

## SUPREME COURT

## SC NOTICE TO CENTRE ON PIL SEEKING TO BAN SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONTENT ON OTT, SOCIAL MEDIA

**Diary Times Desk :** The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre and others on a petition seeking a ban on sexually explicit content on over-the-top (OTT) and social media platforms even as it said it's for the Legislature or the Executive to take measures to deal with the issue.

Noting that "present petition raises an important concern with regard to the display of various objectionable, obscene and indecent contents on OTT platforms and social media," a Bench of Justice BR Gavai and Justice AG Masih also issued notice to X Corp, Netflix, Amazon, Ullu Digital, ALTBalaji, MUBI, Google, Apple and Meta on a petition filed by Uday Mahurkar and four others.

"This is not within our domain. As it is, there is a lot of allegation that we are encroaching upon the Legislative and Executive powers," Justice Gavai told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who said the Government would not take it as an adversarial litigation. Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar had recently questioned the Supreme Court for setting a timeline for the President to take decisions on Bills referred to her by governors and questioned the alleged misuse of Article 142, saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a "nuclear missile" at democratic forces. BJP MP Nishikant Dubey had said Parliament and state assemblies should be shut if the Supreme Court had to make laws. "Kindly monitor it here. We will come out with something which balances the freedom of speech while (Article) 19 (2) is taken care of," Mehta said, pointing out that certain contents circulating on OTT platforms were "perverse".



## PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

## SHOAIB AKHTAR'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL GETS BLOCKED IN INDIA AMID PAHALGAM CRACKDOWN



**Diary Times Desk :** Cricketer-turned-commentator Shoaib Akhtar's YouTube channel was blocked in India on Monday, April 28. The blocking of the channel comes in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 people dead in the Kashmir valley.

Shoaib Akhtar, who is popular in India for his match analysis and takes on world cricket, was amongst 16 other channels that got blocked by the government of India. The banned platforms, which collectively have around 63 million subscribers, include major Pakistani news channels such as Dawn News, Samaa TV, ARY News, Bol News, Raftar, Geo News, and Suno News. Earlier, the Board of Control for Cricket in India vice-president Rajeev Shukla had stressed that India would not play bilateral ties against Pakistan going forward. Shukla had condemned the terrorist attack in Pakistan, which was carried out by members of The Resistance Front. The terrorists opened fire on innocent tourists, leaving 26 dead.

The last time India played a bilateral series with Pakistan was in 2013. Since then, India vs Pakistan matches have only taken place in ICC events. India didn't travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy earlier this year and played all their matches in Dubai.

Apart from Shukla, a host of cricketers and former cricketers had condemned the attack and asked the BCCI to cut cricketing ties with Pakistan. Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was one of the prominent voices in the plea. "100 percent, India should do this (break ties with Pakistan). Strict action should be taken. It has turned out to be a joke that such things are happening every year. Terrorism cannot be tolerated," Sourav Ganguly told reporters. After the attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured strict action against the terrorists and the people linked to the attack.

16 PAKISTANI YOUTUBE CHANNELS BLOCKED; CENTRE  
WRITES TO BBC ON ITS PAHALGAM COVERAGE

**Diary Times Desk :** The Centre has banned 16 Pakistani YouTube channels, including Dawn News, Samaa TV, Ary News and Geo News, for disseminating provocative and communally sensitive content, false and misleading narratives, and misinformation against India, its Army, and security agencies. The decision was taken following recommendations from the Ministry of Home Affairs in the wake of the April 22 terror attack at Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed. The government has also sent a formal letter to BBC over it terming terrorists "militants" in its reportage on the Pahalgam tragedy. "On the recommendations of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Government of India has banned Pakistani YouTube channels for disseminating provocative and communally sensitive content, false and misleading narratives and misinformation against India, its Army and security agencies in the backdrop of the tragic Pahalgam terror incident in Jammu and Kashmir," officials said. The National Investigation Agency teams, stationed at the attack site since April 23, have intensified the search for evidence. The Army is on a high alert, launching several search operations to neutralise the terrorists following the attack.



TURKISH AUTHORITIES REFUTE  
CLAIMS OF SENDING WEAPONS TO  
PAKISTAN

**Diary Times Desk :** Amid escalating tensions between New Delhi and Pakistan over the recent terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, Turkey on Monday clarified the claims that six planes carrying weapons were sent to Islamabad. Turkey faced backlash after reports of the country sending arms and ammunition to Pakistan surfaced. In a statement on X, Turkey's Directorate of Communications Centre for Countering Disinformation said, "The claims circulating in some media outlets that 'Türkiye sent six planes full of weapons to Pakistan' are not true." As per the statement, a transport aircraft departing from Turkey made a scheduled landing in Pakistan solely for refuelling purposes, the authorities said. Amid escalating tensions, Turkey has sought de-escalation between Pakistan and India, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday in Ankara, following a cabinet meeting. President Tayyip Erdogan seeks de-escalation.

PAHALGAM ATTACK: DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH  
BRIEFS PM MODI ON J-K SITUATION



**Diary Times Desk :** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack, people familiar with the matter said. The briefing came as India mulled its options to punish those behind the terror attack on April 22 that killed 26 civilians. Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific incident, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike that triggered widespread outrage within India and abroad. There was no official word on Singh's nearly 40-minute meeting with PM Modi. On Sunday, the Prime Minister said the "perpetrators and conspirators" of the Pahalgam attack will be "served with the harshest response". "The whole world stands with 140 crore Indians in our fight against terrorism. I once again assure the affected families that they will get justice, and justice will be done," Modi said in his 'Mann ki Baat' address.

EX-SUZUKI MOTOR CHIEF OSAMU SUZUKI, SINGER PANKAJ  
UDHAS, SUSHIL MODI AMONG PADMA AWARDEES

**Diary Times Desk :** Former chief of Suzuki Motor late Osamu Suzuki, late singer Pankaj Uddhas, former Bihar deputy chief minister late Sushil Kumar Modi and publisher of Tamil daily Dinamalar Lakshminipathy Ramasubbaiyer were among the 71 prominent personalities conferred with Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu on Monday. Altogether, 139 distinguished persons were named for the country's civilian awards—Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri—on the eve of the 76<sup>th</sup> Republic Day on January 25. While 71 of them were given the awards at the Rashtrapati Bhavan's majestic Durbar Hall on Monday in the presence of Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others, the remaining will be conferred with the decorations at a separate function to be held soon. Veteran actor Shekhar Kapur, cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin, hockey player P R Sreejesh, chairman of Asian Institute of Gastroenterology and AIG Hospitals, D Nageshwar Reddy.



**YOUR HOROSCOPE**  
29-04-2025

**Aries**  
Today, you will meet old friends, which will refresh old memories. Employed people may be fired from the job due to heavy arguments with colleagues in the workplace. People doing business should thank God for getting financial benefits from the advice of their spouse. Due to irritation in the eyes, you should consult an ophthalmologist.

**Taurus**  
Today you will get success as your long pending legal proceedings will come in your favor. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in the family as employed people will get progress in their workplace. People doing business should make a budget and spend the money in order to get financial benefits. Housewives should change their food according to health and season.

**Gemini**  
Today you should include yoga and meditation in your daily routine. For employed people, your responsibilities may increase due to promotion in the workplace. People doing business may suffer financial loss from any unknown person today. There may be difficulty in walking due to nerve pain problems.

**Leo**  
Today, you should offer water to Lord Shiva to avoid difficulties. A heated argument with HR in the workplace will spoil your whole day. Businessmen have to exercise patience, there are chances of improvement in business. Today, you may face stomach and pancreas problems due to eating too much fried food.

**Libra**  
Today is going to be a busy day for you. Employed people will get a chance to work with senior officers due to advancement in their professional field. People doing business should avoid exchanging money with any unknown person today. Pregnant women may have to face problems due to changing weather.

**Sagittarius**  
Today you should take all important decisions of your career thoughtfully. Employed people may have to face some problems due to the start of a new job in the workplace. Due to financial gain for business people, you can invest in a new business. Problems like leg pain and headache may bother you.

**Aquarius**  
Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employees will be suspended due to indiscipline in the workplace. People doing business should solve all the problems of their customers in time. Due to worsening weather, problems related to cold and cough may increase in the family.

**Cancer**  
Today you will get relief from all your problems due to sudden financial gain. Employed people may have to get scolded by their boss due to being hasty in the workplace. People doing business may face increased difficulties in business due to arguments with business partners. As the problem of foot pain increases, you must consult a specialist doctor.

**Virgo**  
Today you should take special control over your speech and behavior. People in employment will get success in the workplace with the help of friends. People doing business will get financial gain due to some special offer, your financial condition will be strengthened. Old diseases of elders in the house may emerge.

**Scorpio**  
Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employed people may have to face mental problems due to extra workload in the workplace. People doing business may have to travel abroad in connection with business expansion. Diabetic patients should get themselves checked by a doctor in case of any problem today.

**Capricorn**  
Today you can invest especially in land and buildings. Employed people may have to travel long distances due to office work, due to which your health may deteriorate. People doing business may face difficulties in repaying business loans due to loss of money. High BP and cholesterol problems will increase the problems of your spouse.

**Pisces**  
Today your interest in creative work will especially increase. Employed people may be given an important project by their boss to handle important projects in the workplace. People doing business should control their speech and behavior with their customers. You should walk carefully on the road, problems may arise due to injury.





## HIMACHAL WEATHER: HOT WINDS BLEW IN THE PLAIN DISTRICTS, TEMPERATURE ABOVE 30 DEGREES IN 14 PLACES

**Diary Times Desk :** Hot winds blew on Monday in many areas of Himachal's plain districts Una, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra including Mandi, Sirmaur and Solan. The maximum temperature has reached more than 30 degrees in 14 places of the state. Heat will haunt the central mountainous and plain districts of the state on Tuesday and Wednesday as well. A yellow alert has been issued for hot winds in these areas of the state on 29 and 30 April. On Monday, the maximum temperature in Una was recorded at 41.6 degrees Celsius. The mercury has crossed 36 degrees in Kangra, Bilaspur and Hamirpur. The heat in Himachal has started making people sweat. On Monday, the maximum temperature in Una was recorded as the highest after 41.0 in the year 2023 and 40.0 in 2024. In the year 2022, the mercury was 43.2 degrees Celsius. Apart from this, Dharamshala, Shimla, Manali also recorded the highest mercury after the year 2022 on Monday. According to Meteorological Centre Shimla, rain is forecast in many parts of the state from May 1 to 4.



## CM SUKHU SAID- THREE THOUSAND VEHICLES WILL BE CONVERTED INTO E-VEHICLES, CHARGING STATIONS WILL BE INSTALLED AT BUS STATIONS

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that the state government is working strongly towards making Himachal a green energy state. This year, the government has set a target of converting 3000 vehicles running on petrol and diesel into e-vehicles. The government has so far attached 50 e-taxis to government departments under the e-taxi scheme and 50 more e-taxis will be approved before May 10. The government has launched Rajiv Gandhi Swarojgar Start-up Yojana of Rs 680 crore for the youth. The state government is providing 50 percent subsidy on e-taxi purchase. The Chief Minister on Monday attended the National Truck and Bus Meet at Gandhi Gram under Kasauli Assembly constituency of Solan as the chief guest. The Chief Minister said that to provide clean and green transport to the people of the state, including tourists, the government is converting diesel buses into e-buses.

## LEADER OF OPPOSITION JAIRAM THAKUR SAID- BAN ON CONTRACT RECRUITMENT IS A CONSPIRACY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO KEEP THE YOUTH UNEMPLOYED

**Diary Times Desk :** Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur has said that the government has conspired to keep the youth unemployed by banning contractual recruitments with immediate effect. In a press statement issued on Monday, Jairam Thakur said that the government is doing injustice to the youth by stopping recruitments. Jairam Thakur said that the Congress government, which came to power by guaranteeing one lakh government jobs in the first cabinet meeting, is adopting tactics to eliminate jobs every day. Excuses are being found for not giving jobs, removing people from jobs, cutting salaries, stopping promotions. In October last year, the government abolished the posts that were lying vacant for two years. The Leader of Opposition said that on April 25, the government has issued a letter and banned all types of contract-based recruitments in the state. Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that the government has not clarified how the recruitments will be done in future? How will the youth get employment?

## HIMACHAL MINISTER JAGAT NEGI SAID- THREATS DID NOT HARM PAKISTAN, ON THE CONTRARY IT HARMED INDIA

**Diary Times Desk :** Revenue Minister Jagat Singh said that when the country's borders are not safe, how will the people be safe. He has also raised questions on the action being taken by the central government after the Pahalgam attack. After the terrorist attack, the PM should have been in Kashmir, but he was threatening Pakistan in an election rally in Bihar, but no action has been taken yet. Negi said that sending back Pakistani citizens and calling back Indian citizens is not a big action. He said that Pakistan has closed the airspace, due to which Indian aviation companies are suffering losses. He said that Pakistan has not suffered anything due to India's threats, on the contrary India is suffering losses. Negi has demanded from the central government that seriousness should be shown on the issue of national security and the security of the countrymen should be given priority over election rallies. He said that if strict action is not taken against.

## HIMACHAL NEWS: RAKESH JAMWAL SAID- MINISTER JAGAT NEGI'S STATEMENT IS SHAMEFUL, CONGRESS IS SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF PAKISTAN

**Diary Times Desk :** BJP's chief spokesperson Rakesh Jamwal said that the statement given by Revenue Minister Jagat Negi on Monday once again proved that Congress leaders neither understand national interest nor respect India's security policy. Jagat Negi said that sending back Pakistani people and stopping water supply is not a big deal. In a press statement issued on Monday, Jamwal said that this statement is like directly echoing Pakistan's sentiments and is an open attack on the country's self-respect. He said that Jagat Negi's statement has made it clear that Congress is still a party that adopts a soft attitude towards Pakistan. If there was even a little patriotism left in Congress, such a minister would have been immediately removed from the cabinet, but Congress is now not afraid to expose its evil mindset. He said that is this not the same party which always talked about friendship with Pakistan? Which advocated giving most favourite nation status to Pakistan even after the 26/11 attack? Jamwal said that Jagat Negi's statement that Modi talks big but does not achieve results is not only a lie but also an insult to the bravery of our army and security forces.

## FOUR MORE PRIMARY TEACHERS SUSPENDED FOR MAKING DEROGATORY REMARKS AGAINST THE STATE GOVERNMENT

**Diary Times Desk :** The Directorate of School Education has suspended four more primary teachers for making derogatory comments against the government. In an office order issued by Director of Education Ashish Kohli, CHT Anil Kumar, HT Sunita Sharma and JBT Pramod Chauhan and Hemraj have been suspended. CHT Anil Kumar working in Nagarota Bagwan of Kangra district has been asked to report to Block Office Indora during the suspension period, JBT Pramod Chauhan of Tikkar of Shimla district has been asked to report to Kupvi School, CHT Sunita Sharma working in Gagret of Una has been asked to report to Bangana School and JBT Hemraj of Bagshyd School of Mandi has been asked to report to Dharampur School. Last Saturday, the government had suspended four teachers for making derogatory comments and two teachers for closing the school in Nerwa. So far, the total number of suspended teachers has reached ten.

## HIMACHAL NEWS: CM SUKHWINDER SINGH SUKHU SAID- WILL NOT LET THE WEALTH OF THE STATE BE LOOTED, WILL FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that he will not let the state's wealth be looted at any cost. In an informal conversation with journalists during the National Truck and Bus Meet at a private hotel in Gandhigram, Solan on Monday, he said that the matter of Shanar Project is pending in the Supreme Court and they have demanded their rights. Advocate Kapil Sibal is representing Himachal. The previous government did not work seriously to save Himachal's wealth. Congress has changed its plans and is fighting the wrong done by the previous governments. He said that in the case of Shanar Project, nothing will happen with anyone's statements. He is fighting a legal battle. This is not just about the Shanar Project, but similar steps will be taken in other projects as well. He said that Himachal has water as its biggest wealth. The state should get its rights. Whereas other companies have benefited from it. Today SJVN has become a company of Rs 67 thousand crores, while the state remained on a budget of Rs 58 thousand crores. The Chief Minister said that taking loan is a normal process and all governments take loan.

SEDITION CASE AGAINST SINGER FOR 'PROVOCATIVE' POSTS ON PAHALGAM ATTACK

**Diary Times Desk :** Police here have registered a case of sedition against folk singer Neha Singh Rathore over a complaint that her provocative social media posts targeting a particular faith community in the wake of the Pahalgam tragedy could harm the nation's unity. The complainant referred to the execution-like killing of 26 people, mostly tourists, in Pahalgam last week by terrorists after reportedly asking about their religious affiliation, which left the entire country grieving and vying for the blood of the perpetrators. "In this situation, singer and poetess Neha Singh Rathore, using her Twitter (now X) handle @nehafolksinger made some objectionable posts that can adversely affect the national integrity and made repeated efforts to incite one community against another based on religion," the complainant, Abhay Pratap Singh, said. The complaint was registered at the Hazratganj police station in Lucknow. Based on the complaint, police registered a case against the folk singer on multiple charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including attempting to promote sectarian animosity, disturbing public tranquillity and endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India, police said, adding that she has also been booked under the Information Technology Act.

FIRST TARGETED FIRING IN POONCH SECTOR AS PAK VIOLATES CEASEFIRE AGAIN

**Diary Times Desk :** Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing, violating the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir for the fourth straight night, officials said this morning. "During the night of April 27-28, Pakistan Army posts initiated unprovoked small arms fire across the Line of Control in areas opposite Kupwara and Poonch districts," the Indian Army said in a statement, adding that they responded "swiftly and effectively". This was the first time that the Pakistan Army violated the ceasefire in the Poonch sector. The exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani troops started after 26 people were killed in a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam last Tuesday. Relations between India and Pakistan have soured further after the role of a terror group linked to Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba emerged in the Pahalgam terror attack -- the worst in Jammu and Kashmir since the Pulwama incident. India has hit Pakistan with a series of strict.

"SHAME ON ME IF...": OMAR ABDULLAH WON'T USE PAHALGAM FOR STATEHOOD PUSH



**Diary Times Desk :** Sending a strong message in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said his politics is not so "cheap" that he would use this tragedy as an opportunity to press for his government's demand for statehood. "Jammu and Kashmir is currently not the elected government's responsibility. But I don't want to use this as an opportunity to demand statehood. How can I use the Pahalgam tragedy to ask the Centre for statehood? Is my politics so cheap? Do I value these 26 lives so little? We have spoken about statehood earlier and will do so in the future. But shame on me if I go to the Centre and ask for it now. At this point, no politics, no business rules, no statehood. This time is only for the strong condemnation of this attack and heartfelt support for the victims," he told the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly during a special session.

UNAWARE TOURIST ON ZIPLINE CAPTURES PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

**Diary Times Desk :** A tourist who was on a zipline ride during a trip to Jammu & Kashmir's Pahalgam last week inadvertently captured the terrorist attack that left 26 civilians dead, according to a new video that has emerged on social media. In the 53-second video that has gone viral, the tourist -- a man in a blue checked shirt, wearing a pair of sunglasses and helmet as safety gear -- can be seen taking and recording the ride using a selfie stick, even as sounds of gunshots can be heard in the background. Unaware of the terror attack, the man enjoys his ride with a smile, while the remaining tourists on the ground run helter-skelter. As the zipline ride finishes and the man moves closer to the ground, another tourist is seen falling down, presumably after sustaining a bullet injury. Earlier in the day, another video of tourists running and hiding behind a kiosk emerged. The sound of gunfire can be heard in the distance. Another video shows bodies strewn across the grass, bursts of gunfire echoing in the backdrop.

WON'T USE PAHALGAM FOR STATEHOOD DEMAND: J&K CM OMAR ABDULLAH

**Diary Times Desk :** At its daylong special session on Monday, legislators of the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Assembly passed a unanimous resolution to defeat the nefarious designs of those who sought to disturb the communal harmony and progress of the nation and of J&K. The resolution said "this House is mindful of the sinister design behind the selective targeting of the victims" of the terror attack in Pahalgam on Tuesday, when 26 people were killed. Addressing the Assembly, J&K Chief Minister (CM) Omar Abdullah said he would not indulge in "sasti siyasad", or cheap politics, to use the Pahalgam terror attack as an opportunity to press for the restoration of statehood to the Union Territory. He said as CM and tourism minister of J&K it was his responsibility to ensure that the tourists returned home safely and that he had no words to apologise to them. Abdullah noted that for the first time in many years, he witnessed truly unified protests against terror attacks.



'INDIAN ATTACK IMMINENT, HAVE REINFORCED FORCES': PAK MINISTER TO REUTERS

**Diary Times Desk :** Pakistan's defence minister said on Monday that a military incursion by India was imminent in the aftermath of a deadly terrorist attack on tourists in Kashmir last week, as tensions rise between the two nuclear-armed nations. The terror attack killed 26 people and triggered outrage in India, along with calls for action against Pakistan. India has accused Pakistan of backing the attack, the worst in years on civilians on April 22. Pakistan has rejected the charge. "We have reinforced our forces because it is something which is imminent now. So in that situation, some strategic decisions have to be taken, so those decisions have been taken," Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told Reuters in an interview at his office in Islamabad. Asif said Pakistan's military had briefed the government on the possibility of an Indian attack. He did not go into further details on his reasons for thinking an incursion was imminent. He said Pakistan was on high alert.

ISLAMIC COURT JUDGMENTS NOT LEGALLY VALID OR ENFORCEABLE: SUPREME COURT

**Diary Times Desk :** Islamic courts like "Qazi's Court", "Kaziyat's Court (Darul Qaza)" or "Sharia Court" have no recognition in law, the Supreme Court has reiterated. The court made it clear that any direction given by them is not applicable in law and neither are their decisions binding. A bench of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah -- while hearing an appeal by a woman seeking alimony on February 4 -- cited a 2014 judgment that said Shariat courts and fatwas do not have legal recognition. The woman was refused alimony by the family court which had relied on a settlement deed filed before an Islamic court. The decision was upheld by the Allahabad High Court. Criticising the approach of the Family Court, Justice Amanullah underscored that 'Qazi Court', '(Darul Qaza) Kaziyat Court', 'Sharia Court' and similar others have no recognition in law. Their decision is not binding and no one can be coerced into accepting it. The exception was when the affected parties voluntarily accept the decision.



**PHILIPPINES HITS CHINA WITH SANDY CAY FLAG-PLANTING AS SOUTH CHINA SEA BOILS PRE-US DRILL**

**Diary Times Desk :** The Philippine military on Sunday hit back at China by planting a flag at the disputed Sandy Cay reef days after Beijing had conducted a similar operation, the Philippine News Agency reported. Beijing's coast guard had said that it 'dealt with' a situation involving six Filipinos who it accused of illegally landing on the reef. China claims that the sandbank had recently come under its control. On Sunday, the National Operational-Tactical Group West Philippine Sea carried out an interagency maritime operation, the Philippine News Agency added. The report further stated that the operation was aimed at 'strengthening the regular and lawful exercise of the Philippines' sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the waters of the Western Philippine Sea'. According to the agency, the Philippine Navy, Coast Guard, and the Maritime Group of the National Police were involved in the efforts. Four teams in rubber boats landed on the Cay 1, Cay 2, and Cay 3 islands, where they detected Chinese presence.

**INDIAN, UK TRADE MINISTERS MEET TO PUSH FOR DEAL UNDER ADDED PRESSURE FROM TRUMP**

**Diary Times Desk :** The British and Indian trade ministers began two days of talks on Monday to conclude more than three years of negotiations on a trade pact, under additional pressure to reach a deal because of Donald Trump's tariffs on exports to the United States. Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal described his first day of talks in with British trade minister Jonathan Reynolds as "productive" in a post on X, without giving further details. India and Britain are both seeking bilateral deals with the United States to remove some of Trump's tariffs, which have upended the global trade system. The turmoil has also sharpened focus in both London and New Delhi on the need to clinch a UK/India trade deal. "The government's committed to doing the right deal with India, which will improve access for UK businesses, cut tariffs and make trade cheaper and easier," British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's spokesperson said. Talks are seen as nearing completion, with the latest negotiating round.

**EUROPE LEADS GLOBAL DEFENCE SPENDING RISE, AWAKENING TO SECURITY DEFICIT**

**Diary Times Desk :** Europe led a record international rise in defence spending last year, according to a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). European expenses rose in real terms by 17 percent to \$693m, spearheading a global rise of 9.4 percent to \$2.7 trillion, marking the highest level of defence spending since the fall of communism in Europe. Russia's war in Ukraine was the principal driver of the new trend, SIPRI said on Monday. "The rapid spending increases among European NATO members were driven mainly by the ongoing Russian threat and concerns about possible US disengagement within the alliance," said Jade Guiberteau Ricard, a researcher with SIPRI. The protagonists in that war still bore the brunt of its expense. Russia saw the biggest annual rise of any single country at 38 percent, as it suffered devastating material losses in its war in Ukraine. It spent \$149bn, more than 7 percent of its economic output. Ukraine spent its entire tax income of \$64.7bn on its defence, and was the country devoting the biggest proportion of its economy – 34 percent – to the military.

**PUTIN ANNOUNCES UKRAINE CEASEFIRE MAY 8-10**

**Diary Times Desk :** Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced a three-day ceasefire in Ukraine between May 8th and 10th for "humanitarian reasons". The Kremlin expects Ukraine to follow through the ceasefire, but has said that they would respond if the ceasefire is violated. "Russia believes that the Ukrainian side should follow this example. In the event of violations of the truce by the Ukrainian side, the Russian armed forces will give an adequate and effective response," the Kremlin added. This comes days after US president Donald Trump posted on his social media, "I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP! 5000 soldiers a week are dying". The ceasefire is taking place on Russia's Victory Day on May 9th, which marks the end of the Second World War. Moscow is trying to win back Trump's favour after the US president said he was "very disappointed" after Russia continued to bomb civilian areas in Ukraine. Trump also said that Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky is ready to give up Crimea for a peace deal with Russia.

**ICJ BEGINS HEARINGS ON ISRAEL'S HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATIONS TO PALESTINIANS**

**Diary Times Desk :** The UN's highest court has begun a week of hearings into Israel's obligation to "ensure and facilitate" humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories and particularly in Gaza. The hearings come in response to a resolution passed last year by the UN General Assembly asking the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to weigh in on Israel's legal responsibilities after the country blocked UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, from operating on its territory. The hearings opened as the humanitarian aid system in Gaza is nearing collapse. The UN legal team was the first to address the court on Monday, followed by Palestinian representatives.

**IRAN ACCUSES ISRAEL OF SEEKING TO DISRUPT NUCLEAR TALKS WITH US**

**Diary Times Desk :** Iran has accused Israel of "brazenly" trying to scupper negotiations as talks with the United States over Tehran's nuclear programme appear to be progressing. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "dictating what [US] President [Donald] Trump can and cannot do in his diplomacy with Iran". In response to a third round of US-Iran negotiations that appeared to gather momentum in Oman over the weekend, Netanyahu reiterated demands that Iran's nuclear programme be entirely dismantled. Araghchi had earlier indicated "cautious" optimism after Saturday's Omani-mediated talks with US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff. The negotiations are aimed at ensuring Iran does not use its nuclear programme to develop weapons. In exchange, Tehran would receive relief from international sanctions. A senior US official reported "further progress" had been made over the weekend, according to the Reuters news agency.

**"WE WILL DIE OF HUNGER": GAZANS SCRAMBLE FOR FOOD, RUN TO COMMUNITY KITCHENS**

**Diary Times Desk :** At the break of dawn, 10-year-old Youssef al-Najjar races barefoot, clutching a battered pot, to a community kitchen in Gaza City, only to find hundreds of others already queueing. "People push and shove out of fear of missing their turn. There are little children who fall," said Youssef, his voice barely rising above a whisper. Thousands of Gazans, including many children, rush to community kitchens every day in the hope of securing food for their families. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has worsened significantly since Israel blocked all aid from entering the territory on March 2, days before resuming its military campaign following the collapse of a ceasefire. Supplies are dwindling and the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) on Friday said it had sent out its "last remaining food stocks" to kitchens. The weight of responsibility fell on Youssef's shoulders after his father was killed in the war. He dreams not of toys or games, but of something achingly simple: to sit at a table with his mother and sister, eating peacefully. For that, each morning, he races to the community kitchen. "Sometimes, in the chaos, my pot slips from my hands, and the food spills onto the ground," he told AFP. I return home empty-handed... and that pain is worse than hunger."

## PUNJAB TO DEPLOY ANTI-DRONE SYSTEMS AMID CROSS-BORDER DRUG TRAFFICKING

**Diary Times Desk :** Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav announced on Monday that testing of the anti-drone system has been completed, and installations will begin shortly along the second line of defence across the border state. Addressing a press conference, DGP Yadav stated that the deployment will be carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Border Security Force (BSF). "We have begun preparations, and within the next few months, we will intercept drones bringing drugs and weapons from Pakistan. Several meetings with MHA and BSF have already taken place," he said. The DGP also revealed that 31 major hawala operators involved in laundering drug money have been arrested — a first in recent months. The police recovered more than Rs 8 crore during the crackdown. He said the Punjab Government has also approved the transfer of prisoners, including drug smugglers and Hawala operators to other states to break their network. Meanwhile, clarifying the Punjab Government's May 31 deadline to make the state 'drug-free,' DGP Gaurav Yadav emphasised that the focus is on dismantling drug supply chains rather than achieving numerical targets for arrests or seizures.



## SOON, CLEARLY DEMARCATED PLOTS IN HARYANA TO BE JUST A CLICK AWAY

**Diary Times Desk :** Digitally recorded and clearly demarcated plots across Haryana are set to be just a click away — a significant development that will go a long way in reducing citizens' dependency on revenue officials and middlemen. With the Nayab Singh Saini government putting the Haryana Large Scale Mapping Project (HaLSMP), an initiative to bring technological advancement to land record management, on the fast track, the land digitisation process is set to be completed by the 2025-26 fiscal, sources said. Recently, the Haryana Government had selected 22 pilot villages, one from each district, for the digitisation of revenue maps. "On the directions of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, 440 more villages (20 villages in each district) have now been identified for the next phase of the digitisation project. The aim is to complete the project by integrating the data on to the Bhū-Naksha portal by 2025-26," Sumita Misra, Financial Commissioner, Revenue (FCR), told. When completed, the project will ensure that each plot of land in Haryana is clearly demarcated, digitally recorded and accessible through a centralised online system, enabling citizens to view and verify their land boundaries online from the comforts.

## HC RELIEF FOR RAVEENA TANDON IN CASE OF HURTING RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS

**Diary Times Desk :** More than five years after the registration of an FIR against Raveena Tandon and another Bollywood personality on the allegations of hurting religious sentiments, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear that they will not be called to join the investigation. The order will remain in force at least till July 14, the next date of hearing in the case. The direction came after Justice Manisha Batra's Bench was told that Punjab and other respondents had started issuing notices under Section 35 of the BNS, calling upon them to join the investigation. "Till the next date of hearing, no such step shall be taken by the respondent," the Bench ruled. The petitioners were represented by senior advocate Akshay Bhan and counsel Abhinav Sood, Anmol Gupta, Mehndi Singhal, Sayam Garg, Jay K Bhaardwaj, Arsh Bir Bhatti, Ishan Kshetarpal and Harsh Gupta. The Bench was initially told that none of the ingredients pertaining to offence under Section 295-A of the IPC were made out from the contents of the FIR. It was registered for deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of a class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs. It was registered under Section 295-A of the IPC at the Ajnala police station.

## GOVERNOR VOWS TO RID CITY OF DRUG MENACE

**Diary Times Desk :** Chandigarh will soon be freed of drugs and made the first drug-free city in the country with zero tolerance towards smugglers and all others involved in the illegal trade, Punjab Governor-cum-UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria has announced. In an exclusive chat with The Tribune at Punjab Raj Bhavan here on Saturday, Kataria, who had already led a similar initiative in the border state recently, said a state-level war on drugs will be launched in the Union Territory with a mega "walk for drug-free Chandigarh" here on May 3. The sustained campaign to combat drug abuse and make the Capital of Punjab and Haryana free of drugs will involve awareness, education and strict enforcement with zero tolerance for smugglers and all others involved in the illegal trade. Kataria, 80, who is serving as Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator since July last, will lead the walk in which the chief ministers of Punjab and Haryana, Bhagwant Singh Mann and Nayab Singh Saini, respectively, and the entire top brass from both the states and the UT Administration have been called to take part. "The aim of the mega event will be to spread awareness against drug abuse and engage the community, particularly the youth, in the campaign against drugs," said the UT Administrator.



## PUNJAB GOVT ORDERS EMPLOYEES TO BE AVAILABLE ON PHONES 24/7, EVEN ON HOLIDAYS

**Diary Times Desk :** The Punjab government on Monday issued directions to all state government employees to remain available on their mobile phones at all times. The instructions, issued by the state Personnel Department, have asked officers of the rank of Secretary and above to ensure that no employee under their command switch off their phones after office hours. They have been instructed to remain available on their phones, even on public holidays, "...for official and administrative reasons." "There are times when administrative work needs to be done immediately, thus necessitating the need for officers' availability. It is observed that their phones are either switched off, remain out of coverage area, or diverted to other numbers. This impacts the administrative work..." reads the order issued by the Special Secretary, Personnel. The employees have been instructed to follow these orders with immediate effect.

## GOVT FORMS ARAVALLI PATROLLING FORCE AMID ALARMING INCREASE IN FIRES

**Diary Times Desk :** With repeated fire incidents threatening the fragile ecosystem of the Aravallis, the Haryana Government has announced the formation of a special Aravalli patrolling unit to tackle the crisis. Over the past two weeks, more than 50 fire incidents have been reported across the Aravalli forests in Gurugram, Faridabad, and Nuh districts. While authorities initially attributed the fires to rising temperatures, environmentalists and local residents allege deliberate land-grabbing attempts, especially around the Bandhwari landfill, where waste strewn across the forest is exacerbating the crisis. Frustrated with the lack of effective action from local authorities, residents and environmentalists have now approached the Haryana Government, warning of protests if immediate steps are not taken. "The Forest Minister himself lives in Gurugram and is oblivious to the crisis. The jungle is being deliberately burnt. It's not just humans who are choking, but also the animals. Has anybody cared to check the impact on over 50 leopards living in the forest or other animals? It's all being done to get more land for the Bandhwari landfill, which has already encroached on the forest," said local environmentalist and Aravalli activist Vaishali Rana Chandra.



## GROWERS SKEPTICAL ABOUT WEATHER INSURANCE SCHEME

**Diary Times Desk :** Despite the increasingly erratic weather over recent years, which has caused substantial damage to fruit crops, fruit growers, especially apple growers, have shown little interest in the weather-based crop insurance scheme designed to secure their produce. Of the estimated 2.5 lakh fruit growers in the state, only around 66,000 opted for the scheme in the last financial year. "It's surprising that not enough growers are opting for the scheme. They should opt for it," says Revenue and Horticulture Minister Jagat Singh Negi. An official associated with one of the three companies managing the scheme in the state attributes the lukewarm response to a lack of awareness among growers. "The response will improve as growers become more aware of the benefits," the official said. However, the growers argue that the scheme has several loopholes and offers minimal benefit, which is why many of them are not insuring their produce..

## PM SHRI SCHOOL TEACHERS EMBARK ON GUJARAT TOUR

**Diary Times Desk :** A group of 88 teachers from PM SHRI Schools in Himachal Pradesh has left for Gujarat to gain insights into innovative practices in education. The delegation includes principals, central head teachers, educators and district nodal officers. During the educational tour, the teachers will visit various academic institutions across Gujarat and receive training on modern educational practices. The group will stay in Gujarat until April 29 as part of the educational exchange program under the Samagra Shiksha initiative, led by State Project Director Rajesh Sharma. Sharma said the PM SHRI Schools initiative aims to strengthen education infrastructure by sending students and teachers to states and countries with advanced education systems. The current delegation includes headmasters from districts such as Kullu, Kangra, Una, Sirmour, Kinnaur, and Hamirpur. A previous batch of 98 teachers had already visited Gujarat under the same programme. He emphasised that the government and Samagra Shiksha are committed.

## TOUR OPERATORS LOOK TO DIVERT TOURISTS FROM J&K TO HIMACHAL, UTTARAKHAND

**Diary Times Desk :** Tour operators across India are looking to divert tourists, who had planned to spend their summer vacation in Jammu and Kashmir, to Himachal and Uttarakhand. Sources say that the hotel owners in Himachal are getting phone calls from tour operators in New Delhi, Mumbai and Gujarat to explore the possibility of diverting tourists from Jammu and Kashmir to Himachal. The sources say that generally during summer months, groups of tourists from southern states come to the hill states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand. After the terror attack in Pahalgam in which 26 persons were killed, thousands of tourists have cancelled their plans to spend summer vacation in the state. A tour operator said that since a lot of planning was done to book air and railway tickets or buses for groups of tourists, he could not afford to cancel tours, which would otherwise cause him huge financial losses. As tourists were cancelling bookings in Jammu and Kashmir hill stations, the tour operators were trying to divert them to Himachal and Uttarakhand, he added. Ashwani Bamba, president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Kangra, said that many tour operators had called hoteliers in Dharamsala and Manali to divert groups of tourists from Jammu and Kashmir to Himachal.



## COLLAPSED DURING 2023 FLOODS, BRIDGE IN MANDI DISTRICT YET TO BE RESTORED

**Diary Times Desk :** The prolonged closure of the Koon Ka Tar bridge over the Beas in Mandi district has left thousands of residents in distress, severely impacting daily life, education and access to essential services. The double-lane bridge, which collapsed during the devastating floods of July 2023, has yet to be restored, cutting off crucial connectivity for over 21 months for the residents of Mandi, Darang and Jogindernagar Assembly constituencies. Amid mounting frustration, residents have renewed their appeal to the Public Works Department (PWD) to expedite the construction of the bridge. A delegation led by the Himachal Kisan Sabha's state vice-president and Zila Parishad member, Kushal Bhardwaj, visited the site along with former ward member Roop Lal Thakur and other local representatives to assess the ongoing work. Bhardwaj expressed strong dissatisfaction with both the state and Central governments, criticising their lack of responsiveness. "Despite repeated appeals, there has been no serious effort to understand or address the suffering of the people," he said, adding that the original bridge had been a lifeline for residents across the Kotli, Jogindernagar, Mandi Sadar, Drang and Dharampur constituencies.

## 217 TRACTORS, 961 BIKES CHALLANED PLYING WITHOUT REGISTRATION NUMBER

**Diary Times Desk :** In an alarming revelation indicative of declining trend of registering vehicles, the Baddi police have challaned 1,291 vehicles operating without registration number since January. While violating the Motor Vehicles Act, a large number of them are used in nefarious activities like illegal mining and thefts. This crackdown on unregistered vehicles has been carried out for the first time in this bordering industrial belt as activities like illegal mining have become a major challenge for the law enforcement agencies. Among 1,291 vehicles challaned by the police since January 1, as many as 217 are tractors which are usually used to ferry illegally mined quarry material from various riverbeds of this industrial belt. Every now and then the police seizes tractor trailers loaded with illegal quarry material. In a majority of the cases, such vehicles are not deliberately registered to evade police action as they can easily get away during a police raid. Tractors are registered for agriculture use but over the years they have been misused for illegal mining as it was a profitable venture. An analysis of the figures of vehicle registration.

## JAI RAM ACCUSES CONGRESS OF HISTORIC INJUSTICE TO AMBEDKAR

**Diary Times Desk :** Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur launched a scathing attack on the Congress. While addressing the Baba Saheb Samman Abhiyan today in Sirmour, he accused the party of disrespecting Dr BR Ambedkar during his lifetime and even after. Thakur said after India's Independence, the nation faced two major challenges — the integration of over 500 princely states and the drafting of a Constitution that would safeguard the dignity, rights and self-respect of every citizen while steering India towards democracy. Thakur emphasised that while the responsibility of integrating princely states was entrusted to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the monumental task of drafting the Constitution was assigned to Dr Ambedkar — both against the wishes of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. "Nehru never liked Baba Saheb and consistently humiliated him, not just during his lifetime but even after his death," Thakur alleged. He added that true national recognition for Dr Ambedkar came only when the BJP came to power with its allies in 1990, posthumously awarding him the Bharat Ratna. Further, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, significant efforts were made to honour Ambedkar's legacy through the establishment of the 'Panch Teerth' memorial sites.



**VAIBHAV SURYAVANSHI, 14, SLAMS 35-BALL TON FOR  
RAJASTHAN ROYALS VS GUJARAT TITANS**

**Diary Times Desk :** Rajasthan Royals' (RR) 14-year-old prodigy, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, shattered multiple long-standing Indian Premier League (IPL) records during his side's match against Gujarat Titans (GT) on Monday. Suryavanshi became the fastest Indian centurion in IPL history, reaching there in just 35 balls. He surpassed the previous record held by former India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan (37 balls vs Mumbai Indians). Suryavanshi is also the youngest centurion in IPL history (14 years 32 days), surpassing Manish Pandey (19 years 253 days). Vaibhav Suryavanshi also broke a massive world record. He is now the youngest ever (14 years, 32 days) to score a ton in the T20 format. He broke the record of Maharashtra's Vijay Zol, who scored a ton at the age of 18 years 118 days against Mumbai in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy West Zone fixture in 2013.

**SANJIV GOENKA "NEVER SAID  
ANYTHING WRONG": KL RAHUL'S  
EX-TEAMMATE MAKES NEW  
REVELATION ABOUT LSG OWNER**

**Diary Times Desk :** KL Rahul is in a terrific form for Delhi Capitals in IPL 2025. In eight matches, Rahul has scored three half-centuries. His run tally stands at 364 at an average of 60.67 with a strike-rate of 146.18. It almost seems that Rahul is out there to prove a point. Till last year, Rahul was the captain of the Lucknow Super Giants. However, Rahul left the franchise ahead of the IPL 2025. He said he wanted to play with more freedom. However, some speculative reports have said that a viral meeting between LSG owner Sanjiv Goenka and KL Rahul after a match against SunRisers Hyderabad as the main reason. Following that meeting, Goenka was severely criticised. Now, Amit Mishra, who played with the LSG team has revealed a new facet on how Goenka operates. "I spoke to the coach last season, and he told me that captain, Mr. KL Rahul, is doing all the work. He is making the 11s, making all the changes, and planning. But this year, I don't feel like that. This year, after Zaheer Khan has come, I feel like he is talking to everyone.

**JASPRIT BUMRAH'S WIFE SANJANA  
TEARS INTO TROLLS FOR JUDGING,  
MOCKING SON ANGAD**

**Diary Times Desk :** Supporting India and Mumbai Indians cricketer Jasprit Bumrah, his wife Sanjana Ganesan, and son Angad were present at the Wankhede Stadium as Hardik Pandya's side beat Lucknow Super Giants on Sunday. Bumrah made the occasion a memorable one, picking up 4 wickets, emerging as a game-changer for his side, prompting loud cheers from the stands. The shutterbugs also got a glimpse of Angad in the stands as Bumrah ripped into the LSG lower order. However, seeing Angad become a hot topic of social media discussion after his 3-second appearance, Bumrah's wife, Sanjana, lost her cool. Taking to social media, Sanjana slammed social media trolls and keyboard warriors for converting her son's appearance in the match a 'topic of entertainment'. In an Instagram story, Sanjana wrote: "Our son is NOT a topic.

**'MS DHONI AND SACHIN TENDULKAR ARE  
THE REASONS WHY...': JADEJA PAINED BY  
CSK'S AUCTION BLUNDER**

**Diary Times Desk :** It's been the second season in a row where Chennai Super Kings are struggling in the playoffs race. They finished fifth last season but did put up a fight till their last league stage match, where Royal Challengers Bengaluru pipped them to reach the playoffs, but things have turned worse for them this year. The five-time champions are currently languishing at the bottom of the points table this season and need something miraculous to make it to the last four from here. They started off the season with a win against arch-rivals Mumbai Indians at Chepauk, but since then, their weaknesses have been exposed match after match. Their batting line-up didn't look well equipped for the fast-paced T20 format as the likes of Deepak Hooda, Vijay Shankar and Rahul Tripathi have failed to add the much-needed firepower in their middle-order. The over-reliance on Shivam Dube to hit big shots in the middle overs has also put them under the scanner. Meanwhile, the injury to Ruturaj Gaikwad forced them to return to their five-time IPL-winning skipper MS Dhoni, which many thought could be a blessing in disguise, but the fortunes didn't change. They have won just two out of their nine matches so far.

**AUSTRALIAN PODCASTER REMOVES ALL  
IPL CONTENT AFTER LEGAL NOTICE FROM  
BCCI**

**Diary Times Desk :** A "polite legal letter" from the BCCI has prompted the creators of a popular Australian podcast to take down "every single video" related to their coverage of the ongoing Indian Premier League from their social media accounts. Sam Perry and Ian Higgins, who host The Grade Cricketer, received a legal notice from the BCCI and the IPL over the weekend. "You may have noticed that every single video from our coverage of this year's cricket tournament has been removed from YouTube, YouTube Shorts, Facebook, Instagram and X," Perry said on the podcast on Monday. "This is something we've done ourselves, it hasn't been done to us, we have removed these videos. On Saturday evening Australian time we received a very polite legal letter about elements of our content from the cricket tournament we speak to you about pertaining specifically to this season. "As a result we decided to take those videos down," he added. According to a report in the 'Sydney Morning Herald', "The legal notice was related to claims that Grade Cricketer IPL videos featured still photography shots from the tournament that the BCCI considered to be used for 'commercial' rather than 'editorial' purposes." It is to be noted that the IPL, in its media advisory.

**PRICE TAG PRESSURE BEHIND  
RISHABH PANT'S POOR  
FORM? ZAHEER KHAN GIVES  
HONEST RESPONSE**

**Diary Times Desk :** Rishabh Pant has been ticking all the right boxes as a leader but needs something to click with the bat to bounce back from a poor run of scores in this IPL, feels Lucknow Super Giants mentor Zaheer Khan. Pant has endured a disappointing run with the bat this IPL, registering six single-digit scores for 110 runs in 10 matches with his 63 against Chennai Super Kings being the only performance of note. On Sunday, the LSG captain Pant perished for a mere four trying to reverse sweep Mumbai Indians' part-time spinner Will Jacks here in their 54-run defeat. Zaheer dismissed suggestions that Pant, who was bought for a whopping Rs 27 crore — the most expensive purchase in IPL auction history — is feeling the pressure of the big paycheck. "I wouldn't relate it to anything like that. He is a leader and he has been fantastic as a leader, that's something which I can vouch for," Zaheer told the media after LSG's loss here at the Wankhede Stadium. "The kind of efforts he has been taking to make sure that each and every individual in that group is comfortable, is heard (out) and the planning to everything which goes around in IPL has been spot on.

**BCCI HINTS AT EXPANDED  
94-MATCH IPL. REPORTS  
MAKES BIG CLAIM ON NEW  
TEAMS**

**Diary Times Desk :** IPL chairman Arun Dhumal said the BCCI is seriously considering to expand the league to a 94-match home-and-away format from the next media rights cycle, which falls in 2028. The IPL currently has the 74-match format ever since Gujarat Titans (GT) and Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) entered the fray in 2022. "Definitely, that might be an opportunity. We've been discussing in ICC, we've been discussing in-house in BCCI. Given how the interest of the fan is changing with regard to bilateral and ICC events, in regard to franchise cricket and T20 cricket, we'll have to talk more seriously about it and see how we can create maximum value for the stakeholders of the game." "Ideally, we'd want a larger window, or to maybe go on from 74 to 84 or 94 at some point... So that every team gets to play against every team home and away, for that, you need 94 games," Dhumal was quoted as saying by ESPNCricinfo on Monday. There was talk around growing IPL to 84 matches for the ongoing season, but it was delayed due to tight scheduling. "Given the window and the kind of commitments.