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A security personnel keeps vigil after a brief exchange of fire took place between terrorists and security forces in Lasana village of Surankote, in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. The exchange of fire took place after security forces launched a search operation following information about the presence of terrorists

**Bogus notes with Rs 4.35 lakh face value seized in MP; 5 held from Indore, Bhopal**  
**INDORE:** Police on Tuesday seized counterfeit currency notes with a face value of more than Rs 4 lakh and arrested five persons from different cities in Madhya Pradesh in this connection, an official said in Indore. All five were members of a criminal gang involved in printing and circulating fake currency notes in the state, police said. Talking to reporters, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Rajesh Kumar Tripathi said three of the accused were apprehended from a hotel in Indore's Anurag Nagar Extension area after cops received a tip-off about their presence. The trio, Abdul Shoaib alias Chhotu (25), Rahees Khan (32) and Prafull Kumar Kori (19), hailed from Chhindwara district, he said.

**Pune businessman abducted and killed in Bihar; suspects detained**  
**PUNE:** A 55-year-old businessman from Pune was allegedly abducted from outside Patna airport and murdered, police said on Tuesday. After Laxman Shinde's body was found in Jehanabad district, around 50 km from Patna, police detained several suspects from nearby villages for questioning. The preliminary investigation suggests that the crime was linked to a sophisticated cyber-led business entrapment scheme, police said. Shinde, the owner of Centrifugal Casting Bearing located in Khedshivapur in Pune, had travelled to Patna by flight on April 11. However, after sending a message to his daughter around 8:30 PM, in which he mentioned heading to Jharkhand, no further communication was established.

**Kidnapped baby boy of visually impaired beggar rescued, 1 held**  
**BHUBANESWAR:** The Odisha Police on Tuesday rescued the kidnapped one-and-half-year-old boy of a visually impaired beggar in Bhubaneswar and arrested one person in this connection, an officer said. The baby boy was handed over to the mother after medical examination at the Capital Hospital here, Commissioner of Police S Dev Datta Singh told reporters. The baby was kidnapped on Saturday night by an unidentified man when he was playing and his mother and sister were sleeping on the footpath. After getting back her child, the visually challenged woman checked the boy by touching his body parts and confirmed that the kid was hers. "I am absolutely happy. I express my gratitude to Lord Ram before whose temple I beg", the woman said.

**145 kg sea cucumbers worth Rs 58 lakh seized by coast guard**  
**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Tuesday said it has seized 145 kilograms of sea cucumbers worth Rs 58 lakh during an anti-poaching operation. Sea cucumber harvesting and trade are banned in India under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. "On April 13, 2025, Indian Coast Guard Station Mandapam (at Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu) seized 145 kilograms of illegal sea cucumbers worth Rs 58 lakh during an anti-poaching operation. A major step towards safeguarding our marine environment and curbing illegal transshipment", the coast guard posted on microblogging site X. The coast guard and Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) had recently seized 300 kilograms of drugs valued at Rs 1,800 crore, which smugglers dumped into the Arabian Sea before fleeing across the International Maritime Boundary Line.

**Wedding of 2 Hathras sisters called off after dowry dispute**  
**HATHRAS:** The wedding of two sisters in a tehsil here was abruptly called off after a dispute erupted between their and the grooms' families over dowry demands, police said. The incident has now reached the police, with the brides' family lodging a complaint at the women's police station. Shivani and Bharti, daughters of Sunil, residents of Samadpur village in Sadabad tehsil, were set to marry Mohit and Narayan, two brothers from the nearby Tajpur village. The wedding ceremonies were scheduled for April 14 and the grooms' procession had already arrived at the brides' home. However, the situation took a turn when the grooms' side allegedly demanded a vehicle in addition to the dowry already provided, the police said.

**Model Town ASI caught taking bribe from retired Delhi Police inspector**  
**NEW DELHI:** The vigilance unit of Delhi Police has arrested an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) posted at Model Town Police Station for accepting a bribe of Rs 2 lakh from a retired inspector of the force, an official said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as ASI Sudesh Kumar Yadav, was caught red-handed while receiving the bribe, a statement of the vigilance unit read. The sleuths swung into action after receiving a complaint on April 14 from the retired officer, a resident of Mahendru Enclave in Model Town. The complainant alleged that ASI Sudesh was demanding a Rs 4 lakh bribe to allow him to carry out repair work at his residence.

# SC to hear pleas against Waqf Amendment Act today

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court would likely hear on Wednesday a batch of petitions, including the one of AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi, against the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan, so far, listed 10 petitions on the issue. In addition to Owaisi's plea, the court listed for hearing the petitions filed by AAP leader Amanatullah Khan, Association for the Protection of Civil Rights, Arshad Madani, Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema, Anjum Kadari, Taiyyab Khan Salmami, Mohammad Shafi, Mohammed Fazlurrahim and RJD leader Manoj Kumar Jha.

Several fresh pleas, which are yet to be listed, were filed in the top court subsequently including



People protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru, demanding a repeal of Waqf Amendment Act

the ones filed by TMC MP Mahua Moitra, Samajwadi Party MP from Sambhal, Zia-ur-Rahman Barq. The YSRCP-led by former Andhra Pradesh chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Communist Party of India (CPI), Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam chief and actor-turned-politician Vijay have also moved the top court on the issue.

Advocate Hari Shankar Jain and one Mani Munjal have also filed a separate petition challenging the constitutional validity of several provisions of the law on the ground that they violate fundamental rights of non-Muslims following which the CJJ agreed to list it.

The Centre, on April 8, filed a caveat in the apex

## SC TO CONSIDER LISTING FRESH PLEA AGAINST PROVISIONS OF 2025 WAQF LAW

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to consider listing a fresh plea challenging the constitutional validity of several provisions of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar took note of the submissions of advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain that a fresh plea was filed and the same be listed for hearing. "All matters where mentioning slips are given, we give dates mostly within a week," the CJJ said. As many as 10 petitions, including the one filed by AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi are already listed for hearing on April 16 before a three-judge bench comprising the CJJ and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan. The fresh plea, mentioned by advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, was filed by Hari Shankar Jain and one Mani Munjal against the Union of India, the Ministry of Minority Affairs, and the Central Waqf Council.

court and sought a hearing before any order was passed in the matter.

A caveat is filed by a party in the high courts and the apex court to ensure that no orders are passed without hearing it.

The Centre recently notified the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, which got the assent of President Droupadi Murmu on April 5 after its passage from Parliament following heated debates in both houses.

## Truckers' stir to continue as talks with CM fail to break deadlock

**PTI, BENGALURU:** The indefinite strike of the truckers in Karnataka will continue as talks with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah failed to yield any breakthrough, a truckers' body office bearer said on Tuesday.

Despite the Chief Minister's appeal to the truckers in public interest, the truckers refused to relent, citing the state government's failure to meet their demands including a reduction in diesel prices and concrete assurances on toll-related issues.

The strike launched at midnight between Monday and Tuesday, brought the movement of Karnataka-based trucks to a standstill affecting transportation of goods within and outside the state.

The protest was spearheaded by the Federation of Karnataka State Lorry Owners and Agents Association, which cited rising fuel prices and alleged harassment at toll plazas, as the main reason for the stir.

The association is an umbrella organisation of 129 truckers associations with six lakh members — drivers, agents and truck owners.

As the trucks remained stationed at the truck terminals across the state, due to the strike, the Chief Minister convened a meeting with the FOKSLOAA office bearers on Tuesday evening.

The FOKSLOAA delegation led by its president G R Shanmugappa attended the meeting.

## Over 10,000 illegal Afghans deported from Pakistan's Punjab since April 1

**PTI, LAHORE:** The Punjab government in Pakistan has deported over 10,000 Afghan nationals since launching a crackdown against illegal foreign nationals on April 1, police said on Tuesday. The government led by Maryam Nawaz Sharif first detained these Afghans, including women and children, from about 150 Afghan colonies after the deadline for their voluntary return expired on March 31, Punjab Inspector General Usman Anwar said.

He said the illegal Afghans were first moved to detention centres from where they were deported to Afghanistan.

"As part of the ongoing campaign to evict foreign nationals residing illegally in Punjab, the government has so far deported over 10,000 undocumented Af-

ghan nationals from across the province," Anwar said.

He said a good number of Afghans residing illegally in Punjab had left voluntarily.

Anwar further said police had a complete record of the Afghan nationals living in Punjab which helped the law enforcement agencies to reach the illegal foreigners.

"The federal government and intelligence agencies are monitoring the deportation campaign," he added.

The intelligence agencies have identified 100,000 Afghans living illegally in Punjab, he said.

The detained Afghans, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the Pakistani government's sudden order to deport them.

"We are peaceful and law-abiding people but paying the price of being Afghans. We sold all our

## COMMUNITY 'UNITY'



Participants during a boat rally organised by Backward Classes and Extremely Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Bihar on the occasion of Nishad Raj Guha Jayanti, at Digha Ghat, in Patna

## Woman shot dead by lover in Delhi

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** A 20-year-old woman was allegedly shot dead by her lover following an argument in Delhi's Shahdara, police said on Tuesday. The accused has been identified as Rizwan (20), they said. He shot Saira twice on Monday night — once on the left side of her head and another on her back.

Sources in the police said that Rizwan and Saira were a couple and were on a walk when the incident happened. "We have scanned some CCTV footage. They were walking normally before but then it looked like some altercation took place between them."

"Rizwan took out a pistol, he shot her twice — on her left side head and back, and fled," the source said.

## Meitei group denied access to sacred site, appeals to MHA

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** A group representing the Meiteis has written a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah claiming that they are not being allowed to visit the Thangjing Hill, a sacred place for the community in Manipur, and has sought the Centre's intervention. In the letter, Meitei Heritage Welfare Foundation has alleged that there is a blockade and threats are being issued by "Chin-Kuki militants and civil society groups" to the Meitei pilgrims who want to visit the site. "Thangjing Hill holds immense religious and cultural significance for the Meitei community, which has conducted annual pilgrimages there since time immemorial to worship Ibudhou Thangjing, the guardian deity of southern Kangleipak (Manipur). The current blockade is a blatant violation of our consti-

tutional rights and a direct assault on our heritage," the group said.

"The latest threat to pilgrims at the sacred Thangjing Hill is not merely a law-and-order issue but a deliberate provocation aimed at inciting unrest among the Meiteis," it claimed.

The group urged the Union government to ensure the safety of Meitei pilgrims and civilians visiting Thangjing Hill.

It also urged the home ministry to take action against those militant groups blocking the pilgrims, and to deploy adequate security forces around the site to maintain peace and avert any escalation of violence.

The Centre had imposed President's rule in the state on February 13 after N Biren Singh resigned as chief minister.

## Man booked for opening fire after brawl

**PTI, THANE:** Police have registered a case against a man for allegedly firing in the air at a village in Thane district of Maharashtra hours after his confrontation with a participant of a procession, police said.

The incident of firing occurred on April 13 morning, around 12 hours after the brawl, an official said. A case in this connection was registered at the Manpada police station in Dombivli. Though no injuries were reported, the incident caused panic in the village.

Accused identified as Yogesh Madvi, a resident of Bopar village in Dombivli, while the complainant is a 43-year-old farmer.

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** India is expected to get above-normal rainfall in the upcoming southwest monsoon season, the India Meteorological Department said on Tuesday, raising hopes for a bountiful harvest for the largely agrar-based economy. According to the long-range monsoon forecast, the IMD said large parts of Tamil Nadu and the northeastern region were likely to get below-normal rainfall, while the rain-deficient parts of Marathwada and adjoining Telangana are expected to witness above-normal showers.

"India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September), with cumulative rainfall estimated at 105 per cent (with a model error of 5 per cent) of the long-period average of 87 cm," M Ravichandran, secretary in the Earth Sciences Ministry, told a press conference here.

The southwest monsoon lasts from June 1 to September 30. He said that of all the global factors that influence monsoon rainfall over India, two will have a neutral impact, and one will have a positive impact on rainfall this year.

"There is a 30 per cent chance of normal rainfall, a 33 per cent chance of above-normal rainfall, and a 26 per cent chance of ex-



A pedestrian crosses a road amid rain, in Hyderabad

cess precipitation during the monsoon season," IMD Director General Mrityunjay Mohapatra said.

According to the IMD, rainfall between 96 per

cent and 104 per cent of a 50-year average of 87 cm is considered 'normal'.

Rainfall less than 90 per cent of the long-period average is considered 'defi-

cient', between 90 per cent and 95 per cent is 'below normal', between 105 per cent and 110 per cent is 'above normal', and more than 110 per cent is considered 'excess' precipitation.

Parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and the northeastern states are likely to experience below-normal rainfall during the monsoon season.

Normal to above-normal monsoon rainfall is expected in large parts of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, which form the core monsoon zone (agriculture primarily rain-fed) of the country.