

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Won't be intimidated...

discussed the broad contours for the revival of tourism. After the special cabinet meeting on Tuesday, the chief minister's office posted on X pictures of the meeting held at the Pahalgam Club. "The cabinet met here and discussed the government agenda but the meeting in cabinet was to demonstrate that the people will not be cowed down by terrorist violence and our resolve for development of Jammu and Kashmir will continue," he said in his first press conference after the April 22 terror attack in which 26 people, mainly tourists, were gunned down. In a message on 'X', his office posted that it was not just a routine administrative exercise, but a clear message "we are not intimidated by cowardly acts of terror. "The enemies of peace will never dictate our resolve. Jammu & Kashmir stands firm, strong, and unafraid," it said. This is the first time the cabinet meeting took place outside the usual summer capital, Srinagar, or winter capital, Jammu, during Abdullah's government's tenure. To a question on the revival of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and the closure of various tourist destinations following the April 22 terror attack in Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam, he said the government is taking "one step at a time". "The last five to six weeks have been a difficult time for the country, especially for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. So I would suggest we will conduct a security audit of various tourist destinations and gradually start opening them," he said. The choice of Pahalgam aims to show solidarity with the residents of the tourist town, which has experienced a sharp decline in tourist footfall since the devastating April 22 terror attack. "Tourism should be a conflict-neutral activity and should not be a barometer to project normalcy. There are many other mechanisms through which we can measure peace. I would always wish to see that tourism is insulated from conflict and the world should see it as an economic activity," he said.

## CM announces memorial...

He added that suggestions would be sought to ensure that the memorial is not only magnificent but also dignified and respectful. Extending heartfelt gratitude to the visiting tour operators, the Chief Minister said, "I thank each one of you for coming to Pahalgam and supporting the revival of tourism. I recognize many of you as those who reignited tourism in the Valley during the most challenging times - when even the locals feared venturing out." He recalled the early 1990s when tourism first resumed in the Valley with the arrival of groups from Mumbai and Gujarat. "They helped restart tourism and brought it to its peak - until the events of April 22. No matter how strongly we condemn what happened that day, it will never be enough. We lack words to comfort the families of those 26 victims. We can only bow our heads in their memory." While acknowledging security challenges, Omar Abdullah stressed the need for strict measures. "Although we do not fully control the security apparatus, I believe what happened should never have happened. And we must do everything possible to ensure it never happens again." On the reopening of tourist destinations post-Baisaran incident, he urged for transparency and openness in communicating with tourists. "Let's not focus on what's closed, but on what's open. I believe it's better to speak the truth rather than have tourists feel misled." He added, "The process of reopening will begin in a phased manner in the coming days. I visited Betaab Valley myself to assess the situation and to build confidence. Not all destinations will reopen at once, but some will gradually become accessible." The Chief Minister assured tour operators that they would be consulted throughout this process. "Together with the administration, we will ensure destinations are reopened responsibly, in a timely manner." On attracting international tourists, the CM said, "In our experience, international guests arrive after domestic tourism shows signs of recovery. The first sign of normalcy is when school children and domestic tourists begin visiting picnic spots again. Once this wave is visible, international bookings will follow. While we must continue to promote globally, I believe a strong focus on domestic tourism will build the right momentum." Reaffirming his confidence in the revival process, he said, "We have come a long way. What happened, happened. But with your courage and commitment, I am certain we will overcome this and bounce back." He acknowledged that certain shortcomings exist and assured these would be addressed moving forward. "We are aware of the gaps - and we will act on them." Tour operators who interacted with the Chief Minister represented a cross-section of travel & operators and bodies such as Raja Rani Travels, Pooja Travels, Heena Travels, Veena World, Off Beat Destinations, KK Tours, Jai Mata Di Travels, Arihant Travels, Madhuchanda Travels, TAFI, Kass Travels, ADTOL, Beckon Tours Pvt Ltd, Trans Global Travels, SHR Harshil Travels (representing OTOAI), Golden Tours (under ETAA), Ajay Modi Travels (Gujarat), Travel Munk (Jain Travel Associations), Thomas Cook, Tamarind, Kraft Vacations, and Travel Lounge. Delegates from national print and electronic media also interacted with the CM, alongside local tour operators, hoteliers, travel and tourism stakeholders. Present during the session were former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, MLAs from Pahalgam and Bijbehara, Director Tourism, MD JKTDTC, and other senior officials.

## Landslide blocks Jammu...

immediately launched by agencies and efforts are underway to make the highway traffic worthy as soon as possible. Given the size of the landslide, the restoration work is likely to be completed by Tuesday night, the officials said, advising commuters to avoid travel on the highway for the time being.

## Tax Deptt extends...

in late April and early May. The changes made in the ITR form for AY 2025-26 also need modifications to be made in return filing utilities and the back-end system. "To facilitate a smooth and convenient filing experience for taxpayers, it has been decided that the due date for filing ITR, originally due on July 31, is extended to September 15, 2025," the CBDT said. The extension applies to individuals, HUFs and entities who do not need to get their accounts audited. They can now file their tax return for income earned in the 2024-25 (April-March) fiscal by September 15.

## Terrorism is Pakistan's...

cause constant pain even if a body is strong otherwise, the prime minister said, adding India made up its mind to "remove the thorn of terrorism", and did it with utmost conviction. "We should have killed the Mujahideens who entered Kashmir in 1947" and then the present situation would not have arisen, he said, referring to the incursions in Kashmir immediately after Independence. "During Partition, Maa Bharati (Mother India) was divided into two, and that very night, the first terror attack on Kashmir was launched by Mujahideens," Modi said, adding that with the help of these terrorists Pakistan captured a "part of Mother India". "(Then Union home minister) Sardar Patel was of the opinion that the Indian army should not have stopped until Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) was reclaimed. However, Patel's advice was not heeded. They (Pakistan and terrorists backed by it) tasted blood," he said, taking a veiled swipe at the first prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru. "This legacy of terrorism has continued for the last 75 years and the terror attacks in Pahalgam was another horrific form of it. Despite playing diplomatic games, Pakistan repeatedly faced India's military strength in war. On three occasions, India's armed forces decisively defeated Pakistan, making it clear that Pakistan could not triumph in a direct military conflict with India," Modi said. Realizing its limitations, Pakistan resorted to proxy warfare, pushing trained terrorists into India and targeting innocent and unarmed civilians including pilgrims, he said. India has only kept the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance (in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack) and Pakistan is already feeling the heat, the prime minister further said. "India has always pursued progress and welfare of all, offering assistance (to its neighbours) in times of crisis. However, despite these efforts, the nation has often faced violent attacks," he said. While dams were constructed on rivers (falling under the Indus Water Treaty) on our side, they were not maintained properly and desilting was neglected for sixty years, Modi said, adding that gates meant for regulation of the water flow were left unopened, leading to a drastic reduction in storage capacity to merely two to three percent. Indian people must have their rightful access to water, he said, adding that while significant steps are yet to be taken, initial measures have been initiated. "India seeks no hostility, and aspires to peace and prosperity. The country is committed to progress and is contributing to global well-being. With firm determination, India remains dedicated to the welfare of its citizens," he said. When he took over as prime minister in 2014, India was the 11th largest econo-

my, and it rose to the fourth position over the last 11 years despite facing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, difficulties with neighboring countries and natural calamities, Modi noted.

## Op Sindoor: Railways...

helped the passengers to reach their destinations safely during the tense situation. The employees of both the departments took special care of the safety and facilities of the passengers and helped them coming from outside to reach their destination station conveniently, the senior divisional manager said. During this time, he said many reserved special trains were also operated in the Jammu division to facilitate the stranded passengers to return. The Railway Ministry had issued a special advisory for all the employees of the department in the wake of Operation Sindoor. The advisory was strictly followed by the employees and along with respecting the Indian Army soldiers, special attention was paid to ensure their reservation on priority, arrangement for stay at the station and seating during travel in trains, he said.

## Centre amends key...

Earlier, the rules did not allow forfeiture of the retirement benefits in case of dismissal or removal from service of the public sector undertaking employee, after his absorption in such undertaking, for any subsequent misconduct. The new rules further said that the provisions related to continuation or grant of "pension and family pension subject to future good conduct" and "compassionate allowance" would also be applicable on such dismissed or retrenched employees. The Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021 apply to the government servants appointed on or before December 31, 2003, except "railway servants", "persons in casual and daily rated employment" and officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS) among others.

## Ex-CJI Khehar...

Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri -- on the eve of the 76th Republic Day on January 25. The President gave awards to 68 chosen ones on Tuesday in the second civil investiture ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan in the presence of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others. During the first investiture ceremony on April 28, President Murmu had conferred Padma awards to 71 personalities. In the ceremony in Ganatantra Mandap in Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday, President Murmu conferred the country's second highest civilian honour Padma Vibhushan to Justice (ret'd) Khehar for public affairs while the award for late Kathak dancer Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia and late legendary folk singer Sharda Sinha were received by Lakhia's grandson and Sinha's son. The President also handed over nine Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award, during the ceremony to noted personalities which included dancer and actor Shobana Chandrakumar, businessman Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti, archaeologist Kailash Nath Dikshit, dancer Jatin Goswami, actor Anant Nag, and Sadhvi Ritambhara. The award for economist Bibek Debroy and former Maharashtra CM and Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi was received by Debroy's wife and Joshi's son. Leading immunologist and KGMU VC Nityanand, footballer Inivalappil Mani Vijayan, singer Ashwini Bhide Deshpande, actor Ashok Laxman Saraf, mask maker Reba Kanta Mahanta, and musician Ricky Gyan Kej were among the recipients for Padma Shri. Noted theatre artist and acting coach Barry John, folk musician and noted parai player Velu Aasan, businessman Sajjan Bhajanka, Dr Neerja Bhatla, scientist Ajay V Bhatt, writer Sant Ram Desval, spiritual leader Acharya Jonas Mejetti, and Farooq Ahmad Mir were among the other Padma Shri awardees.



Noted Dogri writer Lalit Mangotra receiving Padma Shri from Prez Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday.

The awards are given in various disciplines and fields such as art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports and civil service, among others. Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order, and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field. Ever since the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, it has started honouring the "unsung heroes" by honouring them with the Padma awards, thus transforming Padma awards into "People's Padma". This year, the Padma awards were given to 30 "unsung heroes". Instituted in 1954, these awards are announced on the eve of the Republic Day every year. All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards. Concerted efforts are being made to identify talented persons whose excellence and achievements really deserve to be recognised from amongst women, weaker sections of the society, SCs & STs, divyang persons and who are doing selfless service to the society.

## Lightning kills over...

livestock as part of the seasonal migration in search of greener pastures and established their camp near Marg top as per their traditional practice. A team of officials from the Budhal Sheep and Husbandry Department visited the site this morning and prepared a detailed report on the losses incurred by the affected families, who have made an urgent appeal for compensation and rehabilitation support.

## CM Omar cycles...

Pilgrims can choose between the traditional 48-km route from Pahalgam in Anantnag district or the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district. Following the deadly April 22 attack, the tourism sector in Kashmir has faced significant challenges, with Pahalgam experiencing a drastic decline in visitors. However, Abdullah's cycling initiative has garnered positive attention from local tourism stakeholders who viewed it as a vital step towards rebuilding confidence among potential tourists. "This is a welcome gesture from the Abdullah family, and we are hopeful that the chief minister's efforts will contribute to the revival of tourism in the valley," said Amir, a local hotelier. He noted that the recent attack had cast a shadow over the region, leading to mass cancellations by prospective visitors. "Despite the difficulties, we remain optimistic about a resurgence in tourism in Pahalgam and beyond in the coming months," he added. During the cycling trip, the chief minister also made several stops and interacted with the locals as well as the tourists who were there at the hill resort besides posing for a selfie.

## Anti-terror operation...

started the anti-terror operation to neutralise the threat. Special Operations Group of Jammu and Kashmir Police, meanwhile, also conducted a thorough search operation Manohar Gopala and Shatala camp area in Samba district for several hours this morning. The operation was part of the area domination exercise and concluded peacefully, the officials said. The officials said a joint search operation is also continuing in the densely forested Singpora area of Chatroo in Kishtwar district for the sixth day on Tuesday. The operation started on May 22 following an encounter with terrorists which left one soldier dead. However, the terrorists managed their escape taking advantage of the thick foliage and challenging topography. There was no further contact with the terrorists even as a search operation to

track down and neutralise the terrorists continued in the area, the officials said.

## Have not let...

the BSF, the officer said, "Over the past decade, there have been both successful and foiled attempts. We have infused technology and upgraded systems along the border, but the adversary keeps trying new methods. "We are relying not just on technology but also on manpower. Our forces are stationed just 250 meters apart, and this human surveillance is proving very effective alongside technological tools." When asked about the presence of Pakistani Army personnel along with the Rangers, he confirmed, "Yes, regular army troops were part of the build-up." Conveying his concern about terror tunnels being possibly used for infiltration, the IG said, "Some areas on the Pakistani side are left uncultivated, and due to dense bushes, the visibility is poor. "We have deployed high-rise surveillance equipment and UAVs to monitor activities deep across the border. It was one such asset that detected a large group of terrorists moving toward the border on the night of May 8." The officer also hailed BSF women personnel, including Assistant Commandant Neha Bhandari, for showing exemplary courage by manning forward posts. "We are proposing to name one post in the Samba sector after Operation Sindoor and two others after martyrs," he said. Noting that the BSF had foiled infiltration bids in the past, the senior officer said they had thwarted an infiltration attempt by 40 to 50 suspected terrorists along the IB during shelling with preemptive strikes. He further informed that the BSF had successfully foiled a major infiltration attempt involving suspected terrorists who were trying to cross over under the cover of Pakistani shelling in the Sialkot sector. "We launched preemptive strikes and inflicted heavy losses. The adversary was forced to retreat. Their troops, Rangers, and terrorists suffered casualties," he said. The IG then brought up the consistent inputs they had about Pakistan planning to facilitate infiltration under the cover of cross-border firing and shelling. "The enemy is reorienting its defences to deal with such a situation. We foiled their designs." "We are keeping a close watch over every inch of land," the IG said, adding that the BSF and the Indian Army are jointly dealing with tunnel threats. Anand, who took over command of the Jammu Frontier on February 7, highlighted the BSF's robust response post the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack on tourists. "Retaliation was evident after Operation Sindoor. In areas along the LoC in Poonch and Rajouri and the IB in Jammu, we took aggressive postures. Pakistani Rangers confined themselves to posts while BSF stayed on the front foot," he said. He said the BSF destroyed multiple terror launch pads in Akhnor, Samba, and RS Pura sectors, including those in Loni, Mastpur, and Chhabra. "On May 9-10, Pakistan opened unprovoked fire in the Akhnor sector, targeting BSF posts. In response, we hit the Looni launch pad linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba and caused significant damage," Anand said.

## Atmosphere of fear...

of Jammu and Kashmir also urged the External Affairs Ministry to make efforts for getting revoked the negative travel advisories issued by some countries against visiting J-K. "Tourism in Kashmir has been hit after the April 22 Pahalgam attack that left 26 people dead. "What happened here (Pahalgam attack) was very sad, it should not have happened. People were coming here happily. People were busy with their work, they were not asking for government jobs. The situation was such in Pahalgam that there were no rooms available here," Abdullah told PTI Videos here. The NC chief visited the tourist resort and played golf at the Pahalgam Golf Course along with some friends. He said while the attack created an atmosphere of fear, the government has taken some steps to improve the security situation in the valley. "There was an atmosphere for fear, but I feel now the atmosphere of fear has reduced to a large extent. You can see how many people are coming to Pahalgam. I was in Gulmarg, there were 400-500 tourists," he observed. "Thank God, the fear is now leaving. The government has also taken some steps to make the security system stronger. I think the people should come," he added.

The former Union minister appealed to the Centre to make efforts to withdraw travel advisories issued by several countries against visiting J-K. "I also request the Central government, the Foreign Minister, that the time has come to remove the block placed by foreign countries on visiting India. Peace has come to both the countries and we are hopeful that peace will continue in the future as well. They should also be given permission to come here as they also want to see this place. Many of them are golfers and I hope they will come," he said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan. Abdullah said many people play golf and the game has now got a place in Khelo India games as well. "It is played in Olympics, Common Wealth games and Asian Games, so, now there is a need to have it everywhere. I think our people should come here in large numbers, play this sport so that India gets medals in these games," he said. Praising Kashmir's natural beauty, he said, "Look at this weather and beauty, I have travelled to various places across the world, but I have not seen such beauty anywhere. I hope the people who watch your channel come here in large numbers, see this beauty and make the country stronger. We should not be afraid, if we are afraid, then we are dead". On the annual Amarnath Yatra scheduled to begin on July 3, Abdullah said the pilgrimage is very important for us. "It has been going on for many years. I hope more and pilgrims will come here to have a glimpse of Shankar Bhagvan, Bhole Nath comfortably, and then tell people back home how beautiful this place is," he said.

## Ghulam Nabi Azad...

the delegation, said in a post on X. It was not immediately known where and in which hospital the 76-year-old former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister had been admitted. "Taking to X, Azad said, "Blessed to share that despite the extreme heat in Kuwait affecting my health, by God's grace I'm doing fine and recovering well. All test results are normal. Thank you all for your concern and prayers — it truly means a lot!" Panda and Azad are part of one of the seven multi-party delegations India has tasked to visit 33 global capitals to reach out to the international community on Pakistan's designs and India's response to terror, especially in view of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. The delegation visited Bahrain from May 23 and Kuwait from May 25, with Azad taking part in meetings with leaders in both nations. Azad's contributions to the meetings in Bahrain and Kuwait were highly impactful, and he is disappointed at being bedridden, Panda said. Apart from Azad and Panda, the group includes Nishikant Dubey, Phangnon Konyak, Rekha Sharma (all B-JP), Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM), Satnam Sandhu (nominated), and former foreign secretary Harsh Shringla.

## Satsang, Shardhanjali Samaroh held in memory of Dewarka Nath Shastri

■ STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: As part of the monthly religious congregation held on the 26th of each month in memory of Shri Dewarka Nath Shastri, a Satsang and Shardhanjali Samaroh was organised on Tuesday at his Holy Samadhi in Village Sohanjana, Tehsil Mandal, Jammu. The event, led by Gangadhar Maharaj, witnessed the par-



ticipation of a large number of devotees from J&K and neighbouring states. Gangadhar Ji Maharaj stated that the programme also marked the celebration of the success of "Operation Sindoor" and paid homage to the martyrs. A National Flag hoisting ceremony was held amidst thousands, as a tribute to the bravehearts of Bharat.