also said. On December 8, 2024, Syria's armed opposition seized control of Damascus, leading to Bashar Assad's resignation as president and his departure from the country. In January, Ahmed Sharaa, the head of the new Syrian administration, was announced as transitional president.

## Iran's FM says indirect talks with US "constructive"

Tehran, April 19 (UNI) : Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Saturday said the negotiations with U.S. delegations in Rome were held in a "constructive" atmosphere and are making progress, according to Iran's IRIB news agency.

He made the remarks at the end of the second round of the Omani-mediated indirect talks between Iranian and U.S. delegations, headed by him and U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff respectively, on Iran's nuclear program and removal of Washington's sanctions.

Araghchi described the four-hour meeting as "good" and "forward-moving," adding that both sides had reached a better understanding of several key principles and objectives.

He also noted that technical negotiations at the expert level are set to begin in Oman by Wednesday, where the details of the agreement's framework may be discussed.

He added that the negotiators would meet in Oman next Saturday again to discuss the result of the experts' work.The just concluded indirect talks were the second round between U.S. and Iranian delegations. The first round of the talks was held last Saturday in the Omani capital Muscat, which were described by both sides as "constructive."

The talks followed U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to bomb Iran if the Middle Eastern country does not accept his offer for talks outlined in a letter sent to Iran's leadership in early March.

Iran signed a nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, with six major countries -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States -- in July 2015, accepting restrictions on its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. However, the United States withdrew from the deal in May 2018 and reinstated sanctions, prompting Iran to scale back some of its nuclear commitments. Efforts to revive the nuclear deal have not achieved substantial progress.

## Oman confirms progress in Iran-U.S. nuclear talks, next round to be held in Muscat

Muscat, April 19 (UNI) : Oman's Foreign Ministry confirmed Saturday that Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff have agreed to move into the next phase of negotiations aimed at reaching a fair, lasting, and binding agreement on Tehran's nuclear issues.

Araghchi and Witkoff held indirect talks earlier in the day in Rome, with Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi mediating the discussions.

A spokesperson from the Omani Foreign Ministry said that dialogue and clear communication remain essential to achieving "a mutually credible agreement and understanding for the benefit of all concerned regionally and internationally."

It was also agreed that the next round of talks will be held in Muscat in the coming days.

Albusaidi expressed appreciation on the social media platform X for the spirit of cooperation shown by both parties.

"I would like to thank Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Seyed Abbas Araghchi and Presidential Envoy Mr Steve Witkoff for their highly constructive approach to the talks today. These talks are gaining momentum and now even the unlikely is possible," he said.

## Man killed by son over property

Jaunpur (UP), April 19 (UNI) : A 65-year-old man was hit with a stick and killed by his son allegedly over property dispute in Sarpatha area of Jaunpur district here in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, a police officer said here.

Superintendent of Police (City) Ayush Srivastava said that Prabhakar Singh (65), a resident of Deeh Asharfabad village, has four-five semi-constructed rooms on the side of Lucknow-Ballia highway in the village and mostly lived there.

"On Saturday at around 11 am, his son, Akhilesh Singh alias Otu Singh, came inside the room and killed his father by hitting him on the head with a stick," he said.

He said that the son killed his father over selling of land and money transactions. "It is being said that there used to be some dispute between father and son regarding selling of land," he said.The SP said that the deceased's wife Savitri Singh has filed a complaint against the son for murdering her husband.

# 41 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza: Civil defense



Gaza, April 19 (UNI) : At least 41 Palestinians were killed on Saturday and many others wounded amid ongoing Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip, according to civil defense authorities in Gaza.

In a press statement, the civil defense reported that Israeli strikes targeted residential homes and tents sheltering displaced persons in the southern, northern, and central parts of the enclave.

Local sources and eyewitnesses reported that Israeli artillery has been shelling the eastern and northern areas of Gaza City

since early Saturday, targeting even previously evacuated homes.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a Friday statement that their military operations targeting "terrorist organizations" were continuing in Gaza.

In the meantime, health authorities in Gaza reported that hospitals have received 92 bodies and 219 wounded individuals over the past 48 hours.

According to the authorities, the number of Palestinians killed since Israel resumed its military operations on March 18 has risen to 1,783, bringing the

total death toll since the outbreak of the conflict in October 2023 to 51,157.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said in a statement on Saturday that Gaza's border crossings have remained shut for the seventh consecutive week, preventing the entry of humanitarian aid, medical supplies, vaccines and fuel into the enclave. The UN agency reiterated its call for the reopening of crossings to allow the continued flow of aid and urged for a renewed ceasefire.

## Putin declares Easter truce in Ukraine conflict

Moscow, April 19 (UNI) : Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday declared a unilateral Easter truce for the ongoing conflict with Ukraine, media reports said.

The truce will start from 6:00 p.m. local time (1500 GMT) on Saturday and last until midnight on Sunday into Monday (2100 GMT on Sunday)."I have ordered a complete cessation of hostilities during this period," Putin was quoted by the Kremlin's Telegram account as saying at a meeting with Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov, according to Xinhua news.

Putin also noted that Russia hopes Ukraine will follow suit and cease hostilities during the period, media reported. "Our armed forces must remain on high alert to repel possible ceasefire violations, provocations and any aggressive actions by the enemy," the Russian president added.

# Yemen's Houthis claimed downed another US MQ-9 drone in 24 hours

Sanaa, April 19 (UNI) : Yemen's Houthi group said Saturday it shot down another U.S.-made MQ-9 drone over Sanaa province in the past 24 hours.

"The drone was shot down, using a locally manufactured surface-to-air missile," Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said in a statement aired by Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

"This is the second drone our air defenses had successfully shot down in 24 hours ... and the 21st we had downed since November 2023," he said.

# U.S. tariffs threaten Arab non-oil exports: UN agency

BeirutApril 19 (UNI) :A sharp rise in U.S. trade protectionism is placing Arab economies under mounting pressure, endangering 22 billion U.S. dollars worth of non-oil exports, according to a policy brief released Saturday by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Jordan emerges as the most vulnerable, with nearly a quarter of its total exports bound for the United States. Bahrain is also flagged due to its heavy dependence on aluminum and chemical exports to the U.S. market.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates could see disruptions to roughly 10 billion dollars in U.S.-bound re-exports, a result of U.S. tariffs on goods originally produced in third countries, said the brief.

The ESCWA brief also warns of growing financial strains across Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies, which are contending with a sharp drop in global oil prices.

Further financial challenges loom for non-GCC states. ESCWA projects that Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia will collectively face an additional 114 million dollars in sovereign interest payments in 2025, driven by rising global bond yields amid investor uncertainty. These higher borrowing costs risk tightening national budgets and delaying development initiatives, it said.Earlier this month, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order amid widespread opposition, imposing so-called "reciprocal tariffs" on its trading partners worldwide.

# Bangladesh to enhance air cargo capacity for exports after India cancels transshipment facilities

Dhaka, April 19 (UNI) : With India having cancelled transshipment facility for Bangladeshi exports, Dhaka is seeking to enhance the capacity of its own independent air cargo operations.The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has stepped up plans to expand cargo capacity, including introducing dedicated cargo flights from the Sylhet-based Osmani International Airport and bolstering manpower at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, so as to sustain momentum of exports, Business Standard BD reported.

The development comes days after India's Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs on April 8 withdrew a provision which allowed Dhaka to export its goods by using India's land ports enroute to international airports and seaports.

Since Bangladeshi exports are heavily reliant on Indian infrastructure, the cancellation of these facilities had created fear that it will greatly impact the

## 35 taken to hospital after house fire in Japan's Osaka

Tokyo, April 19 (UNI) : A fire broke out around Saturday noon in a 14-story prefectural housing complex in Japan's Osaka Prefecture, with 35 residents taken to hospital and one in serious condition, local media reported.The fire started on the fourth floor of the building and smoke quickly spread to the upper floors, national broadcaster NHK reported. Emergency services dispatched 38 fire trucks to the scene, and the blaze was brought under control approximately four hours later.

country's exports, and essentially cancel its trade with Nepal and Bhutan.

However, New Delhi assured Dhaka that its exports won't be affected, though in the light of the new US sanctions, increase in transportation costs, lack of infrastructure, logistical hurdles, and the country's

own debilitating economy, Bangladesh cited the revocation as concerning.

According to CAAB Chairman Air-Vice Marshal Md Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan, additional staff will be deployed at Dhaka airport until the third terminal becomes fully operational in October.

# Russian President Vladimir Putin declares Easter truce in Ukraine

Moscow, April 19 (UNI) : Russian President Vladimir Putin has declared an Easter truce in Ukraine, the Kremlin press service said on Saturday.

The break in fighting is scheduled to last from Saturday evening until Monday morning local time."During a meeting in the Kremlin, the commander-in-chief heard a report by Valery Gerasimov, chief of the general staff of the Russian armed forces, on the situation on the line of contact and said that the Russian side stops all hostilities from 1800 [1500 GMT] on April 19 to 0000 on April 21," the Kremlin's official Telegram channel said.Putin was quoted as saying that while Russia

"assumed" that Ukraine would follow suit, he warned that Russian troops should be ready to repel possible "provocations by the enemy".

According to the statement on Telegram, Putin said the truce would show how sincere Kyiv was in its willingness to "participate in the process of peace talks aimed at eliminating the root causes of the Ukrainian crisis."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the ceasefire "another attempt by Putin to play with human lives". He wrote on X that "air raid alerts are spreading across Ukraine", and "Shahed drones in our skies reveal Putin's true attitude toward

Easter and toward human life".Putin's announcement of truce came after US President Donald Trump on Friday said negotiations between Ukraine and Russia are "coming to a head" and insisted that neither side is "playing" him in his push to end the three-year war.

Last month, Ukraine endorsed a 30-day ceasefire deal proposed by the US, but Moscow rejected the plan.

The Russian Defense Ministry said it had instructed all group commanders in Ukraine on the ceasefire.

It said in a statement that Moscow's troops would adhere to the truce provided it is "mutually

respected" by Ukraine.

The announcement comes as Russia's Defense Ministry said Saturday its forces have taken control of the village of Oleshnya, in the Kursk region on the border with Ukraine.

According to Russian state news agency Tass, Russia is still fighting to push Ukrainian forces out of the village of Gornal, some 11 km south of Oleshnya.

"The Russian military has yet to push the Ukrainian armed forces out of Gornal ... in order to completely liberate the Kursk region. Fierce fighting is underway in the settlement," the agency reported, citing Russia security agencies.

# Taliban strongly condemn Pakistan's treatment of Afghan refugees, during Ishaq Dar's Kabul visit

Kabul/Islamabad, April 19 (UNI) : The Afghan Taliban's Acting Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund strongly condemned Pakistan's treatment of Afghan refugees, during his meeting with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Kabul today.Dar's visit to Kabul came amid Pakistan's deportation of over 85,000 Afghans, including mostly

children, in just over two weeks, causing significant concern and hardship to the displaced families.

Pakistan has launched a strict campaign to deport over 800,000 Afghans by the end of April. The deportations include individuals who were born in Pakistan or have lived there for decades.

Convoys of Afghan families have been heading to border towns daily,

fearing raids, arrests, or being separated from family members due to the deportation order.Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, said of the meeting between Dar and the Acting Prime Minister: "The prime minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan thanked Pakistan for hosting Afghan migrants thus far, but stressed that recent treatment of Afghan

migrants is unacceptable and strongly condemned it," Tolo News said.Idris Zazai, a political affairs expert, noted: "Numerous meetings have been held between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and many promises exchanged, but Pakistan has repeatedly broken its commitments."Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Foreign Minister, also expressed concern about the treatment of Afghan

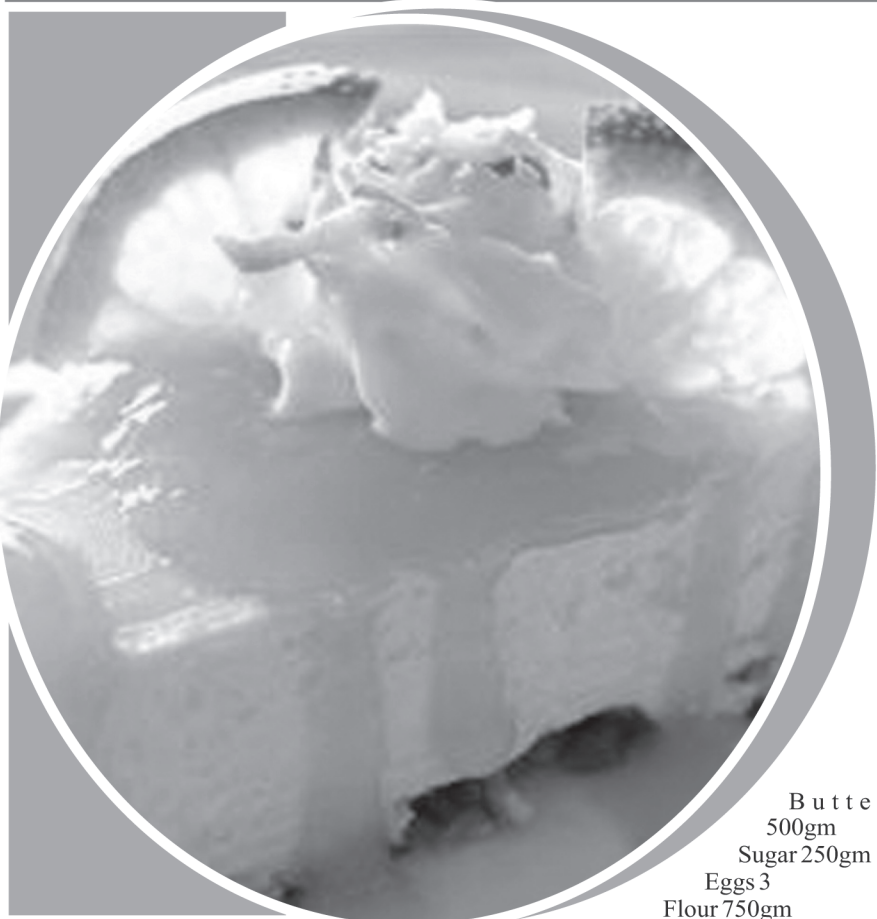
migrants in Pakistan and urged Ishaq Dar to prevent violations of the rights of migrants and returnees.

In response, the Pakistani Foreign Minister said that customs duties on many trade items have been reduced to boost bilateral trade and that Afghan migrants will not be mistreated. He added that Islamabad would prevent any arbitrary seizure of Afghan migrants' property.





# Food&Kids



## Mango Recipes: Crumble, Cheesecake, Mousse

Our love of fruits takes a whole new meaning in summer when mangoes come in great big sizes, making us crave for them in our meals, in our desserts, and every time we celebrate.

To savour the first mango of the season, its subtle sweet and sour flavour, is a joy unmatched. While we delight in a mango smoothie or a mango ice-cream, just by adding a dash of mango to our cakes and crumbles we can bring novelty to our dessert experience. We shortlisted mango crumble, mango cheesecake, mango mousse, and mango phirnee

as our desserts, and went up to corporate pastry chef Devender Bungla of Hyatt Regency, Delhi, for their exclusive recipes. Chef Bungla's is a 20-year-old hand in baking and frosting at the hotel, and fresh from creating the menu for a summer mango festival, he happily doles out the secret to baking a perfect Crumble among others. Mango Crumble Ingredients:



Butter 500gm  
Sugar 250gm  
Eggs 3  
Flour 750gm  
Almond powder 100gm  
Chopped mango 1000gm

### For Crumble:

Butter 500gm  
Sugar 500gm  
Flour 700gm  
Vanilla 5ml  
Cinnamon powder a pinch

### Method:

- Make the base  
- Beat the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg one by one.

- Mix flour and almond powder together and fold with butter mix

- Put in the ring or bowl and put chopped mango on top of the mix, then put crumble and bake at 180 C until golden brown

- Serve warm with cream

### For Crumble:

- Mix soft butter and sugar. Add flour and almond powder. Mix it very lightly like crumb.

- Put in deep freezer until it is hard

### Mango cheesecake

#### Ingredients:

Cream cheese 1250gm  
Sugar 375gm  
Eggs 7  
Fresh cream 125gm  
Flour 10gm  
Custard powder 7gm  
Hang yogurt 125 gm  
Chopped mango 250gm

### Method:

- Beat the cream cheese with sugar

- Add eggs and curd

- Mix fresh cream, flour and custard powder together and mix with the



cheese mix

- Add chopped mango

- Grease the ring or cake tin and put mango cheese mix

- Bake with steam at 160 C for 1 hour

- Take out from oven, cool it down and garnish with fresh mango and gel

- Chill it, and serve

### Mango mousse

#### Ingredients:

Mango puree 500ml  
Sugar 175gm  
Egg yolk 4  
Milk 50ml  
Gelatin 15gm  
Whipped cream 1000ml  
Fresh mango slices 200gm

Method:

- Boil the milk. Add sugar

- Beat the egg yolk and mix with boiled milk

- Add melted gelatin and mango puree

- Cool down and fold with whipped cream

- Put in glass bowl and garnish with chopped mango

- Put in freezer for 2 hours

### Mango phirnee

#### Ingredients:

Milk 1lt  
Rice powder 100gm  
Sugar 200gm  
Cardamom small 10  
Mango pulp 200gm  
Mango diced 100gm

### Method:

- Boil the milk. Add sugar and rice powder and cook for sometime.

- Cool it down and add mango pulp

- Put in a bowl and garnish with fresh mango

- Ready to serve

Chef's love of cheesecakes and crumbles comes from his travels to Europe particularly Germany and France. He shares, "While the Germans can't get enough of cheesecakes, the French prefer bread as a base for everything they eat including desserts, hence the croissants and rye bread bakes." And we did notice an influence of both in what we sampled.

## Cooking for kids: Watermelon Kiwi Popsicles

Is your kid or your inner kid pestering you to buy a Popsicle, but you are hesitant to treat yourself or your kid because of the sugar content or the added colours? Then try this fruity Popsicle recipe shared by Padmaja Vasireddy - Food and Nutrition Expert, California, USA. These popsicles have a tangy flavour of watermelon and kiwi, which will make you and your tots super happy.

### Ingredients:

2 cups diced watermelon  
1 cup diced kiwi  
1 tbs honey  
1 tsp lemon juice

### Method:

1. Blend all the ingredients together.

2. Pour into the popsicle container and



freeze it overnight.

3. Enjoy the healthiest delectable Watermelon Kiwi Popsicle.

## Almond Rooh Afza lassi recipe



This is a very refreshing health drink for all your parties, little get togethers and also for evening after fasting.

Sweet Tangy fusion with rose syrup indulgence gives a wonderful sense of satisfaction and sure to win hearts of many :)

### Ingredients

Curd - 1.5 - 2 cups  
Milk - 2 cups  
Water - 1.5 to 2 cups  
Sugar - 2 table spoon +/- according to your taste

Rooh Afzah - 2 tablespoon

Roasted Almonds - 2 tablespoon roughly chopped

### Method:

- Blend in curd, milk, water and sugar - I used my tall juicer. Adjust the consistency by adding more milk or water if you find it very thick or sourness is more.

- Remove in a big bowl, add in Rooh Afza and mix check for sugar, sourness add more ingredients which suits your taste best.

- Refrigerate the drink and serve chill

- Mix in almonds before serving (see notes)

### Notes:

-No rock hard rules to be followed while making this, be easy to your taste

-After adding everything, lassi was still little sour which got corrected when I served along with ice cubes.

-Since almonds are not blanched and peeled, adding almonds from before might leave the skin after getting soaked up. The skin of almonds might float on top making it overall disaster.

- If you don't want to use roasted almonds then simply blanch the almonds and slice them up still will taste crunchy munchy.

- If you want pinker version add more and more of Rooh Afza till you reach the right pitch. But here again you will need to adjust the sugar by reducing it. Because adding more milk or curd (white) would only make the hue light pink and not dark. Yields 4 tall glasses of lassi

Recipe courtesy: Sweets and Spices



## Restaurant Review: Paramount (Sherbet & Syrup)



The feisty food map of Kolkata actually defies all imagination!

The coexistence of ultra-trendy international restaurant set-ups along with archaic, turn of the century Mecca for foodie spaces amazes me. So, it comes as no surprise same time every year, as the unbearable summer temperatures push all records, I commit my self to the pilgrimage of the heritage sherbets & syrups speck, once frequented by all of the Bengal Renaissance leaders. Paramount is a treasure trove of discovery for the old and young alike.

### Decor

Tucked away in one of the prominent orthodox north Kolkata localities, a stone's throw away from the Indian Coffee House and the Calcutta University, this strip of space imparts a welcome sense of casualness. With its only walk-in policy, we deliberately arrive early to avoid the early evening waiting outside waiting outside and secure a table. We are wrapped in history immediately with game trophies mounted antlers -and Bengal - and Bengal luminaries' photographs looking down from the walls. The slim marble tables and benches bring back an era of pure nostalgia.

And above all, ripples of enthusiastic conversation covering politics to food,

engulfs us completely. The charged up atmosphere actually bubbles into a simple celebration of life through this unadulterated adda.

### Food

The one page laminated menu is full of surprises. Ample variety and innovation has kept them on the top of the trade over 100 years with seasonal organic ingredients, original secret recipes with twists and dollops of the passion and love it is served with. We choose to order the summer quenchers Cream Green Mango (₹ 40) and all famous Dub Sherbet (₹ 40).

Add to that a house special Cocoa Malai (₹ 80) and a Litchi Syrup (₹ 40). For take away, we order bottles of Organic Litchi Syrup (₹ 160) and Green Mango (₹ 120).

### Plus & Minus

The mandatory drink seems to be the house

legend Dub Sherbet -a subliminal bliss to beat the outrageous heat.

Coconut sherbet with crushed ice and slice or two of tender coconut to slurp up with the spoon provided, right to the end. The Green Mango Cream comes in a delightful mixture of home set yogurt adorned with the slightly tangy but countered by the sweetness of the Green Mango Syrup, a generous pinch of salt to heighten the tastebuds. Its strong, atypical scent takes us to a different realm of childhood familiarity. The Organic Litchi Drink comes in a tall glass topped with crushed ice; flavouring the palate with attractive syrupy sweetness, as if freshly squeezed from the delicate soft curls of fruits. The ultimate refreshing frenzy arrives with the cold milk based Cocoa Malai -a subtle cocoa-flavoured sherbet topped with a layer of melt-in the-mouth malai and chopped nuts. This is remarkable!



# Bangladesh seal WCWC 2025 spot as West Indies fall short

Lahore, April 19 (UNI) : Bangladesh have made their way into the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 to be held later in the year in India, following a sizzling Qualifier campaign where they won three out of five matches.

They join hosts Pakistan as the two teams who sealed their spot from the Qualifier.

Bangladesh progressed through on the basis of a higher Net Run Rate (a difference of 0.013) from the West Indies, after the latter missed out qualification by the narrowest of margins.

This will be their second appearance at the marquee ICC Women's event, after finishing second-last in the 2022 edition in New Zealand. Bangladesh will join Pakistan, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, England and hosts India at the tournament later this year, an ICC report said. Bangladesh began their campaign with a

mammoth 178-run win against Thailand. Following it up, the Nigar Sultana Joty-led side defeated Ireland by two wickets in a closely-contested game and later came out on top against Scotland to make it three wins on the trot to kickstart their campaign.

The fourth game saw Bangladesh stumble against West Indies, leaving them needing a win against Pakistan in their final game to seal the second spot available. With Bangladesh's defeat against Pakistan, West Indies' hopes of qualification remained alive. Skipper Joty, alongside Sharmin Akhter and Ritu Moni were the standout performers with the bat, while Fahima Khatun, Jannatul Ferdus and Rabeya Khan shone with the ball throughout the campaign.

With both West Indies and Bangladesh in the hunt for the final World Cup

spot, a thrilling finale unfolded in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2025 on Saturday here. West Indies needing to chase down 167 in just 10.1 overs to secure qualification. There was a narrow margin for error—they could stretch the chase to 11 overs only if they leveled the scores at 166 and then finished it off with a six. As the 10th over concluded, West Indies found themselves 11 runs short. Heading into the final two balls, the equation was clear: a four and a six were needed to keep their World Cup hopes alive. In a moment packed with drama, Stafanie Taylor launched a powerful hit over long-on. The ball sailed over the ropes—but it was a six too early.

The dramatic finish ended West Indies' qualification hopes and confirmed Bangladesh's place in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025.

## LSG clinch last-ball thriller against RR by 2 runs

Jaipur, April 19 (UNI) : Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) edged out Rajasthan Royals (RR) by a slender margin of two runs in a nerve-racking Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 encounter at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing 181 for victory, the RR fell just short, ending at 178/5 despite a valiant 74 from opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and a late push from Riyan Parag. Avesh Khan starred with the ball for Lucknow, claiming 3 crucial wickets, including that of Jaiswal, to halt the RR's charge in the death overs.

Earlier, put in to bat, LSG posted a competitive 180/5, riding on a steady 66 by Aiden Markram and a brisk 50 from young Ayush Badoni. Abdul Samad provided the finishing fireworks with a blazing 30\* off just 10 balls, including four sixes.

RR got off to a flier in response, with Jaiswal and debutant Vaibhav Suryavanshi (34) adding 85 for the opening wicket. However, wickets at regular intervals in the second half of the innings pegged them back. Avesh's double blow—dismissing Jaiswal and Hetmyer in quick succession—turned the match decisively in Lucknow's favour.

Wanindu Hasaranga (2/31) and Tushar Deshpande (1/26) were the pick of the bowlers for Rajasthan, while Jofra Archer and Sandeep Sharma struggled with the ball. With this win, LSG strengthened their position on the points table, while the Royals suffered a setback in their playoff chase.

## Buttler's blitz helps GT hunt down 204 in style

Ahmedabad, April 19 (UNI) : Jos Buttler and Sherfane Rutherford stitched together a dazzling 119-run stand as Gujarat Titans (GT) chased down Delhi Capitals' imposing 203/8 with seven wickets in hand and four balls to spare in a high-octane IPL clash at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing 204, GT lost skipper Shubman Gill early, run out for 7, thanks to Karun Nair's sharp direct hit. But that was as good as it got for Delhi.

Sai Sudharsan and Buttler then counterattacked in style. Sudharsan unleashed a flurry of crisp boundaries, including consecutive fours off Mitchell Starc and Mukesh Kumar, even hoisting Axar Patel for a soaring six over fine leg. The pair brought up their 50-run stand in the sixth over. Sudharsan eventually fell for a fluent 36 (21 balls), caught off Kuldeep Yadav attempting a pull, but GT were already motoring at 74/2 in the 8th over. Buttler, meanwhile, shifted gears seamlessly. He tore into Starc in the 15th over, smashing five boundaries in a row, the last of which



saw him grimacing in pain, possibly cramps, but unfazed in timing.

Rutherford, on the other end, provided powerful support. After hammering Kuldeep and Mohit Sharma for sixes, he clubbed a 91-metre monster over square leg. He eventually perished for 43 (34), caught by Starc off Mukesh Kumar, bringing an end to the game-defining 119-run partnership. With 11 needed off the final over, the ever-dependable Rahul Tewatia finished in vintage style. Starc's first delivery was walloped for a massive six over deep midwicket, and the next, an in-swinging yorker, was inside-edged past leg-

stump to the fine leg fence. A hug from Buttler and beaming smiles followed, as GT romped home with four balls to spare. Earlier, Delhi Capitals posted a competitive 203/8, powered by breezy knocks from Karun Nair (31 off 18), Axar Patel (39 off 32) and a blistering late cameo by Ashutosh Sharma (37 off 19). Abishek Porel gave them a flying start, but it was Prasidh Krishna's timely four-wicket haul that prevented DC from surging past 220. Gujarat's bowling was erratic at times, with Siraj and Rashid Khan struggling for control. Krishna, however, kept pulling Delhi back into the contest with wickets at

crucial junctures, including Axar and Nair, while also surviving an injury scare after a fierce Ashutosh flick.

But the night belonged to Buttler, who remained unbeaten on 97 off 54 balls, with 11 fours and 4 sixes, a masterclass in measured aggression.

With this win, GT bolstered their playoff hopes, while DC were left rueing a wasted opportunity after posting 200-plus.

Brief Scores: DC 203/8 in 20 overs (Axar Patel 39, Ashutosh Sharma 37; Prasidh Krishna 4/41)

GT 204/3 in 19.2 overs (Buttler 97 no, Rutherford 43; Kuldeep 1/30)

Gujarat Titans won by 7 wickets.

## BCB facing tough time: Faruque after media rights go unsold

Sylhet, April 19 (UNI) : Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed said they are going through a 'tough time' after failing to sell media rights for the Bangladesh-Zimbabwe Test series and thanked the BTV for stepping in to telecast the first Test here starting on Sunday. The BCB had invited broadcasters to bid for the media rights of the two-Test series between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe on March 19 but no parties showed any interest as the deadline ended on April 7.

The board still tried to negotiate a deal with broadcasters but after failing to garner any interest, it requested state broadcaster BTV to telecast the match and it obliged, the Daily Star reported.

"I think there is a financial lull in both domestic and international cricket... We are going through a bit of a tough time, it's taking some time after the change in government," Faruque told reporters at an event in Dhaka today. "BTV will telecast it [Zimbabwe series], we are thankful to them. It was really difficult to get BTV's slot. Special thanks to the honourable secretary who is present here. We communicated with her from the board. Usually, you have to buy a slot from BTV. We are grateful to her. BTV will telecast it free of cost. At least, the match would reach the people."

# Alcaraz to face Rune in final of Barcelona Open

Barcelona, April 19 (UNI) : Top seed and home favorite Carlos Alcaraz will play Holger Rune in the final of the Barcelona Open on Sunday after beating seventh-seeded Arthur Fils of France 6-2, 6-4 on Saturday.

Fils had taken Alcaraz to three sets in the quarterfinals of the recent Monte Carlo Open, including winning the opening set, but this time the Spaniard was in no mood for a repeat and began the match by dominating his French opponent and racing to win the first set 6-2.

Alcaraz had to work harder in the second set but with the support of the fans in Barcelona, he closed out the match, despite two double faults in the final game.

"It was a complete performance from start to finish with no ups and downs in

my performance. It was windy, but I knew what shots to take in every moment," Alcaraz told Spanish TV network RTVE afterward, expressing his satisfaction being able to play in Barcelona.

"It is a privilege to be here, we travel all year, and it is very special for a tennis player to be able to perform in front of their fans and get a lot of love when I come here," he said.

Alcaraz will face Denmark's Holger Rune after the sixth seed advanced to the final earlier in the day with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Karen Khachanov, who is ranked 27th in the world.

Rune found his form in the middle of the first set, winning seven consecutive games to go from 2-3 down to claim the first set and take a decisive 3-0 lead in the second against his Russian opponent.

# Afghanistan win Asia Qualifier to clinch U19 Men's Cricket World Cup berth

Kathmandu, April 19 (UNI) : Afghanistan emerged victorious from a competitive Asia Qualifier on Saturday, landing top spot and becoming the latest nation to qualify for the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026 in Zimbabwe and Namibia by virtue of superior net run rate, with the final round of fixtures in Kathmandu abandoned due to rain.

Their campaign began with dominant eight-wicket wins against Oman and Hong Kong China, before a mammoth score of 359 for four helped them defeat the UAE by 180 runs (D/L) and put them into the driver's seat heading into Saturday's winner-takes-all

tie against Nepal.

With the hosts also enjoying an unbeaten week, fans had hoped to witness a dramatic conclusion to the competition, however persistent rain meant no play was possible at the Lower Mulpani ground.

As a result, Afghanistan's net run rate of +4.82 was enough to secure top spot from Nepal (+3.58) and deliver their ninth appearance at an U19 Men's Cricket World Cup.

The post-match celebrations, led by captain Mahboob Khan, also honoured top-scorer Khalid Ahmadzai - the wicketkeeper-batter taking home the Player of the

Tournament prize with 202 runs during the week which included a stellar 132 in the win over the UAE.

Reacting to their qualification, Afghanistan skipper Mahboob said: "Qualifying for the World Cup is a dream come true. This is a proud moment for every Afghan. We played with heart, and today our hard work paid off.

"This victory is for our nation, for every young boy who dreams of wearing the Afghanistan jersey. We are going to the World Cup and it is just the beginning. We will continue to work harder, stay humble, and fight for glory on the world stage. "In the end, I want to thank my teammates,

coaches, and the entire support staff. We stood together in tough times, and now we celebrate together."

As a result of the win, Afghanistan are the latest team to confirm their place among the 16 that will compete at next year's ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026. Ten teams automatically qualified for the event as the best-placed Full Member nations from the previous edition in 2024. These are: Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies. Full Member hosts of the 2026 edition Zimbabwe have also

secured automatic qualification.

The remaining five spots are determined through regional qualification pathways, with only the winning team from each Regional Qualifier advancing to the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026.

Tanzania became the first team to qualify through this route earlier in the month by virtue of winning the Africa Qualifier, with Afghanistan now joining them as winners in Asia.

The focus now shifts to East Asia-Pacific, where Japan, Fiji and PNG will compete for their World Cup place in Sano, Japan from April 24 to 29.

## Mountaineer Krishna Dhokle honoured with Shiv Chhatrapati State Sports Award

Pune, April 19 (UNI) : Renowned mountaineer Krishna Dhokle from Giripremi has been honoured with the prestigious Shiv Chhatrapati State Sports Award by the Government of Maharashtra for the year 2022-23.

The award, which is the highest state-level recognition in the field of land-based adventure sports, was presented to him on Friday evening at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi, Pune, by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis.

Dhokle has been actively involved in mountaineering for over 23 years, said a release here on Saturday.

## Former Croatia player Pokrivac dies

Zagreb (Croatia), April 19 (UNI) : Former Croatia international Nikola Pokrivac has died in a car accident in his home country, the Croatian Football Federation has confirmed. The 39-year-old midfielder played for Dinamo Zagreb, AS Monaco and RB Salzburg over his career and won 15 international caps from 2008 to 2010. Pokrivac was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2015 which forced him to retire from professional football, the

BBC reported. But he returned to amateur football in 2021 and joined lower league side NK Vojnic last summer. Local media said he was in a vehicle with three team-mates from NK Vojnic when they were involved in a four-vehicle collision in Karlovac in central Croatia on Friday evening.

It has been reported a 42-year-old person in another car was also killed, while the other occupants of Pokrivac's car were taken to hospital with serious injuries. "Nikola was a great

football player, who lived football until his last moment in this world, and who showed great courage in life by overcoming a terrible disease," said Croatian Football Federation president Marijan Kustic.

"This is a great loss for our football community, and especially painful for the family." Pokrivac played at Euro 2008, where Croatia reached the quarter-finals, and faced England twice in qualifying for the 2010 World Cup.

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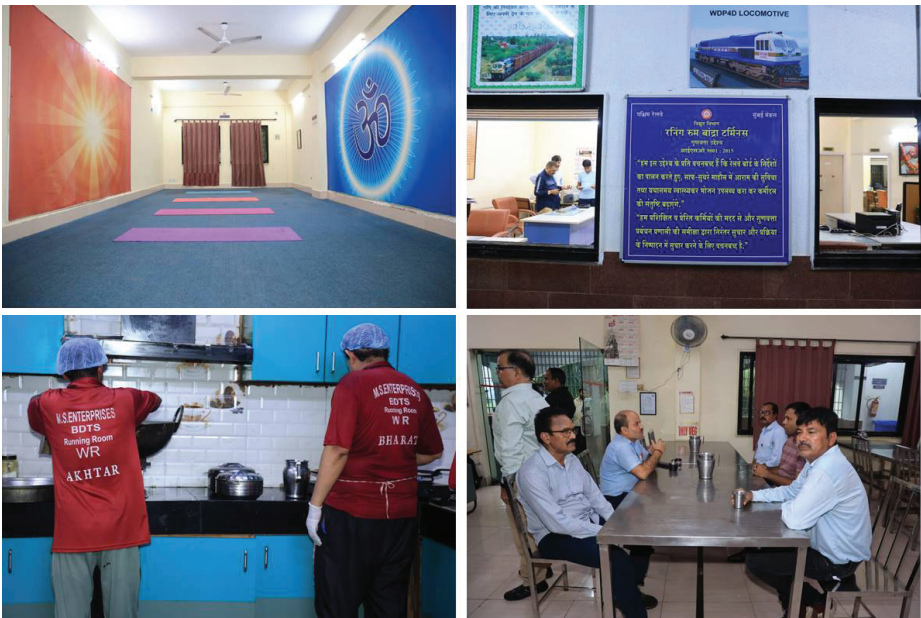
# Indian Railways take significant steps to improve working conditions and safety of Loco Pilots

Significant steps taken by WR to enhance the welfare and comfort of its employees

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 19 : Indian Railways have taken several significant steps in the last decade to improve the working environment and welfare of loco pilots. The Ministry of Railways has prioritized the safety, comfort, and work-life balance of loco pilots. Prior to 2014, facilities such as air-conditioning in running rooms and locomotive cabs were not available, but noteworthy improvements have been made by 2024. Today, all 558 running rooms of Indian Railways are air-conditioned, and they are equipped with modern amenities such as RO water, yoga and meditation spaces, reading rooms, and subsidised meals. Furthermore, 7075 locomotive cabs have been equipped with air-conditioning, ergonomic seating, and other facilities, reducing fatigue for employees working long hours.

It is worth mentioning that Toilet facilities are being now provided as standard in all new locomotives. Toilet facilities are now available in 1170 locomotives, while Older locomotives are also being retrofitted with necessary upgrades. Additionally, new running rooms are being constructed on busy routes, reducing the working time for employees. These



measures have improved working conditions and provided better rest and comfort for staff.

In terms of safety, Indian Railways has adopted several cutting-edge technologies, such as the 'Kavach' system, fog safety devices, and driver alert systems, ensuring the safety of Loco pilots. Over 21,000 fog safety devices have been installed, and simulator-based training is enhancing the decision-making abilities of employees. Additionally, the use of 'Vigilance Control Devices' has further improved the safety and efficiency of loco pilots. These technological advancements play a crucial role in enhancing the overall safety standards of Indian Railways.Post-COVID-19,

Indian Railways successfully conducted two major computer-based recruitment exams, with over 2.37 crore candidates appearing for the exams. As a result, more than 1.30 lakh candidates, including 51,856 Assistant Loco pilots/Loco pilots, were appointed.

To streamline the recruitment process, a yearly recruitment calendar has been implemented starting in 2024, ensuring timely examinations and faster appointment procedures.

This initiative not only makes the recruitment process more transparent and convenient but also ensures timely appointments, which boosts the efficiency of Indian Railways.

The working hours of

Loco pilots have been regulated, with the average duty hours not exceeding 52 hours in 14 days. Additionally, necessary onboard and station facilities for freight, suburban, and passenger trains are being provided, including adequate rest time and basic amenities.

Indian Railways is also focusing on the mental and emotional well-being of employees, with efforts being made to boost morale through counselling sessions and family-oriented programs.

Through these initiatives, Indian Railways continues to strengthen its commitment to the welfare and safety of its employees.

Moving forward in this direction, Western Railway has also taken steps to enhance the welfare and

comfort of its running staff. All our running rooms across the zone are fully air conditioned. Facilities like subsidised canteen facilities with FSSAI certification, yoga and meditation rooms, reading rooms, food massagers, clean and hygienic toilets, wake up call facilities, shoe polish etc are also part of the running room facilities.

The running rooms have separate kitchens for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, a dining hall, a meditation room, and a library for recreational activities. To cater to the needs of female employees, dedicated rooms toilet facilities are also ensured at selected running rooms. For the safety of the employees, the running rooms are equipped with CCTV cameras to ensure constant surveillance and security. Running Rooms like the Bandra Terminus Running Room has received several accolades for its exceptional facilities. This highlights the commitment of Western Railway to maintaining high standards of comfort and safety for its employees. This ensures that employees at various locations have access to modern and comfortable facilities, reinforcing Western Railway's ongoing efforts to improve the working conditions and welfare of its workforce.

# Western Railway to run superfast Tejas special trains Between Mumbai Central - Rajkot

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 19 : For the convenience of passengers and with a view to meet the travel demand especially during the summer season, Western Railway has decided to run Superfast Tejas Special Train on Special Fare between Mumbai Central - Rajkot.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Mr Vineet Abhishek, the details of the special train is as under:

Train No. 09005/09006

Mumbai Central - Rajkot Superfast Special [34 Trips] Train No. 09005 Mumbai Central - Rajkot Special will depart from Mumbai Central every Monday, Wednesday & Friday at 23.20 hrs and will reach Rajkot at 11.45 hrs, the next day. This train will run from 21st April to 28th May, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09006 Rajkot - Mumbai Central Special will depart from Rajkot every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday at 18.30 hrs and will arrive Mumbai Central at 07.30 hrs, the next day. This train will run from 22nd April to

29th May, 2025.

Enroute this train will halt at Borivali, Vapi, Surat, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad, Viramgam, Surendranagar, & Wankaner station in both directions.

This train comprises of First AC, AC 2-Tier and AC 3-Tier Coaches.

The booking for Train No. 09005 & 09006 is open at all PRS Counters and on IRCTC website. For detailed information regarding timings of halts and composition, passengers may please visit [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in).

# Few WR trains affected due to block between Bilimora and Amalsad Station

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 19 : A Block will be taken on Tuesday & Wednesday, 22nd & 23rd April, 2025 for launching of PSC slab on Bridge No. 372 between Bilimora and Amalsad stations of Mumbai Central Division. The blocks will be undertaken on UP & Down Main Lines, due to which a few Western Railway trains will be affected.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, the details of the trains which will be affected on 22nd & 23rd April, 2025 are as under:-

Regulation/Rescheduling of Trains on 22nd April, 2025:-

1. Train No. 22195 Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi - Bandra Terminus Superfast Express of 21st April, 2025 will be rescheduled by 03 hours 30 minutes.
2. Train No. 20968 Porbandar - Secunderabad Superfast Express of 22nd April, 2025 will be rescheduled by 02 hours 30 minutes.
3. Train No. 19016 Porbandar - Dadar

Express of 21st April, 2025 will be rescheduled by 02 hours.

4. Train No. 09056 Udhna - Bandra Terminus Special will be regulated by 30 minutes.
- Regulation of Trains on 23rd April, 2025:-
1. Train No. 19015 Dadar - Porbandar Express will be regulated by 01 hour.
2. Train No. 09075 Mumbai Central - Kathgodam Special will be regulated by 01 hour.
3. Train No. 09055 Bandra Terminus - Udhna Special will be regulated by 50 minutes.
4. Train No. 09035 Bandra Terminus - Bikaner Special will be regulated by 01 hour.
5. Train No. 12925 Mumbai Central - Amritsar Superfast Express will be regulated by 20 minutes.
6. Train No. 12216 Bandra Terminus - Delhi Sarai Rohilla Garib Rath will be regulated by 20 minutes.

# BJP distances itself from Nishikant Dubey's criticism of Supreme Court

New Delhi, April 19 (UNI) : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sought to distance itself from the critical comments about the judiciary made by party MP Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma and said the party rejects the statements.

Party chief JP Nadda said that the party has directed both the BJP leaders as well as everyone else, to refrain from making such statements.

In a post on X, Nadda, who is also Union Health Minister, said:

"The statements made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma regarding the

judiciary and the Chief Justice of the country have no connection whatsoever with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

"These are their personal statements, but the BJP neither agrees with such statements nor ever supports them. The BJP outrightly rejects these statements.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party has always respected the judiciary, wholeheartedly accepting their orders and suggestions, because as a party, we believe that the Supreme Court, along with all courts in the country, is an integral part of our democracy and a strong pillar for the protection of

the Constitution.

"I have directed both of them, as well as everyone else, to refrain from making such statements."

The statement comes as Dubey, Lok Sabha MP from Gonda in Jharkhand, said in a post on X that if the Supreme Court is going to be the one making the laws then it would be better to shut down Parliament.

"Kanoon yadi Supreme Court hi banayega to Sansad Bhavan bandh kar dena chahiye," Nishikant Dubey said in post in Hindi on X.

He also blamed the Chief Justice of India

Sanjiv Khanna for the "civil wars" happening in India

He also criticised the Supreme Court for issuing directions to the President of India, with regard to a time-line for giving assent to bills. "How can you give direction to the appointing authority? The President appoints the Chief Justice of India. The Parliament makes the law of this country. You will dictate to that Parliament?... In which law is it written that the President has to take a decision within three months? This means that you want to take this country towards anarchy," he has said.

# Western Railway to run Summer Special Trains Between Udhna - Subedarganj

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, April 19 : For the convenience of passengers and with a view to meet the travel demand especially during the summer season, Western Railway has decided to run Special Train on Special Fare between Udhna - Subedarganj.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Mr Vineet Abhishek, the details of the special train is as under:

Train No. 04156/04155 Udhna - Subedarganj Weekly Special [22 Trips] Train No. 04156 Udhna - Subedarganj Special will depart from Udhna on every Tuesday at 16.30 hrs and will reach Subedarganj at 21.00 hrs, the next day. This train will run from 22nd April to 01st July, 2025.

# Governor Appreciates the Efforts at State Orchidarium



Imphal, April 19 : Ajay Kumar Bhalla accompanied by First Lady Smt. Jyoti Bhalla visited State Orchidarium, Khonghampat maintained by State Forest Department. Governor was received by PCCF & HoFF, Shri Anurag Bajpai and other senior officers of the Department.

During the visit, Governor and First Lady

launched the plantation activity of the season by planting Heirangoi (Garcinia spp.) which is a wild fruit having high food, ecological and cultural value. Thereafter, Governor visited the Orchid Display House, traversed through trek route witnessing flowering of rare & endangered orchids and inspected the Ground Orchid Plots. Governor and

First Lady also witnessed the film produced by the Forest Department on "Orchids of Manipur" and also a film on rejuvenation of dried natural spring in Langol Reserved Forest for population of Kameng village, by Central Forest Division, Imphal. He appreciated the efforts and advised the Department to replicate the similar efforts throughout the State

# Dams, reservoirs to be developed as tourist destinations in Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow, April 19 (UNI) : The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a major initiative to transform dams and reservoirs into vibrant tourist destinations in a bid to boost eco-tourism, official sources said here on Saturday.

Sources said that as part of the plan, infrastructure will be developed at seven key sites across Chitrakoot, Mahoba, Sonbhadra, Hamirpur, Jhansi, Siddharth Nagar and Banda. "The initiative also includes the promotion of water and adventure sports, in collaboration with the Department of Irrigation and Water

Resources," they said.

Sources said that the main objective of this initiative is to transform these scenic water bodies into attractive destinations for tourists. "The government believes that the development of modern tourism facilities such as resorts, boating, water sports, trekking and camping will not only attract tourists but also boost local employment and economic growth.

Sources said that Irrigation and Water Resources department will provide technical support and necessary approvals for these projects. "It will

also ensure that the safety and structural integrity of the dams are not compromised and that environmental and safety standards for water-based activities are strictly followed," they said.

Sources said that the dams and reservoirs selected for eco-tourism development include Gunta Dam in Chitrakoot, Arjun Dam in Mahoba, Dhandraul Dam in Sonbhadra, Maudaha Dam in Hamirpur, Garhmau Lake in Jhansi, Majhouli Sagar in Siddharth Nagar and Nawab Tank in Banda. Sources said that UP is blessed with immense natural and cultural wealth. "The Yogi

government aims to develop these dams and lakes into world-class tourist destinations, offering visitors a peaceful and adventurous experience amid nature. This project is expected to benefit local communities both directly and indirectly," they said.

Sources said that the development of tourism will create employment opportunities in areas such as hotels, restaurants, transportation and guiding services. "Moreover, it will further strengthen UP's position on the national and international tourism map," they said.

# BRICS CCI Chandigarh Chapter delegates meet Punjab Governor

Chandigarh, April 19 (UNI) : Delegates of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chandigarh Chapter called on Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria to explore and discuss potential investment opportunities from BRICS nations.

The meeting focused on strengthening economic and trade ties with member countries, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia,

Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. The delegation was led by Deepak Shukla, Regional Director, BRICS CCI Chandigarh, along with members Rahul Mittal, Aman Jindal, and Vikas Vij. The discussion highlighted Punjab's growing potential as an investment destination and aimed to foster international collaborations in various sectors including infrastructure, agriculture, technology, and manufacturing.