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## Terrorists Kill 26 Tourists in Pahalgam



- Number of Muslim students declines in Civil Services Exam
- 33 Balochis get death penalty in Iran

- Hundreds killed in explosion at Iran's port
- Controversy over revision of NCERT textbooks

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## **Contents**

<b>Summary</b>	03
<b><u>National</u></b>	
Terrorists kill 26 tourists in Pahalgam	04
Number of Muslim students declines in Civil Services Exam	06
Controversy over revision of NCERT textbooks	08
SC judgment in favour of Urdu	10
SC verdict on Shariah courts	13
<b><u>World</u></b>	
33 Balochis get death penalty in Iran	14
USA ready to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia	15
Bloody clashes on Pakistan-Afghanistan border	15
Four lakh Afghan citizens expelled from Pakistan	17
Muhammad Yunus acquitted of corruption charges	18
<b><u>West Asia</u></b>	
Hundreds killed in explosion at Iran's port	19
Ban on Ikhwanul Muslimeen in Jordan	20
New formula for ceasefire in Gaza	22
Campaign against Houthi rebels	22
Haj begins in Saudi Arabia	24

## Summary

Terrorists have brutally murdered 26 tourists in the Baisaran Valley of Pahalgam, a major tourist destination of Jammu and Kashmir. The terrorists attacked the tourists after asking them their name and religion. The terrorists identified the Hindus and brutally killed them. The investigation into this terrorist attack is being carried out by National Investigation Agency (NIA). So far, more than 200 people have been taken into custody in this connection and their interrogation is still on. Nationwide protests have been taking place against this incident. The opposition has said that it stands in solidarity with the Modi government in eliminating terrorists and in taking action against the forces that control them. The Indian government cancelled the visas of all Pakistani citizens staying in the country and directed them to leave immediately. The government also cancelled the Indus Water Treaty signed in 1960. The government also took several other important steps against Pakistan. Pakistan's defence minister Khawaja Asif threatened that if India stops the water intended for the supply, Pakistan will attack India. This apart, the Pakistan government also imposed a ban on entry of Indian aircraft on its airspace.

The list of the successful candidates in the Civil Services Examination 2024 conducted by the Union Public Service Commission has been published. A total of 1,009 candidates have emerged successful in the examination. This year, there is a decline in the number of successful Muslim candidates. Only 26 Muslim candidates have emerged victorious this year, and out of them nine are women. However, some newspapers have said the number of successful Muslim candidates is 31. Last year, 51 Muslim candidates cleared the exam. Thirty-two candidates who received training from the residential coaching academy at Jamia Millia Islamia tasted success. Similarly, 15 candidates from Zakat Foundation's centre also achieved success.

Recently, the Pakistan Air Force crossed Afghanistan's airspace and made indiscriminate bombings. Several people were killed in this attack. The Pakistan government said that the terrorists sitting in Afghanistan carried out several attacks on the military posts of Pakistan. This apart, the Pakistan government claimed that its army has killed more than 100 Afghan infiltrators. In this operation, 34 soldiers of Pakistan army were also killed. Pakistan forcibly pushed more than four lakh citizens of Afghan origin through the Afghanistan border. The Afghan government has opposed this action. The Afghanistan government claims that out of the 40 lakh refugees of Afghan origin that the Pakistan government has decided to expel from the country, 15 lakh were born in Pakistan itself.

Nearly 100 people were killed and more than 500 were injured in a huge blast that took place in Iran's main port of Shahid Rajaei. Iran government's allegation is that the hands of Israel's intelligence agency Mossad were behind this incident. Iran government claims that Mossad has killed several of its leaders, scientists and soldiers so that its nuclear development programme could be stalled.



**National**

## Terrorists kill 26 tourists in Pahalgam



**Chattan** (April 23) states that terrorists who came in military uniform opened indiscriminate fire in the Baisaran Valley of Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination in South Kashmir. At least 26 people were killed and over two dozen others were injured in the attack. Those who were killed include one foreign tourist and a Kashmiri youth. A tourist victim, Pallavi, told correspondents that masked terrorists asked male tourists about their name and religion and forced them to recite *kalima*. Those who could not recite *kalima* were shot dead by the terrorists. Pallavi said, “The terrorists were selectively targeting Hindus. They killed my husband also. When I told them to kill me as well, one of the terrorists said we will not kill you. You go and tell Modi.”

**Urdu Times** (April 23) states that as soon as information on this incident was received, Union Home Minister Amit Shah reached the spot. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) started an investigation into the incident. Leaders of all political parties and the President of the country condemned this terrorist attack and described it as a cowardly attack. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said those who kill innocent people will not be spared. We will chase those terrorists to the ends of the earth and will give them stringent punishment. Opposition leader Rahul

Gandhi visited the spot of the incident and spoke to the injured. He said the government, instead of making tall claims, should take strong steps to stop such incidents. Chairman of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) Asaduddin Owaisi also strongly condemned this incident.

There have been protests across the country against this terrorist attack. People belonging to all communities took part in these marches and condemned the Pahalgam incident. They demanded the government to take strong steps to stop such incidents. The country on whose orders the blood of innocent people was spilled should be taught a lesson. Prime Minister Modi cut short his visit to Saudi Arabia and returned to the country.

**Urdu Times** (April 25) states that Prime Minister Modi, while addressing a public meeting at Madhubani in Bihar, said time has come to finish off the culprits of Pahalgam incident. Terrorists will get punishment bigger than they could imagine. Modi said the terrorists attacked the soul of the nation. This attack has shaken the entire country. On this occasion, in order to send a message to the entire world, the Prime Minister spoke in English as well.

**Inquilab** (April 25) states that the government has admitted during an all-





party meeting that there had been security lapses in the Pahalgam incident. The Opposition has assured the government that whatever action it takes in retaliation for the Pahalgam incident, the entire Opposition will unitedly stand with it. Chief of AIMIM Asaduddin Owaisi appealed to Muslims that when they offer the juma namaz, they wear black band on their arm in protest against the Pahalgam incident.

As per another news, the Indian government has taken several important steps against Pakistan. The government has officially informed the Ambassadors of more than 20 countries about the Pahalgam attack. The Indian government has decided to cancel the Indus water treaty. As per this treaty, Pakistan had been permitted to use the waters of three rivers namely Sindhu, Jhelum and Chenab. The Indian government has declared as persona non-grata the Pakistani Army, Navy and Air Force attaches posted at Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. This apart, an announcement has been made to reduce the number of employees posted at Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. India has also imposed a visa ban on Pakistani citizens as well. Those Pakistani citizens who are staying in India have been directed to return to their country immediately. This apart, India has also decided to shut down the Attari border.

In a retaliatory action, Pakistan has announced the cancellation of Shimla agreement. It is worth mentioning that after

the 1971 war, the Shimla agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in 1972. As per this agreement, both countries have agreed to respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty and resolve all disputes bilaterally. This apart, Pakistan has closed its airspace for Indian planes. After an emergency meeting of Pakistani cabinet, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that if India stops the water meant for Pakistan, it will be considered as an act of war against Pakistan.

**Roznama Sahara** (April 26) states that the security agencies released the photos of five terrorists who killed the innocent tourists in Pahalgam. The Indian government claimed that there were at least three Pakistanis and two local terrorists among those who carried out the attacks.

**Roznama Sahara** (April 27) states that after the Pahalgam attack, a campaign has been unleashed against foreign citizens across the country. In Gujarat, more than 1,000 Bangladeshi infiltrators have been taken into custody and they are being sent back to their country. This apart, nearly one thousand Pakistani citizens have gone back to their country.

**Inquilab** (April 28) states that a special session of Jammu Kashmir Assembly has been summoned and the Pahalgam attack was condemned.

**Inquilab** (April 29) states that the Indian government, in a huge digital action against Pakistan, blocked 16 Pakistani YouTube channels. The government alleged that these YouTube channels were running a propaganda against Bharat. This apart, the Indian government also issued a notice to 'BBC.' The Indian government has described its reporting of the Pahalgam attack as unfair. The government also took objection to the BBC describing the terrorists as 'militants.'

As per another news, the government has decided to shut down 48 tourist centres in Jammu Kashmir on the recommendations of the security agencies.

**Roznama Sahara** (April 30) states that treason charges have been registered



Tawqir Raza Khan has described the terrorist attack that took place in Pahalgam as shameful. He also targeted the security agencies. Raza said if these terrorists had come from Pakistan, then there is no bigger enemy for Muslims than Pakistan. He said the terrorists targeted the tourists after enquiring about their religion. Their aim was to instigate Hindus against Muslims and to create a civil war-like situation in the country.

against more than 50 people across the country. They had campaigned against the country on social media and said that the government is trying to take political benefits out of these terrorist attacks. Maximum action has been taken in Assam against 30 people. They included one MLA and a few journalists as well.

**Inquilab** (April 25) states that the chief of Ittehad-e-Millat Council Maulana

All the Urdu newspapers have condemned the Pahalgam attack in their editorial. These editorials have stressed on taking stringent action for elimination of terrorists. In their editorials, the Urdu newspapers said there is a need to take stringent action against those at whose behest the terrorists had spilled the blood of innocent tourists so that such incidents could be stopped in future.

## Decline in the number of Muslim candidates in Civil Services Exam



**Inquilab** (April 23) reports that the list of candidates who have cleared the Civil Services Examination 2024 conducted by Union Public Services Commission has been released. A total of 1,009 candidates have cleared this exam. Shakti Dubey, a resident of Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, secured the first rank. Whereas Harshita Goyal got the second rank. Similarly, Dongre Archit Parag secured the third rank.

On the other hand, there has been a huge decline in the number of Muslim candidates who have cleared the exam. Last year, 51 Muslim candidates had cleared the Civil Services Exam. This year only 26 Muslim candidates passed the exam. There is not a single Muslim in the first 30 candidates. Nine Muslim women are among those cleared the exam this year. Whereas last year, their number was 19. In this year's exam, 32 candidates from the coaching centre at Jamia Millia Islamia have cleared the exam. Whereas 15 candidates from Zakat Foundation have also cleared the exam.

The following are the names of the successful Muslim candidates in the Civil Services Examination, 2024.

Serial No.	Name	Rank
1	Iram Choudhary	40
2	Farkhanda Qureshi	67
3	Mohammad Muneeb Bhat	131
4	Adiba Anam	142
5	Wasim Ur Rahman	281
6	Md Nayab Anjum	292
7	Mohammad Haris Mir	314
8	Mohammed Shaukath Azeem	345
9	Alifa Khan	417
10	Nadiya Abdul Rasheed	429
11	Najma A Salam	442
12	Shakeel Ahmed	506
13	Shah Mohd Imran	553
14	Mohammad Aftab Alam	560
15	Mohsina Bano	585
16	Sayyed Mohd Arif Moin	594
17	Ghulam Haider	633
18	Hassan Khan	643
19	Ghanchi Gazala Mohammad Hanif	660
20	Muhammed Salah T A	711
21	Sadaf Malik	742
22	Yassar Ahmed Bhatti	768
23	Javed Mev	815
24	Nazir Ahmad Bijran	847
25	Arshad Aziz Quresh	993
26	Iqbal Ahmad	998

Muslim intellectuals have expressed concern over the decreasing number of successful Muslim candidates. Last year, the percentage of Muslims among the successful candidates was five percent, which has come down to three percent this time. Whereas the percentage of Muslims among the total population of the country is 18 percent. Last year, there were two Muslims among the top 10 successful candidates. Whereas this time, the highest rank holder Iram Choudhary is at 40<sup>th</sup> rank. Iram Choudhary got training from the residential coaching academy of Jamia Millia Islamia.

Commenting on the exam results, chairman of Zakat Foundation Dr Syed Zafar Mahmood said that this year the number of successful candidates in the mains exam has been more than last year, but they did not pass through the interview. Mahmood said that only 1,000 people are selected through this exam. If Muslims want empowerment and development, they



will have to focus on other competitive examinations as well apart from the civil services examination conducted by Union Public Services Commission. Recently, thousands of vacancies were notified by the public service commissions in 19 states and in high courts. Muslim candidates need to focus on these examinations as well. Dr Mahmood said that every year 50,000 employees are recruited through the Staff Selection Commission of the Union government, but we do not focus on it.

**Aurangabad Times** (April 23) states that 1,009 candidates have been selected in the Civil Services Exam 2024. Among them 725 are men and 284 are women. Among the successful candidates, 180 have been selected for IAS, 55 for Indian Foreign Service, 147 for Indian Police Service, 605 for Central Services Group A and 142 candidates have been selected for Group B posts.

**Roznama Sahara** (May 2) claimed that the number of successful Muslim candidates in this exams is 31. The names of Nasreen P, Fasim, Riyaz Watson J, Peerzada M Umar, Abusaliya Khan Kulkarni and Aadil Shukur have been included in the new list.

**Urdu Times** (April 22) in its editorial said we congratulate these Muslim candidates who have cleared the exam despite the anti-Muslim campaign unleashed by the ruling party at the Centre. The newspaper expressed hope that these candidates who join the Indian Administrative Service will try to do justice with Muslims.

**Hindustan** (April 24) said that if the number of Muslims in the higher echelons



of power is insignificant, only Muslims could be blamed for it. They do not get time out of picnic and frivolity. The intriguing thing is that the highest number of Muslim candidates are selected from Bihar which is counted among the most backward states as far as education sector is concerned. Whereas the number of Muslim candidates who get selected from a developed state like Maharashtra is very low. What is needed is that Muslim students need to understand the pathetic situation of own community and take special attention in taking part in these examinations.

**Avadhnama** (April 25) states that the Muslim enmity of the party in power at the Centre is well-known. In such a situation, it is necessary that Muslims take serious effort to get appropriate position in the administration of the country. However, it is also worth mentioning that those who take the interview of Muslim candidates is enveloped in Muslim enmity. This is the reason why several Muslim candidates are failed during the interview.

**Urdu Times** (April 24) said that the Prophet had directed the Muslims that they give utmost importance to education. If Muslims get selected in civil services examination, they will succeed in bringing down the injustice and exploitation of Muslims taking place across the country.

**Comment:** A concern is being expressed for past several decades over the decreasing representation of Muslims in the administrative echelons of the country. In 1983, the Indian government had constituted the Gopal Singh committee to study about the representation of minorities in higher government jobs. In this report, it was concluded that the contribution of

Sikhs and Christians in the country's administration is satisfactory, whereas the representation of Muslims is constantly declining. In its report, this committee said that the total number of IAS officers in the country was 3,975. There were 165 Sikhs, 128 Muslims and 109 Christians among them. The total number of IPS officers was 2,159, out of which 117 were Sikhs, 57 were Muslims and 49 were Christians. This means, the representation of Muslims in IAS was 3.22 percent and in IPS it was 2.64 percent. Whereas the population of Muslims in the country was 12 percent. As per this report, from 1981 till 2000, the representation of Muslims in Indian Administrative Service was 3.15 percent, whereas in Indian Police Service, their representation was only two percent. On the basis of this data, the Rajinder Sachar Committee in its report had concluded that in all India services, the representation of Muslims is low compared to their population.

As per the data, the highest number of 52 Muslim candidates cleared the civil services examination in the year 2016. After this, 51 Muslim candidates passed the exam in 2023. Whereas 31 passed in 2009, 21 in 2010, 31 in 2011, 30 in 2012, 34 in 2013, 38 in 2014, 34 in 2015, 50 in 2017, 28 in 2018, 44 in 2019, 31 in 2020, 25 in 2021 and 29 Muslim candidates passed in 2022. The interesting thing is that 10 Muslim institutions are running 51 centres to help Muslim students prepare for the competitive examinations in the country, where the Muslim candidates get free accommodation, food and study material. This apart, retired senior Muslim officials are providing free service in the form of guidance.

## Row over revised NCERT textbooks

**Inquilab** (April 28) reports that the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has removed chapters related to Mughals and Delhi Sultanate from the social science text book of Class VII. The NCERT said this

decision has been taken in accordance with the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), 2003. It is worth mentioning that till last year, students were provided information regarding Slave dynasty, Khilji dynasty,





Tughlak dynasty, Lodhi dynasty and the Mughal empire. Now in the new textbooks, all these historical incidents have been removed. In their places, new chapters related to Magadh, Maurya, Shunga and Satavahana dynasties have been included. The title of this new textbook in Class VII is 'Exploring Society: India and Beyond (Part – 1)'. In the new books, words like Janpad, Samrajy, Adhiraj and Rajadhiraj are used. This apart, a chapter related to Unani has also been included in the textbook. The interesting thing is that in the new textbook there is a mention of the Maha Kumbh Mela organised in Prayagraj in 2025. Director of NCERT Prof Dinesh Prasad Saklani has written in the preface of book that the new textbook will help children understand Bharatiya culture.

**Roznama Sahara** (April 28) states that in the new textbook, there is special mention of Hindu kingdoms, pilgrim centres, Mahakumbh and government programmes. In the new book, a detailed account of the country's holy places and pilgrimages is given in the chapter titled 'Sacred Geography.' This includes an account of 12 Jyotirlingas, Chardham Yatra and Shakti Peeths. In the book, an account of government programmes like 'Make in India,' Beti Bachao Beti Pathao' and 'Atal Surang' have also been included. In a chapter related to Constitution, it is said that earlier people could not unfurl the

national flag at their homes, now every citizen of the country has been given the freedom to unfurl the national flag.

**Etemaad** (April 29) in its editorial alleged that Hindutva is forcibly imposed on the people of this country. Chapters related to Mughal and other Muslim kingdoms are totally removed from the new NCERT textbooks. Earlier also, several changes had been made in history books, from which it is clear that the government is taking steps towards the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra. Earlier, chapters related to Babri Masjid, Gujarat riots and Hindutva politics have been removed from the textbooks. It is clear from the changes made in the NCERT textbooks that the government wants to wipe out Muslim rulers from the history of India so that the coming generations remain totally unaware of the contributions of Muslim rulers. However, this fact cannot be denied that no power can remove the history of the country. How can Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Shahjahan and Jahangir could be forgotten? When our new generation goes to Taj Mahal, won't they ask who made it? How can Humayun's tomb and the history of Lal Qila be hidden? Muslims had ruled this country for 800 years, but during this period no Hindu, Sikh or Christian felt any threat. Now an evil attempt is being made to change the history of the country and a new history is being written.



establish Hindu culture as the sole and great culture.

**Hindustan** (April 30) in its editorial said this is not the first case of tampering with history. Ever since the BJP came to power, RSS is trying to give arbitrary colour to the country's history and textbooks through its puppets. Saffronisation of education is an old dream of Sangh Parivar. The Sangh Parivar and the Hindutva

**Urdu Times** (April 29) in its editorial alleged that the ruling party is hatching a well-planned conspiracy to erase the heritage of Muslims. The contributions of Mughal Sultanate or the Delhi Sultanate to the politics, economy and art world is written in golden letters, but the communal powers disdainfully repelled them from the textbooks. It is a way of thinking which wants to throw away the 'Ganga Jamuni tehzeeb' of the country and give saffron colour to the culture of the country. Ignoring the Mughal dynasty is a historical injustice. It is such a period in history when Bharat has given a turning point to the civilisation of the country through the medium of architecture, poem, music and fine arts. The social and religious harmony of Akbar and the education of Dara Shikoh is an integral part of Indian soul. The purpose of removing the chapters related to them is to deprive the coming generation of the great cultural heritage of the country. The newspaper alleged that the present government is making undue benefit of the power and dividing the country. It is making effort to lighten the Muslim history by presenting it as foreign invasion and

leaders have hatred towards Mughal rulers only because they were Muslims. The Sangh Parivar has been trying for years to convert this secular nation into a Hindu Rashtra. This is not the first incident of changing the textbooks by the NCERT. As soon as the BJP came to power at the Centre in 2014, changes are being brought in textbooks in a well-planned manner and this work is being undertaken in a fast pace. The BJP and Sangh Parivar have been trying for years to defame the Mughal rulers among the people by describing them as foreign invaders. In the past few years, the towns and roads named after Mughal rulers have been changed. This is distortion of history. The Sangh Parivar has an allergy not only towards the Mughal rulers, but also towards Muslims and secular-minded Hindus as well. Even now these secular leaders, journalists and thinkers are opposing this campaign of BJP and Sangh Parivar. The purpose of these efforts is saffronisation of education. These efforts are being made to wipe out the secular identity of the country. The BJP and Sangh Parivar should remember that the history of the country can never be wiped out.

## Supreme Court verdict in favour of Urdu

**Urdu Times** (April 17) states that the Supreme Court has rejected a petition challenging the use of Urdu along with Marathi on a signboard of Patur Municipal

Council office in Akola district in Maharashtra. It is worth mentioning that the Patur Municipal Council had passed a resolution to use Urdu along with Marathi

on the signboard of the municipal council office. A local leader of BJP had opposed this proposal. Syed Burhanuddin told correspondents that Urdu was used on the signboard of the municipal office set up in Patur village in Akola district in Maharashtra in 1956. In 2019, when a new building was constructed for the municipal council, this



board was once again placed on it. A resolution was also passed in this connection. A local leader of BJP, Varshatai Sanjay Bagade, had opposed this. From 2019 till 2025, a legal battle was fought for Urdu in various courts. Finally, the Supreme Court has directed that the signboard shall be installed in Urdu language.

In its judgment, a bench of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice K Vinod Chandran has written that, if I could speak Urdu, I would probably say this about myself,

*“Urdu hai mera naam, main Khusrau ki paheli,*

*Kyun mujhko banate ho tassub ka nishana. Maine to kabhi khud ko musalmaan nahi maana,*

*Dekha tha kabhi maine bhi khushiyan ka zamana.*

*Apne hi watan me hun magar aaj akeli, Urdu hai mera naam, main Khusrau ki paheli.”*

(My name is Urdu and I am Khusrau's riddle,

Why have you made me a target for bigotry?

I have never thought myself a Muslim, I too have seen an era of happiness. But today I am an orphan in my own country,

My name is Urdu, and I am Khusrau's riddle.)

It is worth mentioning that while upholding the use of Urdu on the signboard of Patur municipal council office in Akola

district, the Supreme Court said those who are born in Hindustan will not link Urdu to any particular religion. In the Constitution, both Urdu and Marathi have equal status, hence use of Marathi alone is unacceptable. The court said that the imperial forces tried to link Hindi to Hindus and Urdu to Muslims in order to create a wedge between Hindus and Muslims. The result being that Hindi started being considered the language of Hindus and Urdu the language of Muslims. The roots of Urdu are entrenched in this land. Linking it to any particular religion is condemnable. Petitioner Varshatai Bagade argued in the court that the use of Urdu is not appropriate as per Maharashtra Local Authorities Official Languages Act, 2022 but the court rejected this argument by stating that there are no legal restrictions on using Urdu apart from Marathi. Both Marathi and Urdu have equal status in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

**Aurangabad Times** (April 17) said that a misconception has been created that Urdu is an alien language for Bharat. Urdu grew and flourished due to the need of people belonging to different cultural ideologies in India. It became a language of choice in many cities. Urdu is deeply intertwined in the functioning of Indian law and courts. This can be gauged from the country's criminal and civil law books and the language used in court proceedings.

**Siasat** (April 17) in its editorial said the highest court in the country, the Supreme Court, has made it clear that it is not appropriate to describe Hindi as a



language of Hindus and Urdu as a language of Muslims. Language is a medium for the expression of thoughts and it is linked to the culture of the country. In this way the court has given a strong slap on the face of communal elements. The court rejected a petition filed against an Urdu signboard of Patur Municipal Council in Akola district in Maharashtra. The Bombay High Court had also allowed to keep the signboard written in Urdu. An appeal has been filed in the Supreme Court against this verdict of the court. The court had also clarified that the language is a medium of expression. Language doesn't represent any religion. Language cannot be restricted to any particular region. Language is a part of culture. Bharat is a country that maintains unity in diversity and there is a need to maintain it in every aspect of life. Hindi is incomplete without Urdu. Several Urdu words are used in Hindi language. Urdu is a language that connects one with another. It is a symbol of 'Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb' in the true sense.



**Urdu Times** (April 17) said in its editorial that the greatness of Bharat lies in its colourful civilisation, innumerable languages and shared culture. Urdu is the same language that has given words to the heartbeats of Mir, Ghalib, Firaq, Faiz and countless other poets. Without this the literary and cultural history of the country is incomplete. Actually, this decision of the court also addresses that historical mistake under which Urdu and Hindi were weighed on the scales of different religions. The court has described this division as regrettable and a symbol of slave mentality. Even today Urdu words like halafnama,

peshi and vakalatnama are used in the courts.

**Hindustan** (April 17) said in its editorial that it is cent percent correct for the court to say that Urdu was born in this country and it is purely an Indian language. After Independence, Urdu has been described as a language of Muslims as part of a well-planned conspiracy to encourage linguistic hatred. The communal powers have been making disgusting efforts to impose a ban on the use of Urdu and stop its development. Urdu has been described as a foreign language, but the court through this verdict exposed the linguistic hatred.

**Hindustan Express** (April 17) in its editorial said the Supreme Court of the country has shown the mirror to those who spread hatred against Urdu and describe it as a language of Muslims. The court said that Urdu represents the shared culture of Bharat. It cannot be termed as a language of foreigners or Muslims. Earlier in 2021, the Bombay High Court had also rejected a petition filed by Varshatai. Now after this verdict of the Supreme Court, the mouths of those people who keep spewing venom against Urdu from time to time should be shut. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath should also learn from this judgment of the Supreme Court, because he recently spewed venom against Urdu in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly.



## Supreme Court verdict on Shariah courts

**Inquilab** (April 29) states that the Supreme Court, while delivering its judgment in a talaq case, said the verdicts given in Darul Qaza (Shariah courts) are not legally tenable. Means, the verdicts given by Shariah courts have no legal standing. In fact, a couple got married in 2002. It was their second marriage. In 2005, the husband filed a petition seeking talaq from his wife before the Qazi in Bhopal,

but since both of them reached an agreement, the petition was rejected. Again in 2008, the husband filed a second petition in the Shariah court for talaq. During this period, the wife approached the family court seeking alimony, but the family court rejected this claim because the husband has not abandoned the wife. Following this, the wife approached the Allahabad High Court questioning the verdict of the family court, but the court upheld the judgment of the family court. In this connection, the issue reached the Supreme Court.

The case was heard by a division bench of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah. In its verdict, the court made it clear that the verdicts of



Shariah courts have no legal validity. The court reiterated the system laid down in the case of Vishwa Lochan Madan saying that the court of Qazi, Darul Qaza or Shariah court etc, in whatever name they are known, do not have any legal standing. In the Vishwa Lochan Madan judgment, it has been said that the Shariah courts and fatwas have no legal status. The order issued by Shariah courts are neither enforceable by law, nor binding on parties. The court said its order can only be legally enforced if the affected parties have accepted the decision and implemented it. This cannot be implemented on a third person. In this case, the court directed the husband to give Rs 4,000 every month as alimony to the woman concerned.

## 33 Balochis hanged to death in Iran



**Urdu Times** (May 2) reports that 33 Baloch prisoners have been hanged to death in the past one month in Iran. Human rights organisations alleged that Iran has been taking action against Balochis due to pressure from Pakistan. As per a press release issued by these organisations, the Iranian Balochis who have been hanged to death were neither tried in court, nor were they allowed to present their case in the courts. As per a report of news portal 'Balochwama,' 33 Balochi prisoners were hanged to death in 10 different jails in the country in April. The portal alleged that the Shia government of Iran is treading on the policy of genocide of Balochis at the behest of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei because Balochis are Sunni Muslims. Whereas the Iranian rulers are Shia.

This portal also claimed that there is a possibility of giving death penalty to 85 other Balochi prisoners soon who are lodged in Zahedan Central Jail in Iran. It is worth mentioning that the representation of Balochis among the total population of Iran is just five percent. The Iran government is persecuting Balochis due to religious enmity. Last year, more than 10 percent of those prisoners who were hanged to death

in Iran's jails were Balochis. In its report, Baloch Activist Campaign claimed that the Iran government does not like Sunnis and that is why they are hanging Sunni Baloch citizens on fabricated charges.

The organisation claimed that those Balochi prisoners who were hanged to death were accused of taking part in political activities. The Iran government alleged that the hands of Sunnis were behind the mass protests held against hijab in the country. Twentyfour Balochi prisoners were hanged to death on fake charges of smuggling narcotic substances. The interesting thing is that the family members of those who were hanged to death were not given any information in this connection. It is worth mentioning that Baloch citizens are settled in some regions of Iran as well apart from Pakistan. The governments of both the countries are committing political persecution of Balochis. The Iran government's allegation is that the Balochis have formed a terrorist organisation Jaish-al-Adal, which takes part in terrorist activities at the behest of foreign governments. The Jaish-al-Adal recently carried out attacks on nearly a dozen chowkis in Iran and killed several policemen.

## USA ready to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia

**Roznama Sahara** (April 26) states that the US is getting ready to sell a weapons package worth more than 100 billion dollars to Saudi Arabia. According to British news agency 'Reuters,' an announcement regarding this proposal will be made during the visit of US President Donald Trump to Saudi Arabia in May. The proposed package has come after an unsuccessful attempt by the former US President Joe



Biden's administration to finalise a defence deal with Saudi Arabia. The US had laid this condition that Saudi Arabia shall establish diplomatic relationship with Israel. The Biden administration has proposed to Saudi Arabia that it stop buying Chinese weapons and assure the US that it would reject the proposed Chinese investment plans in the country. In return, the US will give a package of most modern weapons to Saudi Arabia.

It is worth mentioning that US President Trump during his first term had described the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia as in the interest of the US. The US has indicated it can supply Saudi Arabia with military weapons systems, including the C-130 transport aircraft manufactured by American company Lockheed Martin. It is hoped that other US defence equipment manufacturing companies will also

participate in the latest weapons package prepared by the US. In this package, the other companies which are likely to be included are Boeing company, Northrop Grumman and General Atomics etc. It is being said that General Atomics has also expressed interest in supplying drones.

In order to give final touches to this deal, a delegation of senior officials of US defence manufacturing companies is set to visit Saudi Arabia soon. The US has been providing weapons to Saudi Arabia for a long time. In 2017, Trump had proposed to sell weapons worth 110 billion dollars to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is taking special interest in buying F-35 fighter planes of Lockheed company. Their complaint is that the US is giving only few modern weapons to Arab nations compared to Israel. Israel has F-35 fighter planes right from the beginning itself.

## Bloody clashes on Pakistan-Afghanistan border

According to Pakistani newspaper **Jung** (April 28), a series of bloody clashes are taking place on Pakistan-Afghanistan border for the past three days. As per a press release of Pakistan military's public relations department (ISPR), more than 100 Afghani infiltrators were killed during an attempt to infiltrate Pakistani border. It has also been claimed in the press release that

34 personnel of Pakistani Army were also killed in these clashes.

**BBC Urdu** (April 30) states that the Pakistani Air Force carried out 16 air strikes in the past three days after violating the airspace of Afghanistan. It was claimed that nearly 45 terrorists were also killed in these attacks. Pakistan's Army Chief General Asim Munir alleged that the hands





of a neighbouring country were behind this infiltration. He said that the Pakistani air force carried out attacks on the bases of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which is active in Afghanistan. In these attacks, 26 bases of terrorists were destroyed. This apart, the godowns of weapons and ammunition were also destroyed. He said that a proxy war is being waged against Pakistan from Afghanistan. Pakistan will not tolerate this under any circumstance and a strong reply will be given to the infiltration of terrorists on Pakistani border.

**BBC Urdu** (May 1) states that a spokesperson of Afghanistan government Zabiullah Mujahid alleged that the Pakistani army and its air force have been crossing our designated border and targeting innocent Afghan citizens. We are preparing to give a befitting reply to it. He rejected the claim that the territory of Afghanistan is being used to carry out terrorist attacks in Pakistan. He alleged that the Pakistan government is solely responsible for the current situation that prevails in Pakistan today.

**Avadhnama** (April 27) states that the Pakistan army shot dead eight terrorists who infiltrated through Bannu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Whereas four terrorists were injured during this operation. Earlier, the Pakistani Army had killed six terrorists on the intervening night

of April 20 and 21 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the retaliatory action by the terrorists, three Pakistani soldiers were also killed.

As per another news, six soldiers of Pakistan Frontier Force were killed and four others injured in an explosion on a military convoy near Balochistan's capital Quetta. The injured have been admitted to military hospital. Security forces cordoned off the entire area and launched a search operation. Till now, no organisation has taken responsibility for this attack.

**Avadhnama** (April 30) states that nine persons were killed and 21 injured in a blast that took place in a government office at Wana locality in South Waziristan. The DSP of the area Imran Ullah said the hands of TTP were behind this attack. He admitted that this area has been a centre of terrorist activities for a long time. This year, 74 terrorist attacks took place in this area so far in which 132 people were killed. Those who were killed include 40 soldiers, 35 terrorists and the rest ordinary citizens.

**Aurangabad Times** (April 28) states that in a statement, the ISPR has claimed that the Pakistan Army has shot dead 54 Afghan infiltrators in Hassan Khel locality in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the night of April 25, 26 and 27. Huge cache of weapons and ammunition were seized from their possession. It has been claimed in the



press statement that these infiltrators had arrived in order to carry out attacks on the military bases of Pakistan at the behest of its foreign handlers.

As per another news published in this newspaper, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed that it carried out an attack on Pakistani military cantonment in Margret locality in Quetta and killed 10

Pakistani soldiers. This attack was carried out through an explosion using remote control.

**BBC Urdu** (April 30) states that at least 10 people were killed in an explosion that took place in an oil tanker in Nushki district in Balochistan. Whereas 55 were injured. The number of dead is likely to increase further.

## Four lakh Afghan citizens expelled from Pakistan

**Hindustan Express** (April 28) states that the Pakistan government has started the process of expelling citizens of Afghan origin staying in the country. So far the Pakistan government has expelled four lakh Afghan citizens from the country and pushed them through the Afghanistan border. The Afghan government had urged the Pakistan government to stop the campaign to expel the Pakistani citizens of Afghan origin for the time being, but the Pakistan government rejected this appeal. According to Afghan government, currently 40 lakh citizens of Afghan origin are staying in Pakistan. Out of them, 15 lakh were born in Pakistan itself, hence they are Pakistan citizens. Pakistan's interior minister Mohsin Naqvi has rejected this argument of Afghan government. He said that Afghan citizens were found involved in terrorist activities and smuggling in Pakistan, hence they are being expelled from the country.

**Hindustan Express** (April 28) states that the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party has organised protest marches in more than 50 places in the country against the forceful expulsion of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. In this connection, the biggest rally was organised in Islamabad. This was led by the general secretary of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party Abdul



Rahim Ziaratwal and Hamid Khan Achakzai. The protesters demanded that those Afghan-origin citizens who are born in Pakistan should be provided Pakistan citizenship.

**Qaumi Tanzeem** (April 21) states that the foreign minister of Taliban government Amir Khan Mutaqi met Pakistan's foreign affairs minister Mohammed Ishaq Dar in Kabul. During this meeting, the Afghanistan's foreign minister expressed concern that in spite of an appeal by the Afghan government, Pakistan is forcibly expelling citizens of Afghan origin from the country. Ishaq Dar said the Pakistan government has decided that more than eight lakh citizens of Afghan origin should be expelled from the country in the month of May. Spokesperson of Afghan foreign ministry Hafiz Zia Ahmed has condemned this decision of Pakistan government.

## Muhammad Yunus acquitted of corruption charges



**Inquilab** (April 25) states that the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has rejected all corruption allegations against the chief advisor of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus. It is to be noted that the anti-corruption commission of Bangladesh has registered a case against Yunus. He was accused of misappropriating Rs 25.22 crore from the profit sharing fund of rural telecom workers and illegally transferring money by violating the anti-money laundering Act. It is being said that this case against Muhammad Yunus was registered at the office of the deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

A chargesheet was filed against Yunus and others in a special court in

Dhaka on June 12, 2023. The lawyer for Muhammad Yunus and six others, Abdullah Al-Mamun told correspondents that the Supreme Court, while taking cognizance of the chargesheet, described all charges against Yunus as baseless. Now Muhammad Yunus has been legally freed from all corruption charges.

It is worth mentioning that on August 7, 2024, a day before Muhammad Yunus took oath as the chief advisor, the Labour Appellate Tribunal had hastily overturned the decision of the labour court. In January 2024, the labour court in Dhaka has awarded six months in jail to Yunus and three officials of rural telecom on charges of violating the labour law.

## Hundreds killed in explosion in Iranian port



**Siasat** (April 29) states that there is a possibility of nearly 100 people being killed and over 500 injured in a massive explosion that took place in Iran's major port of Shahid Rajaee. Iran's supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ordered a high-level inquiry into this incident. Iran's three different agencies will conduct separate investigations into the incident.

In another news published in this newspaper, Iranian MP Mohammad Siraj claimed that there is evidence of the hands of Israel's intelligence agency Mossad behind the explosion that took place at Shahid Rajaee Port in Iran's major city Bandar Abbas. He said that it was not an accident, instead a sabotage action of Israeli intelligence agency. He said explosions took place in four places simultaneously. The newspaper claimed that more than 1,000 people were injured in these explosions. The explosions took place in the containers stationed at the port. It is Iran's most important commercial port. The oil and petroleum produced in Iran is exported world over from here.

**Qaumi Tanzeem** (April 28) states that Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian directed Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni to visit the spot immediately. This

apart, he also sent Iran's all intelligence agencies to the spot. A spokesman of Iran government said that containers filled with inflammable substances are kept in different places of this port. Simultaneous explosions took place in these containers. Iran government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani told Persian News agency that the fire could not be controlled fully as yet. Until the fire completely subsides, nothing clear could be said about this incident. He said that Iranian military aircraft are trying to control the fire. A spokesperson of Iran government said that Mossad had tried to destroy this port through a cyber-attack in 2020 as well. That time the Iranian scientists foiled the Israeli attempt. According to Washington Post, the possibility of Mossad's hands behind the blasts cannot be ruled out.

As per another news published in the same newspaper, after the blasts that took place at Shahid Rajaee Port, an emergency has been declared in the entire country. Governor of Bandar Abbas, Ahmad Pouyafar said all the offices, schools and colleges of this state have been closed. Spokesperson of National Disaster Management Organisation Hussain Jaffari said that due to the blasts, massive pollution has spread in the country. In order



to control the same, efforts are being made at international level. According to Iran's official news agency 'IRNA,' several Chinese scientists are missing in the blasts.

**Avadhnama** (May 1) states that Iran has hanged to death a spy who was in contact with Israel's intelligence agency. As per a report of Al Jazeera, Mohsen Langarneshin was hanged to death in an unidentified jail. According to Iranian news agency 'Mizan,' Mohsin Langarneshin has been providing information related to logistics, technology and operations to Mossad for the past two



years. He was also accused of involvement in a conspiracy for the murder of a top official of IRGC, Colonel Syed Khodaei. It is being said that Mossad assassinated Khodaei in Tehran in 2022.

## Ban on Ikhwanul Muslimeen in Jordan



**Urdu Times** (April 25) states that a ban has been imposed on Jordan's main Opposition party (Muslim Brotherhood) and the organisations associated with it. A ban has been imposed on the withdrawal of its money deposited in different banks as well. Jordan's Interior Minister Mazin Al-Farrayeh claimed that Ikhwanul Muslimeen is conspiring to commit genocide by spreading terrorism in Jordan. In this connection, 16 people have been arrested. During their interrogation, the government got credible evidence regarding this conspiracy. Following this, the government has decided to confiscate all movable and immovable properties of this organisation and also shut down all its offices. The home minister said this extremist organisation has been conspiring to

overthrow the current government by inciting the youths. The aim of Ikhwanul Muslimeen is restoration of Islamic Caliphate and implement Shariah across the world. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and several Islamic countries have imposed a ban on this organisation, but till now Jordan has not imposed any ban. In the parliamentary elections held in Jordan recently, the political arm of Ikhwanul Muslimeen namely Islamic Action Front registered victory in 31 seats out of the total 138 seats in Parliament.

**Chattan** (April 25) states that the son of a senior leader of Ikhwanul Muslimeen conspired to capture power in Jordan through violence. His aim was to create instability in the country. Commenting about the success of Ikhwanul Muslimeen in the elections held in Jordan, Ikhwan leader Murad Adaileh claimed that the people of Jordan support them because they have been supporting Hamas which has been fighting for the freedom of Palestine.

### What is Ikhwanul Muslimeen?

Ikhwanul Muslimeen is the biggest extremist Islamic organisation in the



Muslim world. Its branches are spread in all Arab nations. Ikhwanul Muslim was established by Hasan ul-Banna in Egypt in 1928. The aim of this organisation is to organize the Muslim community on the basis of Shariah and Quran and bring a radical Islamic government to power. This organisation had opposed the British influence in Egypt and ran an armed struggle against the then King of Egypt, Farouk. Farouk was accused of acting as a British puppet, finishing off Islam and taking the country towards Christianity and Western culture. Due to the violent agitation of this organisation, Farouk had to flee from Egypt in 1952. Following this, a clash took place between Ikhwanul and the Army over occupying power. Ikhwanul Muslimeen opposed socialism, secularism and pan-Arab agitation.

In 1954, Ikhwan tried to assassinate Egypt President Jamal Abdel Nasser. Following this, Nasser had unleashed a nationwide campaign to crush this jihadi organisation. As part of this campaign, thousands of people associated with the organisation were arrested. Its leader Syed Qutb and his many colleagues were sent behind bars. Syed Qutb is considered as the founder of Islamic terrorist organisation Al Qaida and Hamas. In 1966, Syed Qutb was hanged to death. Following this, an agreement was reached between the then President of Egypt Anwar Sadat and the leaders of Ikhwanul Muslimeen. The leaders of Ikhwan announced that they will not take part in violent activities in future.

In 1981, a subsidiary organisation of Ikhwan, Al-Jihad assassinated Sadat. Following this, the organisation started openly taking part in politics. In the general elections held in Egypt in 1984, Ikhwan supported its own subsidiary organisation 'Wafad party'. The Wafad party registered victory in 65 seats out of the 450 seats of Egypt Parliament. This apart, dozens of people belonging to this organisation won the elections as Independent candidates. Following this, the influence of Ikhwan in Egypt politics grew and it deposed the then President of Egypt Hosni Mubarak from



power in 2011. In the general elections held in Egypt in 2012, Ikhwan entered into an agreement with 'Freedom and Justice Party' and registered victory in 84 percent seats of the Parliament. Along with this, Ikhwan candidate Mohamed Morsi was elected the President. Later differences occurred between the military and the Ikhwan. Following mass protests by this organisation, Mohamed Morsi had to abdicate power.

It is said that Morsi developed differences with Army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and el-Sisi dissolved the Constitution and seized power. Ikhwan opposed this and launched massive nationwide agitations. The army shot dead more than 1,200 protesters. El-Sisi imposed a ban on Ikhwan and arrested thousands of supporters of this organisation including Morsi. A case for treason was charged on Morsi and he passed away mysteriously in the jail itself in 2019. Following this, Ikhwan adopted the path of violence. It is being said that Qatar and Turkiye have secretly supported Ikhwan and had also given refuge to hundreds of activities belonging to the organisation in their own country. This organisation has also been accused of killing hundreds of tourists in 1997.

In 2019, after the visit of Egypt President el-Sisi to the United States, the US had declared this organisation as a terrorist organisation. The leaders of Ikhwan allege that el-Sisi is running a campaign to crush their organisation due to pressure from the US and hundreds of its activists have been hanged to death. Last year, Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Egypt. After this visit by him, there has been a new turn in the policy of Turkiye. The Turkish government cancelled the citizenship of more than 200 leaders of Ikhwan staying in the country.

## New formula for ceasefire in Gaza

**Inquilab** (April 23) states that Qatar and Egypt have prepared a new formula to revive the ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas. According to BBC, the top officials of the two countries said that as part of this new plan, a provision has been made to keep a seven-year term for ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. This apart, all Palestinian prisoners lodged in Israeli jails will be released. In return, Hamas will also release Israeli



prisoners. The two countries are trying to stop the Israeli attack on Gaza that has started again after the two countries abandoned the ceasefire. Israel has refused to comment on the new plan. The ceasefire plan is being used to try restart talks between the two countries from next month. In this regard, the mediators are establishing contact with Muhammad Darwish, head of Hamas' political council.

**Inquilab** (April 25) states that Israel has again started an attack on the homes of Palestinian citizens in Gaza. As per a report of Al Jazeera, 50 Palestinians were killed in this attack. They include both women and children. There was a journalist also among the dead. According to Hamas, more than 51,000 Palestinians have been killed and 1.25 lakh have been injured in the war in Gaza till now. Sources in the United Nations confirmed that due to pressure

from Israel, relief material could not be handed over to those residing in Gaza for the past one month, because Israel is targeting the vehicles carrying the relief material.

As per another news, Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas urged Hamas that it immediately release all Israeli hostages, because it is giving a pretext for Israel to carry out an attack on Gaza. He said that our people are paying the price for Hamas's stubbornness. Commenting on the appeal of Mahmoud Abbas, senior leader of Hamas Basem Naeem said that Mahmoud Abbas is playing at the hands of Israel. As per another news, Mahmoud Abbas demanded Hamas that they surrender their weapons and hand over the administration of Gaza to Palestinian Authority, because the genocide in Gaza cannot be tolerated indefinitely.

## Campaign against Houthi rebels

**Inquilab** (April 23) states that Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Israel is stepping up its attack on Houthi rebels in Yemen. He said that Houthis continue to attack Israel. Now this cannot be tolerated. The Houthi rebels were regularly attacking the ships of Israel and the US, hence we had to carry out retaliatory action against them.

**Urdu Times** (April 30) states that 68 people were killed in US attack in Yemen. Footage of the attack released by Yemen's Al-Masirah television channel showed a prison in Sana'a being bombed. African immigrants were kept in detention in this jail. US President Donald Trump has given this clear direction that the military bases of Houthis should be destroyed at any cost.

Till now, the US military carried out attacks at more than 800 bases of Houthis. Hundreds of Houthi rebels were killed in these attacks. These also include senior commanders of missile and drone attacks. Several command centres, air defence system, weapons and ammunition stores were destroyed in these attacks. US sources confirmed that despite their warnings, Iran has



been extending military aid to Houthis. The US sources confirmed that the US planes bombed Ras Isa oil port. More than 100 people were killed in this bombing and nearly 500 people were injured.

**Qaumi Tanzeem** (April 29) states that African citizens who have illegally entered Yemen are kept in detention centres. The US carried out an attack on the detention centres in which 70 people were killed. The Houthi media released the videos showing the bodies of those who were killed. It is being said that more than 150 African citizens are kept in the detention centres.

**Qaumi Tanzeem** (April 19) reports that the US State Department has claimed that Chinese company Chang Guang Satellite Technology is providing images to Houthis in the Red Sea to target the ships of the US, Israel and their allied countries. British newspaper 'Financial Times' claimed that this company belongs to the Chinese military. However, this company claims that it is a business organisation, but its relationship with Chinese military is well-known. In this connection, the US has lodged its protest with the Chinese government several times. The Houthis have started attacking the vessels of the US and its allied countries in Red Sea using missiles from 2023. They had claimed that Israel is playing Holi with the blood of Palestinians in Gaza, hence in order to stop

this genocide it is targeting the vessels of Israel and its supporting nations. Its attack will continue until Israel stops the genocide in Gaza.

A US defence expert said that more than 100 satellites of Chinese satellite company Chang Guang are at the atmosphere and their number is likely to go up to 300 by the end of this year so that the photos of any location on earth could be obtained through satellite. In the recent years, the US had imposed sanctions on dozens of Chinese business organisations because they were working for Chinese military under the pretext of business. This defence expert has claimed that the satellite company's connections are with a senior military general of China Zhang Yuxi, who is considered as the second-most senior leader in the Chinese Army after the Chinese President.

**Siasat** (April 30) states that the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has imposed sanctions on three shipping companies. The companies on which sanctions have been imposed include Tulip BZ, the Maisan, and the White Whale. The US government alleged that these companies extended financial aid to Houthis. It is worth mentioning that the US has declared the Houthis as foreign terrorist organisations. As part of the sanctions, all the financial resources of these companies and their ships have been seized.



## Haj begins in Saudi Arabia



**Inquilab** (April 30) states that Haj has started in Saudi Arabia. The first group of 5,000 Hajis from Bharat has reached Medina. The Mecca City Committee has issued permit for 3,000 residential buildings. There are 4.5 lakh rooms in these buildings. A total of 18,71,336 Hajis can stay in them. The Saudi government has ordered that no one other than those having Haj permit will be allowed to enter Saudi Arabia. A direction has been given to all hotels not to provide accommodation facility to anyone who does not have a valid Haj permit. According to official sources, 58,000 people have been taken into custody during a nationwide drive by intelligence agencies. Those who have been arrested did not possess the permit for Haj pilgrimage. All these people are expelled from Saudi Arabia and are being sent to native countries. This apart, 16,000 beggars have also been arrested. Among them the highest number of 4,000 beggars are Pakistanis.

**Hindustan Express** (April 27) states that more than 25 lakh foreigners are likely

to do Haj this year. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia has started the operation of special flights from April 29 in order to bring the Hajis. This operation will continue till July 11. This year, in order to protect Haj pilgrims from the extreme heat, an arrangement for

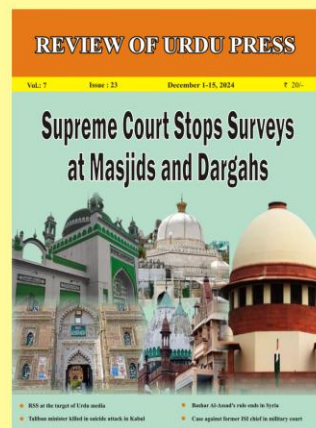
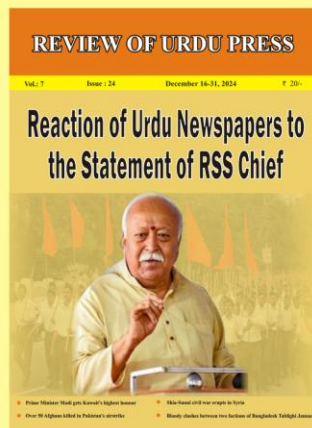
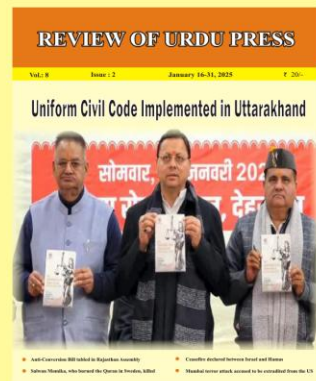
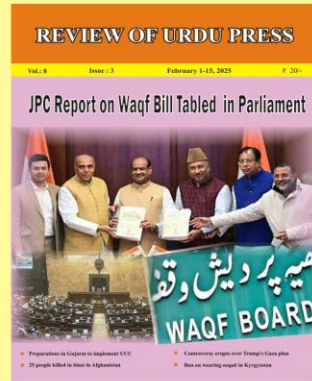
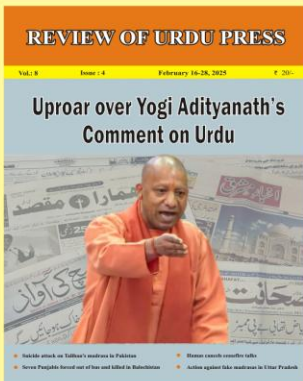
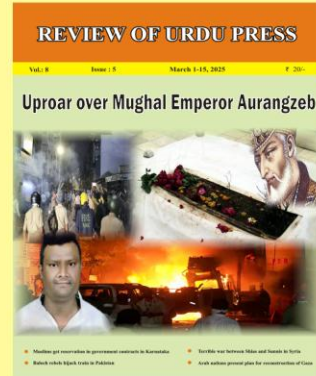
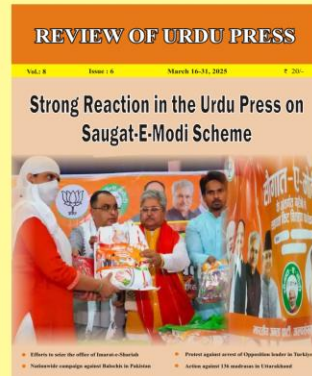
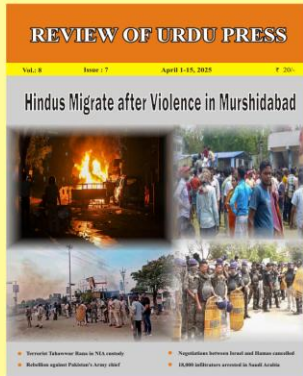
special 'ihram' has been made. It is worth mentioning that more than 1,500 Hajis died due to extreme heat last year. The Saudi government had claimed that majority of those Hajis who died were un-registered. These people entered Saudi Arabia without permit to do Haj. This year, the quota for Bharat has been fixed at 1.75 lakh. Later Saudi Arabia made a reduction of 80 percent in the quota of private tour operators. Due to this, more than 52,000 Indian Hajis have been deprived of doing the Haj.

**Etemaad** (April 27) states that Saudi Arabia has started a campaign against fake Haj committees. According to government sources, they collect huge amount of money from people who want to go on Haj pilgrimage by giving them false assurance of performing Haj.

**Etemaad (April 26)** states that the Saudi government has directed the tour operators that from April 29 to July 11 they should not do any booking for accommodation facilities in Mecca for those who do not have Haj permit.



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