

REVIEW OF URDU PRESS

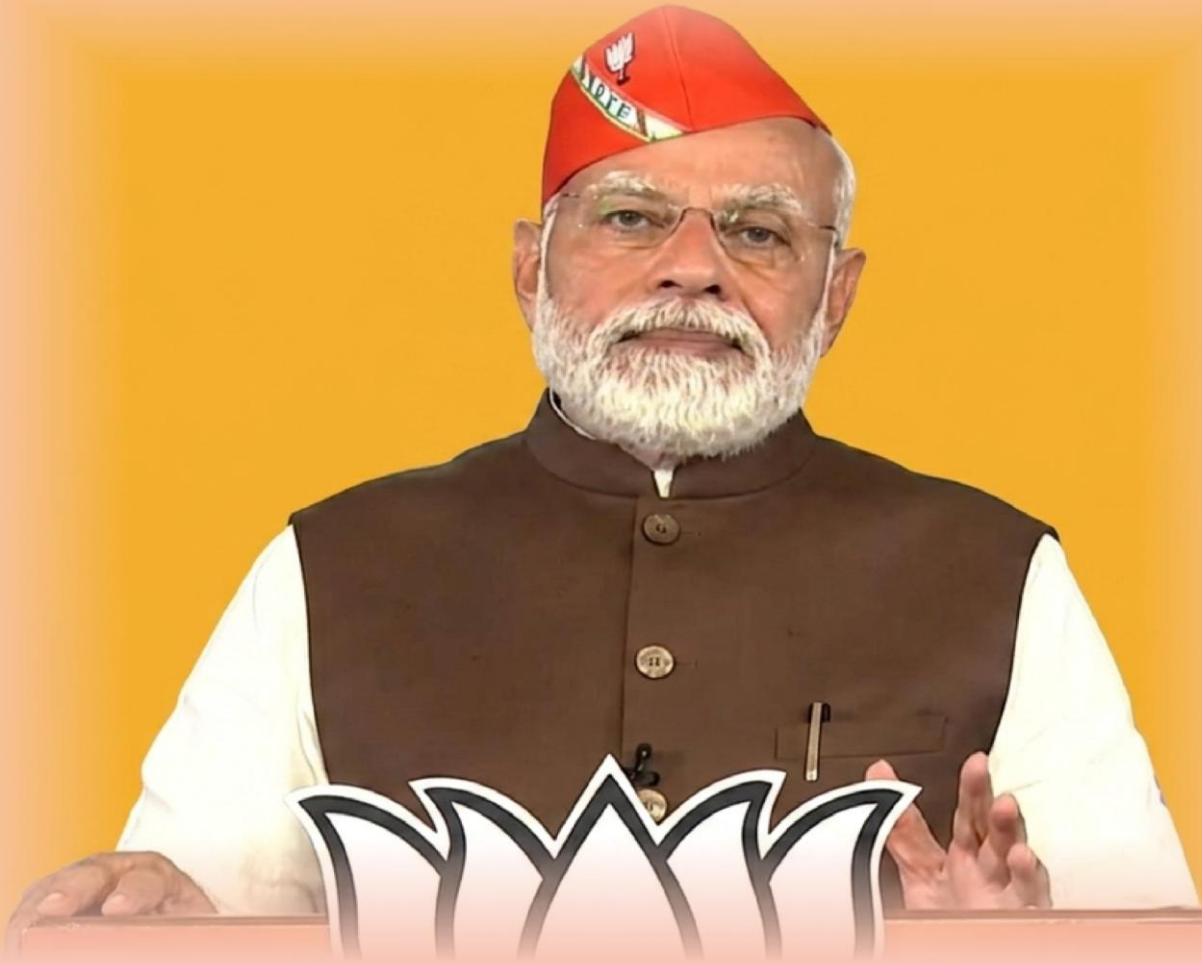
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Prime Minister Modi Signals Implementation of Uniform Civil Code



- Case registered over not singing Vande Mataram
- Alarming situation in Balochistan
- 20 lakh people expected to undertake Haj this year
- Kurd leader Nizar Amedi is new President of Iraq

Editorial Advisor
Dr. Kuldeep Ratnoo

Editor
Manmohan Sharma

Translation from Hindi Edition
K.S. Kumar

Editorial Assistance
Shiv Kumar Singh

Office
D-51, First Floor,
Hauz Khas,
New Delhi-110016
Tel : 011-79687620

E-mail:
info@ipf.org.in
indiapolicy@gmail.com

Website:
www.ipf.org.in

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Summary

On the occasion of the foundation day of BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it clear that the next goal of the government is the implementation of Uniform Civil Code (UCC). Notably, the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution also mention about the implementation of the UCC and the Supreme Court had also suggested to the Parliament several times to make a law in this connection. It is worth mentioning that Uttarakhand has become the first state in the country to implement the UCC, whereas the Gujarat Assembly also took a step in this direction recently. However, several Muslim organisations have been consistently opposing this law.

The internal situation in Pakistan is becoming terrifying day by day. Voices against the persecution of citizens in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are growing louder. The citizens there complain that the benefits of their natural resources are cornered by Punjab province and Chinese projects, rather than helping the local people. In order to suppress this discontent, the Pakistan army is persecuting the local residents. Recently, dozens of people were killed in the operations and firing by the army in the rural areas of Balochistan.

Finally, Iran has agreed to open the Strait of Hormuz to all the commercial ships in the world. Due to the blockade imposed by Iran approximately 40 days ago, a severe global oil and gas crisis emerged, leading to a massive surge in their prices. US President Donald Trump said that Iran has been compelled to soften its stance due to the effective blockade by the US Navy.

Meanwhile, though a temporary ceasefire has been agreed upon between US, Israel and Iran two weeks ago, the attacks carried out on Lebanon by Israel has put the agreement in jeopardy. Trump also mentioned that Pakistan had a significant role in launching this ceasefire talks. Though a ceasefire has been announced between the three countries, it would be too early to say whether the agreement would be a permanent one or the crisis in West Asia has been completely resolved.

As soon as the Haj season began, the process of Hajis reaching Saudi Arabia also started. This year, more than 20 lakh Hajis from over 100 countries are likely to offer Haj. The Saudi government is striving to provide maximum facilities to Haj pilgrims, because it brings a huge revenue to the country. In 2024, several Hajis died due to extreme heat, on which the Saudi government had clarified that majority of the deceased were illegal Haj pilgrims. Keeping this in view, several stringent steps have been taken this year to stop illegal Haj pilgrims.

Meanwhile, nearly 1.75 lakh Hajis from India will offer Haj this year, out of which 1.22 lakh will be send through the Haj Committee of India and the rest will be send by private tour operators. Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju announced that the facilities for Hajis have been increased and their accommodation has been arranged in hotels near Ka'aba. However, due to the fare hike implemented by airlines, Indian Haj pilgrims will have to pay a little extra this year. The Haj pilgrims will leave in special planes to Saudi Arabia from 17 departure centres in the country.

Prime Minister Modi signals implementation of Uniform Civil Code in the country



Hindustan Express (April 7) states that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the party workers on the occasion of the foundation day of BJP, made it clear that the next goal of the government is to implement the 'Uniform Civil Code' and 'One Nation, One Election.' In his address, the Prime Minister said the BJP has achieved numerous major successes—along with political power—so far. However, the party's mission has not yet come to a halt.

The Prime Minister stressed that the the BJP has always adhered to the 'Nation First' policy and has honestly confronted every challenge.

Modi expressed confidence that the efforts being undertaken for these major reforms would yield positive results. Addressing the workers via video conferencing, he inspired them by stating that the party's journey would continue in the future with the same resolve and transparency.

In his address, recalling his ties with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Prime Minister stated that it was under the shade of this vast and sacred banyan tree of the RSS that he found the inspiration to step into politics with noble intentions and integrity. The party has created such a committed cadre who consider service to

the nation as supreme and never compromised with the principles. He explained that during the initial decades, all energy was devoted to formulating the organization's policies, after which the focus shifted to building the BJP into a strong, cadre-based party. The party built a dedicated cadre that regarded service to the nation as paramount and never compromised on its ideals.

Highlighting the government's major achievements, the Prime Minister stated, "Since coming to power, we have repealed hundreds of draconian laws dating back to the British era and have constructed a magnificent Parliament building, serving as a new temple of democracy. We have made a provision for 10 percent reservation for the poor among the general public. This apart, triple-talaq has been banned, Citizenship Amendment Bill and a grand temple was constructed in Ayodhya.

He stressed that the BJP's mission has not ended. The government is now committed to the implementation of important issues like Uniform Civil Code and One Nation One Election across the country.

Inquilab (April 11) states that while addressing a public meeting in Kolkata, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that if the BJP wins the West Bengal Assembly

elections, then the UCC will be implemented in the state within six months of the formation of the government. He said that the government is committed to the implementation of the UCC. Wherever the BJP had come to power, the Bill related to the implementation of the UCC had been passed and it was implemented. Hence if we come to power in West Bengal, we will definitely implement the UCC.



Inquilab (April 4) states that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also announced that if a BJP government comes to power in West Bengal, then UCC will be implemented in the state. It is to be noted that the Supreme Court had also several times supported the implementation of the UCC in the country and the court had suggested that the Parliament needs to take a decision in this connection.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 5) states that Union Minister Giriraj Singh, while supporting the implementation of the UCC in the country, said that a few Muslim organisations are opposing it. He alleged that they are trying to make India an Islamic nation, but it would not be possible. He claimed that the UCC will be definitely implemented during Prime Minister Modi's regime. It is to be noted that while releasing the manifesto for the Assam Assembly elections earlier, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma promised the people that UCC will be implemented in Assam as well on the model of Uttarakhand and Gujarat and a stringent law will be made against Love Jihad as well.

Akhbar-e-Mashriq (April 12) states that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged that the BJP is adopting all tactics after anticipating its defeat in the elections. However, BJP leaders know it very well that they will not be able to win this elections, hence Prime Minister Modi has started playing the Hindutva card. The newspaper said that while addressing an

election meeting at Jangipur region in Muslim-majority Murshidabad, Modi said, "We will not allow the majority Bengalis to become minority in the state. We will implement UCC in the state to end the politics of Muslim appeasement." Retorting it, Mamata Banerjee said the BJP government at the Centre does not want the development of West Bengal, hence they stopped the funds for social welfare programmes. She alleged that due to political selfishness, the Central government is misusing Central agencies like CBI and ED against the Trinamool Congress. She also claimed that the BJP, in order to divide the Muslim votes, handed over Rs 100 crore and fielded a person, but this conspiracy has been exposed. Taking a swipe, Mamata Banerjee said, "Snake can be trusted, but not the BJP."

Akhbar-e-Mashriq (April 12) in its editorial accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of adopting every tactic to win the elections. At one level, the Election Commission declared 85 lakh Bengali voters as suspicious due to pressure from him and deprived them of voting rights. Majority of them were Muslims. In such a situation, claims of fair elections were only on paper. The newspaper alleged that the Election Commission, under the guise of Special Intensive Revision (SIR), is trying to bring BJP to power. The Election Commission has never done such an activity in any election in the country so far.



Hindustan Express (April 14) in its editorial said the BJP has adopted a new strategy this time to lay siege to TMC. The BJP is likely to benefit from the Election Commission's decision to remove the names of Muslims from the voters' list.

Urdu Times (April 11) in its editorial alleged that the hate campaign that the Prime Minister is waging against Muslims in the country to win the election cannot be condemned enough. This campaign by him is against the basic spirit of the Constitution. It looks like the Prime Minister wants to change the present Constitution and is preparing to implement the new Constitution of Hindu Rashtra.

According to **Etemaad** (April 17) the Supreme Court has said that the implementation of the UCC is in accordance with the Constitution. The court has accepted a Public Interest Litigation for hearing. In this petition, certain sections of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, have been challenged on the ground that Shariah law runs contrary to the vision of equal rights granted to women under the Constitution.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul M Pancholi, while hearing a public interest petition filed by Paulomi Pavini Shukla and Nyay Naari Foundation, sought a reply from the Union Minorities Welfare Ministry in this connection. The court told the lawyer of the petitioners Prashant Bhushan that he should ensure that some women affected by

Shariah law also appear as parties in this matter. The court observed that women's property rights cannot be denied on the grounds of religion.

The articles of the Indian Constitution safeguard the fundamental rights of all citizens, the freedom of expression, and the right to practice their faith in accordance with their beliefs.

Prashant Bhushan argued that the country's civil laws should be uniform for everyone. On this, the chief justice said that the UCC is mentioned in the Directive Principles of the Constitution.

It is to be noted that it has been said in the petition filed in the court that the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 is discriminatory towards women. It does not provide for giving women an equal share in ancestral property as men. Women are given half of the share or even less than that compared to men. This apart, Muslim women have not been given the right to legally adopt any child. Advocate Prashant Bhushan argued that the Shariah law of 1937 violates Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. In response to this, the Chief Justice stated that replacing or reforming Muslim Personal Law with the Indian Succession Act falls under the category of enacting new legislation, and the authority to enact new laws rests solely with Parliament.

Background: The BJP has been trying for the implementation of UCC right from the beginning and it had stressed in several election campaigns that there should be equal law for all the citizens in the country. However, Muslim leaders have been consistently opposing the same. They claim that the Indian Constitution grants every individual the freedom to practice their religion in accordance with their religious beliefs. In this context, reference is made to the 1937 Act, which included provisions for the protection of Shariah law.

The argument of Muslim leaders is that during the debate in the Constituent



considering it a sensitive matter—stated that there was no need for changes for the time being.

Muslim organisations allege that despite this assurance, the government is interfering in their religious laws. On the other hand, it is also a fact that Shariah law discriminates against Muslim women, as it does not provide for giving them an equal share to men in ancestral or spousal property. Women are given half or even less than that of the men's share in the property, which is considered as against the basic spirit of the Indian Constitution and against the right to equality. In order to bring this legal uniformity, steps were taken for UCC in states like Uttarakhand and Gujarat. However, organisations like Jamiat Ulema and All India Muslim Personal Law Board allege that this stand of the BJP is a major step towards their stated objective of establishing a Hindu nation in the country, which the Muslim society is not willing to accept.

Assembly, the minorities have been given the guarantee that there would not be any interference in their personal law. But, according to them, the current government wants to take away these rights. Their belief is that the Shariah law was created by Allah and neither the Parliament nor the court has any right to change the same. In the context of this very protest, in 2022, a memorandum signed by 4.5 crore people was submitted to the Law Commission, urging it not to interfere in Shariah. At that time, the Law Commission, too—

Departure of Haj pilgrims begin



facilitate the Hajis so that they can be located in the event of them going missing.

This apart, 60,000 Indian Hajis will be able to benefit the fast train between Mecca and Medina.

Etemaad (April 10) states that final touches were given to Haj preparations at a high-level meeting held in Delhi. In this meeting, top officials of Central

Hamara Samaj (April 18) reports that Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijju announced that the departure of Indian Haj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia has started from April 18, 2026. The Hajis will depart to Mecca from 17 airports in the country. He made it clear that the ministry has formed a nodal agency for it and this year digital facilities like 'Haj app' and 'smart wrist band' are being provided to

Haj Committee including the Joint Secretary at Union Minorities Affairs Ministry Ram Singh and India's Consular General in Jeddah Fahad Ahmed Khan Suri took part. After the meeting, Suri told journalists that 1.75 lakh Hajis will visit Saudi Arabia this year. Among them, 1,22,518 pilgrims will be sent by Haj Committee, whereas the management of the rest of the Hajis will be taken care of by



private tour operators. This apart, 5,400 women will do Haj pilgrimage without ‘Mehram’ (close relative). The first contingent of the Hajjis will arrive at Prince Mohammad bin Abdul Aziz International Airport in Medina on April 18 and this will continue till May 22. The return will begin from June 30.

Siasat (April 10) states that a spokesperson of Indian government said that the arrangement for the accommodation of Hajjis have been made at the hotels near Haram Sharif and other places. Special planes have been arranged for women, and only women will be deployed to look after them. Nearly 350 doctors and other medical staff will go to Jeddah for care of Hajjis. Several camps have been opened at the behest of India for the treatment of Hajjis. During the Haj, special arrangements have made for the stay of Indian Hajjis in Mina. In view of the extreme heat, special arrangements for ACs have been made at the camps. In Mecca-Medina, there is arrangements for special hospitals and dispensaries, where Indian doctors and paramedical staff will be present round-the-clock.

Inquilab (April 12) states that this year, the travel will be a bit expensive for the Haj pilgrims because Air India has hiked its rate by 15 to 20 percent.

Inquilab (March 25) states that compared to last year, Haj this year has

become expensive by Rs 1 lakh to 1.25 lakh because Haj pilgrims will not have permission to cook their own food. They will have to buy food from outside and money will be taken from them separately for this. The Haj Committee of India has extended the date of payment by one week. Last year, the total expenses were Rs 3.37 lakh, whereas this year the expenses are likely to be Rs 4.25 lakh. The money does not include qurbani, food and personal expenses. This way, the total expenses will be nearly Rs 5.5 lakh.

Inquilab (April 8) reports that the executive officer of Bihar state Haj Committee Mohammad Rashid Hussain said this year 2,556 Hajjis will go for Haj from Bihar. Since there is no direct flight from Bihar, they will have capture planes from other states. The Hajjis from Bihar can travel from Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Nagpur. Last year, 2,383 Hajjis from Bihar departed from Gaya airport, but this year there is no arrangement from there. Bihar’s quota is 12,225, but only 2,556 applications were received. Former head of Bihar Haj Committee Haji Abdul Haq said that Bihari Muslims are financially weak, hence it is not possible for them to pay the increasing expenses. He also said the Bihar Haj Committee’s term ended on May 30, 2025. Despite that, the government has not constituted a new committee.

Case registered for not singing Vande Mataram



Hindustan (April 16) reports that a case has been registered at M G Road police station in Indore against two women Congress councillors for refusing to sing national song 'Vande Mataram.' It is to be noted that Rubina Iqbal Khan and Fauzia Sheikh Alim had refused to sing Vande Mataram during the budget session of the municipal council, following which a huge ruckus took place. Several leaders of BJP submitted a memorandum to the Divisional Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police demanding action against the two. The police questioned the two Muslim councillors before filing the case. Later a case was registered against them under Section 196 (1) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita.

It is to be noted that at the meeting of the municipal council, chairman Munnalal Yadav ordered Fauzia Sheikh Alim to get out of the House. The chairman argued that Vande Mataram has completed 150 years and as per the guidelines issued by the Central government, its singing is mandatory in all government offices. It was alleged that when the singing of Vande Mataram began, Fauzia Sheikh Alim stood up in the House and walked out. When she came to the House again, she was accused of trying to obstruct the proceedings and making objectionable comments against Vande Mataram, on the basis of which she was expelled for one day.

Inquilab (April 10) states that Fauzia Sheikh told the media that in Islam

singing of Vande Mataram is not allowed as it is against the concept of Islam. She argued that as per the Constitution, every individual has the freedom to live in accordance with their own religion. Therefore, no one can be compelled to sing this song.

She alleged that that the BJP has stirred up the 'Vande Mataram' controversy to divert the public's attention away from the grave issue of the supply of contaminated water by the Municipal Corporation in Indore, and the deaths resulting from it.

Meanwhile, Indore mayor Pushyamitra Bhargav, while describing the action of Fauzia Sheikh as unfortunate, said that nobody should have any objection to singing of national song. On the other hand, Opposition leader in the municipal corporation Chintu Choukse said that this was Fauzia Sheikh's personal matter and own decision. Earlier, another councillor of Congress Rubina Iqbal Khan had also refused to take part in the singing of national song and she boycotted the House and walked out.

Inquilab (April 14) states that BJP legislator from Depalpur in Indore Manoj Patel has also now got involved in the Vande Mataram controversy. While addressing a public meeting, he said, "If you want to remain in our area, you will have to sing Vande Mataram." Patel said that the song had played an important role during the freedom movement of the country and it is necessary to honour the song. On the other hand, several Muslim organisations including Jamiat Ulema said that nobody could be forced to sing Vande Mataram, because it is against their religious faith. In Islam, there is permission to bow only before Allah, but in certain stanzas of Vande Mataram, there is mention about the worship of Hindu Devi-Devatas.

Maulana Abdullah Salim Qasmi released on bail

Inquilab (April 11) states that Maulana Abdullah Salim Qasmi Chaturvedi of Bihar has been released on bail. It is to be noted that Uttar Pradesh STF had arrested him from Purnia in Bihar on March 30. Maulana Qasmi has been accused of making unsavoury remarks against the mother of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Maulana compared the cow to the chief minister's mother. It is said that Uttar Pradesh police arrived in Purnia in Bihar in plainclothes and took Maulana into custody and took him first to Gorakhpur and then to Bahraich. He was officially arrested on the basis of a report filed in Bahraich police station.

The case had been registered against Qasmi under Section 196 (1) (A), 299 and 353 (1) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Following the arrest, he was produced before the court, from where he was sent to the jail on a 14 days' judicial custody. Inspector General of Police, Devipatan Range, Amit Pathak said that a video had gone viral on social media a few days ago, in which Maulana Salim, a resident of Araria in Bihar, had made objectionable remarks on the mother of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Following this, complaints were made against the Maulana at several police stations in Uttar Pradesh.

In his statement, Maulana Qasmi said, "At a gathering held on May 5, 2024, in the village of Meeranchak in Bihar's Bhagalpur district, I inadvertently made some objectionable remarks regarding the mother of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, for which I offer my apologies."

It is to be noted that the Maulana is a resident of Mahalgaon in Jokihat police station area in Araria district in Bihar. Earlier, he was associated with All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, but he had resigned from the party during the Bihar



Assembly elections. Complaints were registered against the Maulana in 84 police stations in Uttar Pradesh. The Uttar Pradesh STF team had been conducting regular raids in search of him. According to police officers, different Hindu organisations had filed cases against him for sparking religious hatred and violations of IT Act.

AIMIM legislator from Jokihat Mohammad Murshid Alam alleged that the police targeted Maulana Qasmi due to religious and political hatred. He said this was a two-year-old matter. Several Muslim leaders lodged protest over the arrest of Maulana. Bihar state president of AIMIM Akhtarul Iman said the BJP is deliberately targeting the Maulana, while the party spokesperson Adil Hasan, while condemning the arrest of the Maulana, described it as an action prompted by 'saffron politics.'

A team of Muslim lawyers was formed to secure the release of Maulana. Secretary of Association for the Protection of Civil Rights (APCR) Nadim Khan said the Maulana was released on bail due to the efforts of lawyers Akaram Siddiqui and Shadab Hussain. He said that the fight does not end here, instead they will take this matter to Allahabad High Court. Nadeem Khan said the Maulana left for Bihar after his release.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 7) in its editorial, while criticising the arrest of Maulana Abdullah Salim Qasmi, said the Maulana was targeted on the pretext of the



comments he made at a meeting regarding the cow two years ago. The interesting thing is that the Maulana had even sought to apologise regarding his comments, but in an act of revenge, the BJP, based on his old statement, filed FIRs against him in dozens of police stations in Uttar Pradesh. The Maulana's political background was also deliberately raked up. The law should not be used for political vendetta. The newspaper alleged that this incident is a live example of the atmosphere of hatred being created against a particular community in the country.

The newspaper also expressed serious concern that the Maulana appears to be limping in the video that has surfaced after the arrest. This creates the doubt that he was assaulted after he was taken into custody. The atmosphere that is being created against religious minorities in the country, especially Muslims, is very dangerous. The Constitution states that the law is equal for everyone; however, at the grassroots level, the standards of the law appear to differ for Muslims and the majority community. If any section of society feels that it is being subjected to injustice, it gives rise to feelings of discontent and mistrust within society, which are detrimental to the democratic system.

Hamara Samaj (April 5) in its editorial said the incident related to Maulana Qasmi is proof of the reality that the Muslim Ulema should speak after

proper thinking. According to newspaper reports, in the current circumstances, the constitutional rights to freedom and freedom of expression often appear to be compromised due to one's Muslim identity. The current atmosphere is not fully secure for the Muslims because those sitting on power could use their each and every word to spread hatred against them.

Hamara Samaj (April 3) has said in an article that the ruling party is deliberately targeting the Muslim Ulema so that flames of hatred could be spread against Muslims in the

society. In the past, Maulana Kalim Siddiqui had incurred the wrath of the government. Later, Maulana Salman Azhari had to cases and stay in jail due to a speech delivered by him. Recently, Maulana Tauqeer Raza of Bareilly was also targeted. These incidents serve as proof that the ruling party is not applying the law equally to all sections of society, and that individuals belonging to a specific group are being deliberately targeted. The newspaper advised that in the current atmosphere in the country, Muslim leaders should open their mouth with caution and should save themselves from getting trapped in legal cases.

Awadhnama (April 4) in its editorial said the people of Bihar had committed a grave mistake by giving their votes to BJP and Nitish Kumar, the consequences of which people will have to bear for five years. Recently, the renowned Maulana of Bihar Chaturvedi (who has knowledge of all the four vedas) was abducted at gunpoint in broad daylight and taken to Gorakhpur via Patna. It is surprising that the Bihar government has maintained silence over this illegal action. As per the law, the police of other states do not have the right to arrest a person without the permission and information of the police of the concerned state. In any kind of arrest, the permission of local police is mandatory, but in this case, the Uttar Pradesh police arrived in Purnea in plainclothes and entered the house of

Maulana and took him away without informing the local police.

According to the newspaper, the Maulana was accused of comparing a cow to the mother of Chief Minister Yogi two years ago, due to which complaints have

been registered against him in dozens of police stations in Uttar Pradesh. However, the Maulana had apologised for this comments earlier itself, and the action taken against him despite it is condemnable.

Owaisi and Humayun Kabir's alliance in West Bengal collapses



Etemaad (April 11) reports that All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen has announced its scrapping of electoral alliance with Humayun Kabir's party Aam Janata Unnayan Party in the Assembly elections in West Bengal. The party said in a statement that it has become clear from the viral video of Humayun Kabir that given how vulnerable and insecure the Muslims of West Bengal are, the AIMIM cannot associate with any party whose integrity is questionable. Asaduddin Owaisi said that secular parties are in power in West Bengal for several decades, but they did nothing for the welfare of poor Muslims. The policy of AIMIM is to provide an independent political platform for backward and deprived communities, hence the party will fight the polls on its own strength. Party incharge for West Bengal Adil Hasan said that an investigation into the viral video should

be done by the chief justice of the high court or the Election Commission. He urged the people to get united, because the TMC and the BJP want to garner votes by instilling fear of one another.

Siasat (April 10) reports that TMC has released a so-called video of Humayun Kabir. The party claims that this video was made through a sting operation. In this 19-minute video, Humayun Kabir could allegedly be heard saying, "It is very easy to make fool of Muslims. More than 90 percent Muslims of West Bengal stand with Mamata Banerjee even today. I have been handed over the mission to separate them from Mamata, but a huge fund is required for this. The BJP has given me Rs 1,000 crore for this work so that I could run a campaign against them. My relationship is with big leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma and Suwendu Adhikari and I got this money with their help." In this video,



Humayun Kabir could also be heard saying that he could do anything to remove Mamata Banerjee from power and if the BJP comes to power, he could be made the chief minister. However, Humayun Kabir, while totally rejecting this video, described it as fake and said that there is not an iota of truth in it.

It is to be noted that a few months ago, Humayun Kabir had announced the laying of foundation of Babri Masjid in the Muslim-majority area of Murshidabad, after which the TMC expelled him from the party.

Akhbar-e-Mashriq (April 12) in its editorial said that a video of a sting operation has created ripples in West Bengal politics. The truth about Humayun Kabir, who claims to construct Babri Masjid, has now become public. TMC claimed that Humayun Kabir is working at the behest of BJP and he was given Rs 1,000 crore for this purpose. Following this exposure, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi announced ending of electoral alliance with Humayun Kabir.

On the other hand, Union Home Minister Amit Shah described this video as fake and said that Mamata Banerjee is

capable of making 2,000 such videos. However, Amit Shah's claim cannot be believed, because Humayun Kabir was once part of BJP. He contested the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 on a BJP ticket, but he joined TMC after losing the elections. The newspaper said the BJP wants to win the West Bengal elections at any cost. For this, buying people like Humayun Kabir and extend financial aid to them is not a big deal.

Mumbai Urdu News (April 11) in its editorial supported the decision of Owaisi to end the electoral alliance with Humayun Kabir. The newspaper said that Asaduddin Owaisi has set an example of political wisdom by taking such a decision and made an effort to keep the image of Muslims above doubt. The newspaper said Humayun Kabir's personality has been mired in controversy right from the beginning. He laid the foundation of Babri Masjid at the behest of BJP in order to divide the Muslim votes. The newspaper also said that it cannot be denied that even the secular parties never made any serious effort to remove the backwardness of Muslims in West Bengal.

Plan to hike US defence budget to \$ 1.5 trillion



Inquilab (April 5) reports that the Trump administration has proposed a defence budget of 1.5 trillion dollars before the US Congress for the financial year ending 2027. Such a massive sum of money has never been allocated for the defence budget in the history of the US. The Trump administration has also appealed to the US Congress to make substantial cuts to the budgets of various social welfare schemes. According to the sources in White House, a demand has been made to the Parliament that a hike of at least 40 percent shall be made in the defence budget for next year compared to the current year. Additionally, a proposal has been put forward to cut the funds allocated for schemes such as health, education, and housing by \$73 billion. Trump administration's argument is that it is necessary to increase the defence budget in view of the rising threat to the US in the world.

The Opposition MPs argue that the US economy will come under excessive pressure due to this proposed massive hike in the defence budget. According to sources in the White House, it has been proposed to cut internal budget of the country by 10 percent. As a result of this reduction, several development projects meant for the welfare of minorities and the

weaker sections of the society will have to be shut down.

Qaumi Tanzeem (April 9) states that US newspaper 'Wall Street Journal' has claimed that 24 Democratic MPs, while describing the policies of President Donald Trump as destructive to the nation, demanded that he should be removed from his post. This demand has been made in accordance with the 25th Amendment of the US Constitution. As per this provision, if the President does not use his powers in the interest of the nation and if his decisions endanger national security or the economy, he could be removed from power.

Under the constitutional process, the Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet must provide written notification to the Senate (Upper House) and the House of Representatives (Lower House) regarding this matter.

As soon as this information is received, the powers of the President gets suspended and the Vice-President assumes office as the acting President. Following this, the Congress will have to take a final decision on this issue within 21 days. However, this Constitutional system has never been utilised in the history of the US.

Urdu Times (April 4) reports that 100 international law experts in the US

have issued a letter addressed to the media, in which the attacks carried out on Iran by the US and Israel have been strongly condemned. It has been made clear in the letter that this military operation is an open violation of the United Nations charter. The experts say that this operation which started against Iran on February 28 was launched without the permission of the United Nations Security Council. It has also been mentioned in the letter that no overt threat was issued by Iran regarding attack on the US.

As per international law, military force may be used against a country only

when it is essential for self-defence or when the Security Council has authorized it.

Iran has neither attacked Israel nor the US, hence the Security Council has not given nod for any such action.

The experts have described this war as illegal from the legal point of view. In the letter, the fierce attack that was carried out on a primary school in Iran has been strongly condemned, where the lives of 175 innocent children were lost. Further, it has also been stated that this war is imposing a heavy economic burden of, on average, two billion dollars per day on US taxpayers.

Situation in Balochistan alarming



Awadhnama (April 15) reports that the Pakistan army has attacked a village in Balochistan using artillery in which 32 residents were killed. Majority of those killed were women and children. Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claims that the Pakistan army took this action in retaliation to the attack carried out against them. While the BLA has claimed responsibility for the attack, the Pakistani Army has not yet issued any official statement regarding the assault on the village and the killing of civilians.

On the other hand, as per a report published in Balochistan Post, spokesperson of Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Major Gohram Baloch claimed that more than 36 personnel of

Pakistan army, Frontier Corps and Anti-Terrorist Corps were killed in their attacks in the past one week. As per the report, a communication centre of the Pakistan army was targeted in Nuski. This apart, an attack was carried out on an eight-vehicle convoy of the army using rocket launchers in Awaran district. In this attack, three army vehicles were totally destroyed while five soldiers were killed in the spot and four others were seriously injured.

Chattan (April 3) states that the security situation of Balochistan remained a matter of serious concern in the first quarter of this year. As per government data, a massive increase of 104 percent has been recorded in incidents of violence in Balochistan compared to last year. The total number of deaths has gone up from 217 to 443, which has been increasing for the past 13 years. As per government data, there has been a decline in the number of people dying in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, whereas a huge increase has been registered in Balochistan. As per the data, out of the total deaths in Pakistan, 55 percent are registered in Balochistan alone.

Government employees banned from marrying foreigners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Hindustan Express (April 16) reports that the government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan has imposed a ban on government employees from marrying foreign citizens. The chief minister of the province Sohail Khan Afridi announced that this decision was taken to maintain the security and secrecy of the nation. In this connection, a notification was issued under ‘Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Service Rules, 2026’ which replaced the old law of 1973.

As per the new law, if any government employee wants to marry a foreign citizen, the person should obtain permission from the government in advance. If the directive is violated, the employee will be immediately dismissed from service. The government has also made it mandatory to provide all the details regarding the future husband or wife to the security agencies before the marriage. The permission for marriage will be given only after a green signal

following investigations. A special tribunal will be set up to examine the cases of those employees who married foreigners before the implementation of this law. If the life-partner of any employee is found to be a threat to the security of the nation, the person concerned will have to divorce him or her. However, the government could adopt a liberal policy in special circumstances.

Pakistani channel gets notice for offering tributes to Asha Bhosle

Chattan (April 15) reports that Pakistan’s Electronic Media Regulatory Authority has issued a show-cause notice to the country’s prominent TV channel ‘Geo News’ for telecasting material related to India’s renowned singer Asha Bhosle following her death. Managing Director of Geo News Azhar Abbas confirmed that they were issued this notice for telecasting a tribute programme and her songs on the channel. Abbas said that Asha Bhosle was very popular in Pakistan as well. He argued that when reporting on a great artist, it is an established tradition to recall and appreciate their works. It is as part of this tradition that a special programme was broadcast in memory of Asha Bhosle. Despite this, PEMRA raised an objection

and decided to take action against the channel.

On the other hand, former governor of Sindh, Mohamamd Zubair Umar in a post on social media wrote, “Today, notice is being issued for broadcasting the songs of Asha Bhosle, tomorrow, perhaps, it will be asked why a Pakistani channel is broadcasting content praising Virat Kohli’s batting.”

Meanwhile, Pakistani journalist Mona Alam, while criticising this decision of the government said, “Asha Bhosle is a legendary figure of whom the entire world is proud. I am delighted that the news channel has represented the sentiments of millions of Pakistanis by presenting a special programme in tribute to Asha



Bhosle. We all grew up listening to her songs.”

PEMRA spokesperson said that his institution has no objection to broadcasting the news on the death of any artist, but playing the song of the films along with the news is what kind of journalism? He said the managers of Geo News will have to appear before the authority on their own on through their lawyers on April 27. According to the spokesperson, “It has been said in the show-cause notice issued to Geo News that along with the news related to the death of Indian singer Asha Bhosle, filmic glimpses of her songs had also been shown. The is an open violation of the orders of Pakistan’s Supreme Court. In its verdict in October 2018, the court had stayed the telecast of any Indian content on Pakistani TV channels. This verdict was

delivered by a division bench headed by Mian Saqib Nisar. This apart, the Geo News also violated a notification issued by PEMRA in 2002 in which a ban had been imposed on the telecast of Indian music.”

Commenting on this notice, Managing Director of Geo News, Azagar Abbas said, “Like knowledge, art too is a shared heritage of humanity, and it should not be confined within boundaries. Asha Bhosle herself was a great admirer of Pakistan’s renowned singer Noorjahan and she used to call her as her elder sister out of affection. Asha Bhosle had also worked with Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and she lent her voice to the poetry of great Urdu poets such as Nasir Kazmi.

He clarified that Geo News will give a legal reply to the notice issued by PEMRA. ■

Italy suspends defence cooperation agreement with Israel

Hindustan (April 15) states that Italy, a prominent country in the European Union, has cancelled its defence cooperation agreement with Israel. This was announced by Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni in the Parliament. She said that the Italian government took this decision in view of the growing military conflict in West Asia. It is to be noted that Italy is considered as the biggest ally of Israel in Europe. The Italian government had publicly condemned the Israeli attack on Lebanon last week and announced that it is withdrawing its soldiers from the United

Nations Peacekeeping Force. According to a government spokesperson, the Italian government took this decision with the purpose of saving the lives of innocent people in Lebanon.

This apart, the spokesperson of European Union clarified that no member nation of European Union will not be part of any plan to ensure a blockade of Strait of Hormuz. The spokesperson also confirmed that all 27 countries of the European Union have decided to cease supplying weapons and medicines to Israel in the future, in order to quell the flames of war. ■

Ten-day ceasefire announced between Israel and Lebanon



Urdu Times (April 17) reports that a 10-day ceasefire has been announced between Israel and Lebanon. Previously, the temporary ceasefire between the US and Iran had fallen into trouble due to Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

According to sources, US President Donald Trump was in constant touch with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to resolve this issue. Pakistan's foreign ministry has confirmed that this ceasefire in Lebanon is part of a broader agreement between Iran and the US. Establishing peace in Lebanon was a mandatory condition to make the talks between Iran and the US successful. During this time, the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, met the Pakistan army chief General Asim Munir in Tehran, immediately after which General Munir left for an important visit to the US.

According to **Hindustan Express** (April 17), after a long gap of 34 years, official peace talks between Israel and Lebanon are beginning. Lebanese TV channel 'Al Jadeed' has claimed that this ceasefire became effective following

tripartite talks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. It is noteworthy that with US mediation, representatives of Israel and Lebanon had started talks in Washington.

Hindustan Express (April 18) states that US President announced that a complete agreement has been reached for a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon and the two sides have stopped military attacks against each other. Trump has directed Vice-President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio to work with the joint chiefs of staff to turn this temporary ceasefire into lasting peace.

Trump has invited Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Joseph Aoun to the White House for the next important round of talks. On the other hand, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid has strongly criticised Netanyahu for this ceasefire. He alleged that Netanyahu has broken the expectations of the Israeli public and backtracked on his promises.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Army spokesperson Charles Jabbour said that the



Lebanese government should now pressure Hezbollah to hand over its weapons to the army.

Hindustan (April 10) states that despite the announcement of a ceasefire with Iran by the US and Israel, Israel continued its airstrikes on Lebanon.

At least 254 people were killed and more than 1,100 injured in these attacks so far. The Israel army claims that these attacks have been carried out on Hezbollah's locations and will continue in the future.

Etemaad (April 10) reports that Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian took a tough stand and said that with the Israeli attacks on Lebanon continuing, ceasefire talks between the US and Iran no longer have any meaning. While Netanyahu is adamant about targeting Hezbollah's locations, the mediator country Pakistan says that the issue of Lebanon is also included in this agreement.

Hindustan (April 18) states that celebrations were held in Beirut after a 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel

came into effect. Rallies were also taken out and slogans were raised in support of Hezbollah in the Iranian capital Tehran.

Ismail Qaani, commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Pasdaran-e-Inqilab (IRGC), has called the ceasefire a big victory for Hezbollah. They said this agreement is a result of the firmness of the Lebanese resistance and the support of Iran, due to which US and Israel had to step back.

Munsif (10 April), in its editorial, condemned the Israeli attack on Lebanon and demanded from the US that it stop these attacks immediately. The newspaper alleged that the Indian government has failed to play any effective role in bringing about an agreement between the two countries, the full benefit of which has been taken by Pakistan. It was said in the editorial that due to the failures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy, the world today is praising Pakistan's diplomacy, which has dealt a deep blow to India's image as 'Vishwaguru' (world leader).

Kurd leader Nizar Amedi is Iraq's new president

Inqilab (April 13) reports that the Iraqi Parliament has elected Kurdish leader Nizar Amedi as the new President. Amedi is a prominent Sunni leader. Notably, US President Donald Trump recently threatened that if former Prime Minister

Nouri al-Maliki becomes Prime Minister again, the US will stop all aid provided to Iraq.

It is worth mentioning that parliamentary elections were held in Iraq in November last year, after which Shia



parties, considered pro-Iran, nominated Nouri al-Maliki for the post of Prime Minister. Interestingly, during the conflict between Israel and Iran, Iran-backed militia

groups repeatedly attacked US military bases located in Iraq, and at least twice targeted the US Embassy in Baghdad. The new President, Amedi, is 58 years old and has served as the environment minister of Iraq.

Since 2024, he has been serving as the president of the Kurdish political party, the 'Patriotic Union of Kurdistan'. If Shia parties push Nouri al-Maliki forward for the post of Prime

Minister despite Trump's opposition, it could trigger a new political and diplomatic crisis in Iraq.

100 people die in army bombing in Nigeria

Inqilab (April 14) reports that the Nigerian Air Force bombed a weekly market located in Gilti village of Yobe state, resulting in the death of more than 100 civilians. The Nigerian ministry of defence, terming it a 'misfire', stated that their objective was to destroy the hideouts of the terrorist organisation Boko Haram active in the region.

Human rights organisation 'Amnesty International', citing survivors, has confirmed that more than 100 people were killed in this airstrike in Yobe state. This area is located near the border of Borno province, which has been a main stronghold of Boko Haram for the past decade. Boko Haram has links with Islamic terrorist organisations like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. A civil war has been going on in Nigeria for more than a decade. Brigadier General Dahiru Abdul Salam, military advisor to the Yobe state government, has claimed that the Air Force targeted common civilians in this attack.

He called the government's claim—that those killed were Boko Haram terrorists—baseless. On the other hand, the government spokesperson maintained that



the incident was a tragic accident occurring during anti-terror operations.

Boko Haram is enslaving children from this region and selling them to Arab countries. Describing this as an open violation of the United Nations Charter, they have appealed to the United Nations for immediate intervention in this matter and to stop this business of human trafficking.

Urdu Times (April 18) reports that armed terrorists in the Benue state of Nigeria kidnapped a bus full of students going to take an examination. Benue state governor Hyacinth Alia has confirmed that terrorists have abducted several students and other passengers on board the bus. He expressed fear that the terrorists might sell them abroad as slaves. The governor said that security forces have been directed to start a search and rescue operation.

20 lakh people likely to perform Haj this year

Hindustan (April 18) reports that the Saudi Arabian administration has completed the preparations for this year's Haj. The Haj season began on April 18 and is expected to continue until June.

According to the spokesperson of the Saudi ministry of Haj and Umrah, more than 2 million pilgrims from over 100 countries are expected to perform Haj this year. He stated that the government is making efforts to ensure that no untoward incidents occur during the Haj. Booklets in 54 languages have been prepared to guide the pilgrims. Four lakh government employees have been appointed to assist them, including 15,000 doctors and other medical staff. In view of the extreme heat, all camps have been made air-conditioned. Additionally, arrangements have been made for one lakh vehicles, metro trains, and 20 lakh rooms.

Hindustan (April 16) states that the Saudi government has announced heavy fines for those who violate Haj permit rules. According to the new guidelines, if any person enters the Haj area or holy sites without a valid permit, a fine of up to 20,000 Riyals can be imposed on them. Additionally, those who provide shelter to illegal pilgrims or assist them in any way will be fined up to one lakh Riyals.

Urdu Times (April 15) reports that the interior ministry of Saudi Arabia has issued strict instructions to all foreign travellers who came for Umrah to mandatorily return to their countries by April 18. After this deadline, if any person is found in Saudi Arabia without a valid visa, they will have to face at least one year in prison and a fine of 50,000 Riyals.

The ministry also clarified that foreign nationals who attempt to perform Haj illegally will not only be deported but will also be banned from entering Saudi Arabia for several years to come. Until May 31, only valid Haj visa holders are

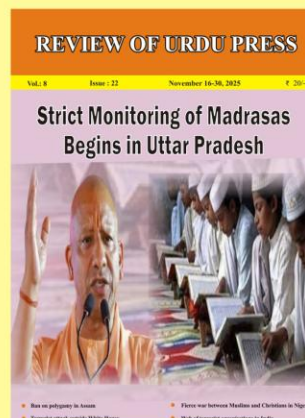
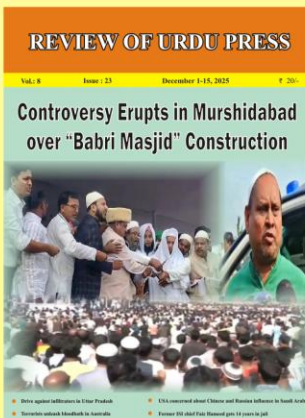
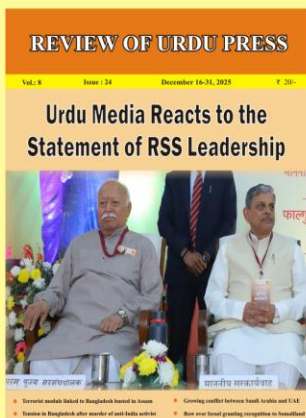
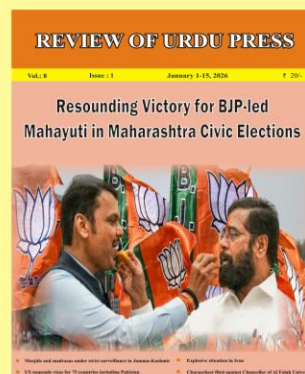
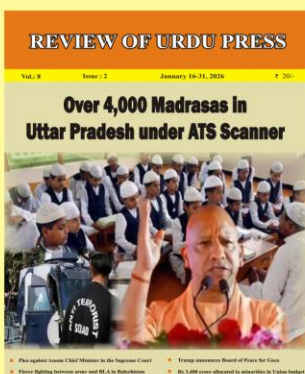
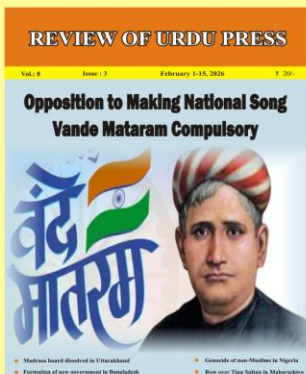
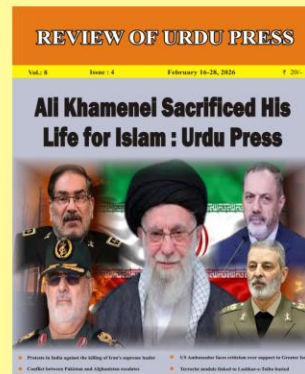
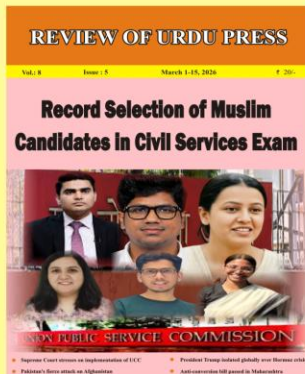
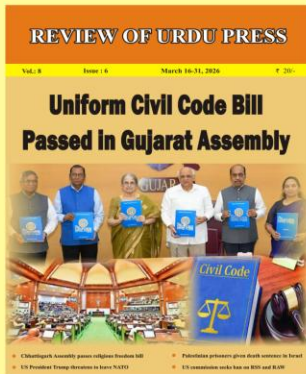
allowed entry into Mecca and Medina. And all other types of visas will also remain suspended. To prevent incidents of extreme heat and fire, pilgrims will not be allowed to cook their own food. They must obtain food only from government-run or recognised canteens.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will personally monitor the entire event. Drones, AI cameras, and advanced technology are being used on a large scale for security. The responsibility for the security of Mecca, Medina, and the Mina Valley has been entrusted to a special unit of the Saudi Army.

Awadhnama (April 13) states that the Saudi government has made major improvements to international airports and metro systems for the convenience of pilgrims. Saleh bin Ibrahim Al-Rasheed, chief executive officer of the Royal Commission for Mecca city and Holy Sites, stated that 430 new buses have been added to the Mecca bus network, and 12 new Metro stations have been opened in Mecca and Medina.

The holy sites of Mecca and Medina have been linked with a state-of-the-art communication system. For the convenience of pilgrims, 60 new multi-story buildings have been constructed near Mecca and 32 new escalators have been installed. Eight new camps have been established in an area of 1.9 lakh square metres in Arafat, while double-story tents are being set up in an area of 33,000 square metres, where special arrangements have been made for the stay of five lakh pilgrims.

Ten new residential towers in Medina and a new emergency hospital with 200 beds in Mina have been built. Along with this, 60 new supermarkets have been opened. Pedestrian paths have been increased by 127 per cent and 50,000 new trees have been planted.



भारत नीति प्रतिष्ठान
India Policy Foundation

D-51, First Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016
Tel : 011-79687620
E-mail : info@ipf.org.in, indiapolicy@gmail.com
Website : www.ipf.org.in