RNI Regn. No. MPENG/2004/13703, Regd. No. L-2/BPLON/41/2006-2008 Late City Vol.22 Issue 32 | \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

**Established 1865** the ploneer MONEY 10 BUDGET IS BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BHOPAL, MONDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹2 ILISHED FROM: DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA www.dailypioneer.com

# Modi's guarantee for Delhi: PM

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

rime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) highlighting how the party is falling apart ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in Delhi. "We are seeing that even before the voting, 'jhaadu ke tinke bikhar rahe hain' (the straws of the broom are falling apart). Leaders of 'AAP-da' are leaving it, they (people) hate this party," Modi said, referring to several AAP leaders quitting the party. Taking on the AAP's claims, the prime minister told people that no jhuggi will be demolished in Delhi and no welfare scheme shut in case of the BJP coming to power. Asserting that the Union

Budget has filled every family with happiness, Prime Narendra Modi said on Sunday that this is 'he most middle class India's history and only the BJP respects the middle class of the country. He further claimed the Union Budget presented on Saturday (February 1, 2025) was to ensure that "Modi's

guarantees" were fulfilled. Addressing a "Sankalp" rally at RK Puram ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in Delhi, the prime minister spoke about various beneficial provisions of the Budget for the middle class to claim that never since India's Independence those earning up to Rs 12 Lakh have received such a relief. The middle class is saying that this is the most friendly Budget for them in India's history, he added. Before beginning his speech,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a public meeting ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, at RK Puram in New Delhi Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer Modi spotted a portrait of while his government has

himself among the crowd. He eased the tax burden and asked the Special Protection provided greater relief to the Group personnel, deployed for "Let me present a picture before you. It will help you his security to bring the portrait to him. He also asked understand better and make the artist to write their address on the portrait and said he would write a letter to the If we look at this Budget-back artist. The PM also took a swipe at earned Rs 12 Lakh, the government would take away

the Congress, invoking prime former ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi to claim that their governments imposed heavy taxes on people's earnings,

taxes. That was the scenario back then, which is why I am explaining this today." He added that while a Rs 12 Lakh income meant paying Rs 2.6 Lakh in tax under Congress rule, the latest budget presented by his government ensures zero tax on the same earnings

"Even 10-12 years ago, under a Congress government, if you earned Rs 12 Lakh, you had to pay Rs 2,60,000 in taxes. Now, after yesterday's BJP government budget, a person earning Rs 12 Lakh in a year will not have to pay even a single rupee in tax," PM Modi said. The PM said many residents of RK Puram have government jobs. "You have got not just tax relief but 8th Pay Commission is also being introduced, pension schemes were consolidated, and budget benefits extended to senior citizens and the retired government officials too," he said, adding that young couples, too, will save a lot on taxes

PM Modi then underlined the Budget offerings to Bihar to reach out to the Purvanchali community in Delhi, which plays a key role in the election. Purvanchal spans eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar and many migrants from the region have settled in the national Capital. "The Purvanchali community made me an MP and the PM. The Purvanchali community made me who l am and they have been taken care of in the Budget. They were neglected in Congress' time. People from Bihar were not respected. But we have respected them," the PM said, pointing to the Budget announcements for Bihar.

BISWAJEET BANERJEE Mahakumbh is preparing for another massive Amrit Snan on Basant

Panchami day on Monday, following the tragic stampede that marred the Amrit Snan on Mauni Amavasya. Authorities estimate that over four crore pilgrims will take the holy dip, with roads leading to Sangam already swelling with crowds by Saturday evening.

With an extended weekend and a public holiday, officials anticipate a fresh surge of visitors starting Sunday. In response, security has been intensified, crowd management measures reinforced, and medical services strengthened to prevent any untoward incidents and ensure a smooth pilgrimage experience. The Maha Kumbh, which commenced on January 13, will continue until February 26. The remaining significant snan dates include Basant Panchami on February 3, Maghi Purnima on February 12, and Maha Shivaratri on February 26. The city has been witnessing a continuous influx of pilgrims since January 26, with the Mauni Amavasya Snan setting new records as nearly eight crore devotees took a dip in the Ganga. While the footfall slightly declined in the following days, officials now expect another massive turnout for the upcoming snan.

Many pilgrims began their bathing rituals on Sunday itself, as the Panchami tithi starts that day. Local vendors near the ghats have observed a sharp rise in footfall. Shyam Sundar Mishra, a vendor, remarked that the last few days were relatively quiet, but now the crowd is swelling again and they are prepared for a busy weekend. In light of the tragic incidents during the Mauni Amavasya Snan, the government has significantly ramped up security and crowd management efforts. Senior officials, including Prayagraj Divisional former Commissioner Ashish Goyal and former PDA Vice-Chairman and DM Bhanu Chandra Goswami, have been deployed alongside five special secretaries. On Saturday, five



Devotees are seen near 'Nandi Dwar' as they proceed towards Sangam during the ongoing 'Maha Kumbh festival, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

### Maha Kumbh stampede: Police launches probe BISWAJEET BANERJEE PRAYAGRAJ

**Kumbh readies for Amrit Snan today** 

The Uttar Pradesh Police has launched an investigation into the stampede that claimed 30 lives during Mauni Amavasya at the Maha Kumbh, following suspicions of a possible conspiracy behind the incident. In addition to central intelligence agencies, the state's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and Special Task Force (STF) are actively searching for a group of youths believed to have triggered the chaos. The state government has also constituted a threemember judicial commission to probe the matter.

Several eyewitnesses and survivors reported that a group of young men was deliberately pushing the crowd, causing panic among pilgrims. As people tried to escape, they began pushing those ahead of them, leading to many falling and getting trampled underfoot. The stampede resulted in 30 fatalities and left 37 others injured. A similar stampede was also reported in the Jhunsi area, raising concerns about deliberate attempts to create unrest.

additional PCS-level officers were assigned to enhance supervision and coordination. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Manoj Kumar Singh assured that past crowd movements have been analysed and improvements made to ensure better flow and safety so that no devotee faces difficulties.

To prevent overcrowding, authorities have identified 28 high-risk zones at Sangam, where police, RAF, and paramilitary personnel will be stationed. A senior official overseeing crowd management explained that these 28 locations were the most congested during Mauni Amavasya and Makar Sankranti, and teams will be stationed here to prevent stampedes and maintain order.

Special measures have also been introduced at the ghats. Devotees will be guided to leave the bathing areas immediately after their dip to prevent congestion. Security forces will ensure pilgrims follow designated entry and exit routes. Amit Tiwari, a devotee from Kanpur, shared his experience from Mauni Amavasya, saying that last time it was difficult to move because of the crowd, and he is glad to hear that authorities are making arrangements for better management.

# Congress fly EAGLE over ECI Retired judge files PIL Badrinath temple to open on May 4

### DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

A fter leveling charges of alleged `manipulations' in elections, Congress has formed a committee to monitor the conduct of free and fair elections by the Election Commission of India. The committee named as Empowered Action Group of Leaders and Experts (EAGLE) will first take up lleged manipulation of vote list in Maharashtra followed by Haryana and submit a detailed report to the party high command. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge constituted EAGLE with immediate effect to monitor the conduct of free and fair elections by the poll watchdog. The panel includes Congress treasurer Ajay Maken and senior leaders Digvijaya Singh, Abhishek Singhvi, Praveen Chakravarty and Pawan Khera. Besides, Gurdeep Singh Sappal, Nitin Raut and Challa Vamshi Chand Reddy are also part of the panel. Besides Maharashtra, 'EAGLE' will also analyse past elections in other States, and proactively monitor upcoming elections and all other issues related to the conduct of free and fair elections in the country. Congress led INDIA bloc members had anticipated a massive win in both the States but only to be routed completely. Members of Opposition parties under the INDIA bloc has claim that about 63 election petitions have been filed across various benches of the Bombay High Court



middle class. PM Modi said,

it easier to explain to others.

in Nehru Ji's time, if you

one-fourth of your salary as

tax. If this were Indira Ji's era,

you would be shocked to hear

that out of Rs 12 Lakh, nearly

Rs 10 Lakh would go into

# against poll freebies

### STAFF REPORTER MINEW DELHI

Retired Justice SN Dhingra has moved the Delhi High Court against the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Indian National Congress (INC) over their political promises to distribute cash to the voters in the upcoming Assembly polls, alleging that it falls within the meaning of "corrupt practices." The PIL refers to AAP Mukhy Samman Yojana", BJP's "Mahila Samridhi Yojna" and Congress' Pyari Didi Yojna" wherein the parties have promised cash benefits to the voters if they are elected to power. A direction is also sought on BJP, AAP and Congress to desist from collecting personal and electoral data of voters and not to share or use the same to any third party. The petitioner argues that such schemes violate provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, particularly Section 123(1), which pertains to corrupt practices, and Section 127A, which pertains to corrupt practices, and Section 127A, which deals with election materials. unauthorized Additionally, these actions allegedly breach Sections 170 and 171 of the DRI HI DECID Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which relate to bribery and undue influence in elections. Furthermore, these actions disregard advisory guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI)," the petitioner argues. The petition has been filed by Justice Dhingra who is also the President of organisation Samay Yaan (Sashakt Samaj).

### PNS NEW TEHRI

The sacred portals of the Badrinath temple in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district will open for devotees at 6 am on May 4. On the occasion of Basant Panchami,

the auspicious time for opening the temple was decided after special prayers were offered at the former Tehri royal court in Narendra Nagar.

Panchang and Chowki After Ganesh



Tehri Manvendra Shah, his wife, daughter Shreejaand, Tehri Lok Sabha member Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, Badrinath's chief priest Rawal Namboodri. Amarnath Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee's chief executive officer Vijay Thapliyal and several religious

officials were present. Every year after Diwali, the doors of the Char Dhams – Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri - are closed for the The portals reopen in April-May the following year. During the six-month-long pilgrimage Lakhs of devotees from across the country and abroad visit the Char Dhams.

Congress General Secretary and Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi at a Delhi assembly campaign in national Capital on Sunday. Delhi goes to polls on Wednesday Pioneer photo

against discrepancies in the recently held Assembly election. About 25 Congress leaders have filed petitions, before the Nagpur and Aurangabad benches of the High Court. Five Congress leaders from Marathwada have also filed poll petitions.

Some other petitions have been filed by NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) candidates through advocate Aseem Sarode at the Principal Bench. The petitioners have alleged misconduct in the polls, including duplicate voting, concealed criminal cases, asset concealment, EVM malfunctions, bribery, and lack of election

transparency. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had last month alleged that there is a "serious problem" with the

country's election system and that the Nirvachan Sadan must ensure transparency in polls which the first faith of the people of India. Rahul rued the fact as why the Election Commission has refused to provide Congress and other opposition voter lists of Maharashtra and Haryana elections despite of several reminders and

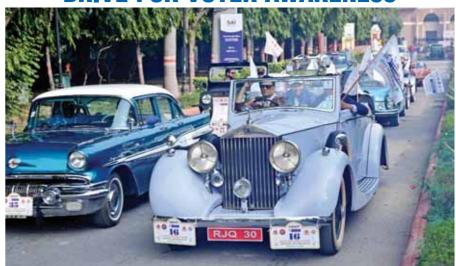
memorandum. In his address to party workers at the inauguration of the new party headquarters last month, Rahul had alleged there has been an increase of nearly one crore voters between Maharashtra Lok Sabha and assembly elections but the Election Commission is neither answering the queries raised by the opposition nor giving the lists of voters.

The petitioner is seeking directions to cease and desist from collecting personal and electoral data of voters under false pretences and direct not to share & use the data collected during election to any third party.

royal priest Acharya Krishna Prasad Uniyal decided the date for opening the doors of the Badrinath temple.

On this occasion, besides former Maharaja of

### FR



Vintage cars taking part in voter awareness drive organised by the Delhi Election Office at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday Pioneer photo

### India's youngsters dominate U-19 Women's T20 world cup

### PTI KUALA LUMPUR

A<sup>n</sup> utterly dominant India flaunted their embarrassment of riches to win a second successive U-19 Women's T20 World Cup title with a nine-wicket shellacking of South Africa here on Sunday, the triumph giving a peek into the game's most perfectly calibrated youth structure.

Having outclassed every team during their march to the final, India asserted themselves yet again, getting the job done with as many as 52 balls to spare while also becoming the first team to win the tournament without dropping a single game.

The biggest star of the day was allrounder Gongadi Trisha, who complemented her excellent 3/15 with an unbeaten 33-ball 44 while batting.

South Africa, led by Kayla Reyneke, opted to bowl first, but their moment is one I'll cherish forever,"

decision backfired quickly as India's three-pronged spin attack bowled them out for 82.

Left-arm spinner Aavushi Shukla was the star of the show with figures of 4-2-9-2, while leg-spinner Trisha, who has also been a revelation with the bat, further underlined her allround capabilities with her triple strikes with the ball.

Trisha once again anchored India's chase with an unbeaten knock that was studded with eight fours.

Vice-captain Sanika Chalke (26 not out; 22 balls, 4x4) sealed the victory with a powerful heave to the squareleg boundary, forcing the young Indian players, draped in the Tricolour, to break into wild celebrations.

'I've dreamt of this moment for the past two years, and I can't believe I hit the winning runs — it's truly surreal. My teammates' support made all the difference, and this



said Sanika after the match. Left-arm spinner Parunika (4-0-6-2) provided India with an breakthrough, immediate dismissing opener Simone Lourens for a duck as South Africa struggled from the outset.

Right-arm seamer Shabnam Shakil (2-0-7-1) then removed the dangerous Jemma Botha, reducing South Africa to 20/2 by the end of the fourth over.

The pressure intensified when Aayushi bowled Diara Ramlakan, further denting South Africa's innings. At the halfway mark, South Africa were struggling at 33/3, unable to gain any momentum. Captain Kayla Reyneke (7) tried to stabilise the innings but fell to Trisha, who later stumped Mieke van Voorst (23) to break a promising 30-run partnership for the seventh wicket.

Their skipper attempted to break free but perished while trying to go big, holing out to Trisha at long-off. Despite Fay Cowling (15; 20 balls) and Mieke van Voorst putting up a small resistance, South Africa's struggles continued.

The duo tried to rebuild but with just four overs remaining, South Africa were precariously placed at 58/5.

Trisha's breakthrough then triggered a collapse and they were eventually bowled out in the final delivery of their innings. India got off to a strong start in their

chase, scoring briskly with a steady flow of singles and boundaries.

Trisha was once again the aggressor with her exquisite strokes, while Kamalini G also chipped in.

The opening partnership was moving smoothly until Kamalini was dismissed for 8, caught by Simone Lourens off Kayla Reynekes bowling, leaving India at 36/1 in 4.3 overs. Sanika faced a few dot balls before settling in as South Africa's wayward bowling and fielding also helped India's cause.

Trisha , on the other hand, continued to exude confidence, accumulating runs with a mix of singles and boundaries.

Indian opener Trisha, who struck the only century of this edition of the tournament - 110 against Scotland - finished as the topscorer with 309 runs from seven innings at a fantastic average of 77.25 and a strike rate of over 147. She also returned with seven wickets at an economy rate of 6.42 across the seven outings.

Vaishnavi emerged as the tournament's top wicket-taker, claiming 17 scalps at an outstanding economy rate of 4.35 from six matches, while Aayushi Shukla supported her brilliantly with 14 wickets from seven matches.

halfway mark of their innings. The defending champions enjoyed a flawless campaign, winning all their group-stage matches against the West Indies, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka.

Their winning momentum continued in the Super Six stage with victories over Bangladesh and Scotland.

In the semi-final, India delivered a commanding performance against England to extend their unbeaten run to six matches.

"Immensely proud of our Nari Shakti! Congratulations to the Indian team for emerging victorious in the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025. This victory is the result of our excellent teamwork as well as determination and grit. It will inspire several upcoming athletes. My best wishes to the team for their future endeavours," PM Modi said in his tweet.

In the final, India were 71/1 at the

### **MP will benefit from National Skill Excellence Centres: CM**

#### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

hief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that Minister Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, skill development and employment have been kept at the core in the Union Budget 2025. Madhya Pradesh is ready to take advantage of this opportunity and develop the state as a 'Skill Power State'. CM Dr. Yadav said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are creating an environment where every youth will get training according to the latest indus-trial needs. With this, the talent of the state will make its mark not only at the national but also at the global level. Yadav said that Madhya

Union Budget-2025. Through these centres, the "Make for India and Make for the World" campaign will be strengthened, which will promote advanced training of trainers, certification system and industry-related courses in the state. CM Dr. Yadav has described this initiative as a historic opportunity for the youth of the state. He said that Madhya Pradesh is ready to touch new heights of skill development. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the announcement of a Fund of Funds of Rs 10 thousand crore for start-ups will give a new direction to innovation and entrepreneurship in Madhya Pradesh. The state government is preparing a special action plan to take maximum advantage of this fund, so that local start-ups can

National Skill Excellence get capital and structural sup-Centres announced in the port.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Employment, Gautam Tetwal said that "This budget not only addresses skill development, but also presents a model of holistic development model of nolistic development by linking it with employ-ment. We will give priority to digital learning, AI based edu-cation and training pro-grammes in Madhya Pradesh in line with the requirements of new industries. This will open the doors of employment and entrepreneurship for the youth." He said that a comprehensive strategy is being prepared by the Department of Skill Development and Employment to effectively implement the schemes announced in the Union Budget at the state level. The Chief Minister said that

had recce the area before the

crime, knowing Deepesh's

routine of carrying large sums of money every

the budget emphasises on the Global Capability Centre (GCC) framework, which will give Madhya Pradesh an opportunity to set up skill centres of global companies in tier-2 cities. This will prepare talented youth in accordance with the global market. Provision of Mudra loan has

been made in the tourism and hospitality industry. The government will provide special financial assistance to the youth to promote home-stay and rural tourism, which will bolster the local economy. For the first time, the government is going to connect 5 lakh vouth with online capacity building and entrepreneurship training for Scheduled Caste and Tribe women and entrepreneurs of deprived communities.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that this budget is a powerful

step towards making Madhya Pradesh a centre of skill and innovation. New skilling hubs, GCC centres and funding for startups in the state will create innumerable employment opportunities. Carrying forward the self-reliant India vision of Prime Minister Modi, Madhya Pradesh is moving towards becoming the "Skill Hub of India". Minister Gautam Tetwal said that the state government will prepare a new strategy in the coming years to link skill develop-ment directly with employ-ment, so that every youth can get opportunities according to his ability. This budget is not just a doc-

ument of financial allocation, but the beginning of a new era where skill will become the foundation of a developed society, developed state and developed country.



A priest helps a child to make her start writing on a slate during Saraswati Puja on the occasion of Basant Panchami at Bengali Association Kalibari, TT Nagar in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

#### Videos shot before suicide go viral CCTV probe launched as accountant loses Rs 2 Lakh Police nab 3 notorious criminals, recover stolen goods

### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

Pradesh will especially benefit

from the establishment of 5

ccountant of Bansal And company was targeted by four armed masked miscreants robbed of Rs 2 lakh at Agarwal Sweets near Rachna Tower.

On Saturday evening, four masked individuals robbed an accountant at knifepoint in the Govindpura area of Bhopal, making off with a bag containing Rs 2 lakh. Despite the police cordoning off the area immediately after the incident, the miscreants have not yet been traced.

Deepesh Joshi, a resident of Netaji Enclave Chunabhatti, works as an accountant at Bansal One Company.

Every Saturday, he carries cash to the company's workshop in Ashoka Garden to

distribute salaries. On the evening of the rob-bery, Deepesh left his office at Rani Kamlapati Railway Station with Rs 2 lakh en route to the workshop. When Deepesh reached

Agarwal Sweets near Rachna Tower, he was surrounded by four miscreants riding two motorcycles. They threatened him with knives, snatched the bag, and fled the scene. Deepesh attempted to raise an alarm, but by the time anyone reacted, the robbers had already disap-

sums of money every Saturday. The police are currently investigating former employ-ees of the company and other potential suspects. Govindpura ACP Deepak Nayak stated that the route taken by Deepesh has been peared. The police have formed four teams to investigate the case. Deepesh told the police that taken by Deepesh has been he routinely brings cash to divided into four parts for pay the workers and had investigation, and four teams are reviewing CCTV footage. The police are conbeen carrying the money when the robbery occurred. He mentioned that the misfident that the culprits will creants blocked his path be apprehended soon.

near the crematorium close Bhopal: After ten days of treatto Agarwal Sweets, where ment a 26-year-old youth, who they stole the bag containing committed suicide by jumping in Rs 2 lakh. The robbers had front of a train, in Vidisha on cloth tied around their faces, January 22, made three videos, and Deepesh, fearing for his before ending his life. In videos, he alleged girlfreind and cousin safety, did not resist and handed over the bag. Police believe the robbers harassed him forcing to take extreme level.

These videos have surfaced after the death of the young man. Hemant Raikwar, a resident of Bhopal, was found seriously injured near the railway track in the Ramdwara area of the district at around 9 pm on January

His family immediately admit-ted him to the local medical college, where he was referred to Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal in view of his critical condition. He died 10 days later on Saturday. In the video, he has accused his cousin of breaking his marriage with his girlfriend as well as blackmailing and threatening

The young man said - these two

also distanced me from my parents and sister. I am committing suicide because of these two. He said to former CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan that girls are taking wrong advantage of the law. Get it changed. Before committing suicide,

Hemant has also mentioned his family, girlfriend, cousin sister and former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the video. After Hemant jumped in front of the train, his family also reached Vidisha.

On the second day of the incident, Hemant's family reached the SP office demanding action against both the girls. Here he demanded action against the accused in the case from the police. Brother-in-law Uday Kewat said that a year ago, Hemant's marriage was fixed with a girl from Bunty Nagar.

### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

amla Nagar Police have arrested three notorious criminals who resumed their theft spree after being released from jail. The police recovered stolen valuables worth Rs 13.50 lakh, including three motorcycles and gold and silver jewelry. The arrests were made after the suspects were identified through CCTV footage.

The criminals had previously served three-year sentences for theft. However, after being released a few months ago, they resumed their criminal activities. During the preliminary investigation, police uncovered their involvement in six theft cases across Kamla Nagar, Kotwali, Piplani, and Taliya areas.

Additional DCP Rashmi Agrawal Dubey stated that on January 27, Satish Kumar Nema,

a resident of Sahyadri Complex, Kamla Nagar, left home with his family to attend a religious event. Upon returning, he found the house ransacked, locks broken, and valuables missing. The stolen items included gold bangles, a gold chain, a pendant, three mangalsutras, four gold earrings, silver anklets, silver coins, and ?25,000 in cash. A case was registered against unidentified suspects, and a special police team was formed to investigate the broad daylight theft.

Upon reviewing CCTV footage from the crime scene, police spotted two suspects entering the house. They were identified as habitual offenders Niyaz Khan and Raju Khatri. Later, both were arrested near Shastri Nagar ground, where they confessed to committing the crime along with their accomplice Abid Khan. Based on their con-

fession, the police recovered three stolen motorcycles and gold and silver jewelry worth 13.50 lakh from various locations in Kamla Nagar, Kotwali, Piplani, and Taliya. The arrested individuals have

been identified as Niyaz Khan (40), a resident of Bangalore, Karnataka, currently living in Gadde Wali Multi, TT Nagar; Raju Khatri (52), a resident of Gadde Wali Multi, TT Nagar; and Abid Khan (47), a resident of Ashta, Sehore district. The three are long-time associates. Niyaz and Raju had previously been sentenced to three years in prison for theft and were released in October and November last year.

According to Kamla Nagar Police Station in-charge Nirup Pandey, the accused would change the number plates of stolen motorcycles before using them for burglary and theft.

### February brings warm days to MP, temperatures expected to soar

### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

adhya Pradesh ushered in February with a rise in temperatures, a trend that is expected to continue throughout the month. On the second day of February, several districts recorded temperatures above 32°C, temperatures above 32°C, including Mandla (32.4°C), Malajkhand (32.9°C), Khandwa (32.5°C), and Khargone (32°C). Other cities such as Betul, Ratlam, Sagar, Satna, Seoni, Tikamgarh, and Umaria en 30°C and

gresses, daytime tempera-

**Historically, February in Madhya Pradesh has been** characterized by hot days with temperatures exceeding 30 C and cooler nights ranging from 10 to 14 degrees

the state starting on February 3. The disturbance expected around February 12-14. Cities like Bhopal, Indore, and Ujjain will expe-rience high daytime tem-peratures, while Gwalior is likely to be the coldest, with is expected to bring clouds and drizzle, particularly in the Gwalior-Chambal region. temperatures dipping as low However, the system is not

Damoh, Jabalpur, Rewa, expected to be very strong, and heavy rainfall is unlike-Tikamgarh, and Umaria ly. The first week of cold that gripped the state experienced temperatures February will likely see in November and

December lasted for nine days, prompting changes in school timings and the installation of heaters in places like Bhopal's Van . Vihar National Park. January saw a mix of severe cold during the first half of the month, followed by a moderation in tempera-

tures. The lack of strong Western Disturbance activity in January prevented heavy rains or hail, although day temperatures in some areas like Bhopal, Rewa, Sagar, and Jabalpur rose above normal.

Nights in January remained ler in severai



Artistes paint graffiti as a part of beautification of the city ahead of the Global Investors Summit in Bhopal on Sunday.

Drunk man climbs 80-foot tower in Barkhedi area of Bhopal, rescued

### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

A dramatic incident unfolded in the Barkhedi area of the State capital when a 33-year-old intoxicated man climbed an 80-foot mobile tower, causing panic among locals. The bizarre episode, which occurred near the railway station underbridge, was captured on video and quickly went viral on social media

Eyewitnesses stated that the man, identified as Vivek, began scaling the tower while visibly drunk. Despite initial efforts by onlookers to stop him, he managed to reach the top and started shaking the structure, raising fears of a possible accident. Concerned residents immediately alerted the Jahangirabad police and the municipal corporation for assistance.

Authorities responded swiftly by dispatching a fire crane to the scene while police officials attempted to talk Vivek down. The negotiation lasted nearly 20 minutes before he finally agreed to descend on his own. As soon as he reached the ground, police

### **Despite initial** efforts by onlookers to stop him, he managed to reach the top and started shaking the structure

took him into custody for questioning.

The incident created a spectacle in the area, drawing a large crowd of curious onlookers. Meanwhile, the viral video of the stunt has been widely circulated on various social media platforms, sparking debates about the dangers of intoxication and reckless behavior. Officials have not disclosed whether any legal action will be taken against Vivek. However, the incident has once again highlighted concerns regarding public safe-ty and the risks associated with alcohol abuse. Fortunately, the quick response from authorities prevented a potential tragedy, leaving residents shaken but relieved.

at Van Vihar succumbs STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

Tiger under treatment

In a heartbreaking turn of events, Chhota Bhim, a tiger from Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, passed away on Sunday at the Van Vihar on Sunday at the Van Vihar National Park in the state capital

The tiger was rescued in late November 2024 from the Khitauli range, where he was found in a dire state, with a clutch wire noose tightly wrapped around his neck. The

injury was grave, and immediate intervention was necessary. Recognising the critical condition of the animal, wildlife authorities rushed him to Van Vihar, where he received extensive medical care. Despite two months of intensive treatment, including heart care and other vital interventions, the tiger's health deteriorated, and he tragically suc-

cumbed to heart failure. The news has sent ripples of sorrow through wildlife circles, with many expressing deep sympathy for the lost animal. Post-mortem plans are already underway. A four-member team of veterinarians has been tasked with conducting an

autopsy to ascertain the precise cause of death.

Cops crack jewellery heist, recover gold & silver worth Rs 10 lakh

nights.

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

Kotwali police regarding rob-

bery from shop Anand

Jewelers in Sarafa Bazar, on

Saturday at around 7 in the

evening, three unknown mis-

creants on a red motorcycle

fired in the air from a 315 bore

pistol and took away gold and

Police swung into action and

formed and received infor-

and fired at the accused.

silver jewellery from shop.

were identified as Bhind police arrested three miscreants involved in robbery from **Gulli alias Shivam** (23), Anshu a jewellry shop and recovered Shrivas (19) and cash, robbed jewelry and arms **Mohit Tomar all** used in the crime. Anand Soni, runs a jewellery residents of shop who reported to the Morena

> On checking with the search light, the accused were found lying in the bushes with bullet wounds in their legs.

The accused

The accused were identified as Gulli alias Shivam (23), Anshu Shrivas (19) and Mohit Tomar all residents of Morena. On checking the belongings

three police teams were they were carrying cash Rs.2.77 lakh, two gold chains mation from Ater police that three persons resembling the three pendants, two pairs of earrings, one ring, one single earring and 6.95 kg silver, appearance of the accused were spotted near Ater Fort towards Chambal, based on worth Rs. 10 lakh and one 315 which police team surroundbore pistol, one 12 bore pistol, 5 live cartridges and 4 empty shells were recovered from ed the accused. Two accused opened fire at the police while the third person tried to escape them.

with the bag. The police team warned all the committed the crime and also confessed to committing three accused to surrender but the accused fired again at incidents such in the police team and the police Ahmedabad, Morena, Mumbai etc. areas which are team retaliated in self-defense under investigation.

cloudy skies in some areas, 31°C. As February probut temperatures will remain high during the day. tures are expected to rise Historically, February in further, with warm days Madhya Pradesh has been and cool mornings and characterized by hot days with temperatures exceed-According to the Meteorological Department, ing 30°C and cooler nights ranging from 10°C to 14°C. Rain is also common during a Western Disturbance will affect the northern parts of the month, with showers

December, Februar a return to milder conditions Both of the previous

months set record low temperatures, with Bhopal experiencing its coldest November in 36 years and December breaking records for the lowest temperatures. The cold waves in

as 6°C in previous years.

In contrast to the severe

with temperatures dipping below 12°C in areas like Rajgarh (8.4°C), Sehore (9.1°C), and Gwalior (11.6°C). Despite this, February is expected to bring further rises in both daytime and nighttime temperatures as the cold gradually subsides.



Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan being welcomed by his supporters on his arrival in Morena, Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. Pioneerr photo

### AIIMS Bhopal organizes CME program on leprosy

nder the guidance of Executive Director, Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, a significant Continuing Medical Education (CME) Saturday, February 1, 2025. The event saw enthusiastic participation from postgrad-

uate students of various medical colleges.

The primary objective of the CME was to foster collaboration among medical institutions through intercollegiate academic meetings, enabling knowledge exchange and enhanced learning opportunities for students. This year's World Health Organization (WHO) theme-"Unite, Act, Eliminate"-perfectly resonates with this ini-

tiative. It underscores the need for unity within the medical community, deci-sive action through early diagnosis and effective treatment, and a collective effort toward eliminating leprosy. During the CME session, experts on leprosy discussed in detail the identification of the disease, the latest treatment methods, and the promotion of the right mindset towards this illness in society.

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Printed and published by Syed Naved Alam on behalf of CMYK Printech Limited and Printed at "SHRI BALAJI PRINTERS" Plot No.137,138,139 Sector I Special Industrial Area Govindpura Bhopal - 462023, (M.P.) and published at 152 Saif Complex - 2nd Floor, M.P. Nagar, Zone 1, Bhopal-462011 (M.P), Telephone: 0755-2550977, Mob.: 09893130364. Editor-in-Chief Shobor Ganguli, RNI Regn. No. MPENG/2004/13703, Regd. No. L-2/BPLON/41/2006. 2008, AIR Studente of Re. 1.00 East: Calcutta, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar, North Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chegan Action (Contral) : Khajuraho, Delhi Office: 100k Milap Bhawan, 8/A Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Corporate Office: 201-205, 208-210, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-46035729, 011-69342500, Mumbai Office: Devendra Adhikari Mobile No.: 09867575933, 09892829259, Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow 226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

The accused accepted to have

program on leprosy was orga-nized for postgraduate stu-dents at AIIMS Bhopal on



### **Neerja explores leadership and decision-making of 6 PMs**

### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

he 7th Bhopal Literature Festival concluded with 20 dynamic sessions featuring over 30 speakers, leaving audiences enriched with insightful discussions, book launches, and cultural showcases. The final day commenced with a visit to the Tribal Museum, offering a deep dive into the rich heritage of Central India's indigenous tribes, and ended with an award ceremony honoring literary excellence.

Renowned author Manjula Padmanabhan's novel Taxi received the prestigious Sushila Devi Book Award, while Bhopal's Verity Bookstore was honored with the Gyan-Prasarak Award, previously bestowed upon book houses from Indore and Jabalpur. Additionally, Dr. Seema Raizada was awarded the Smt. Vimal

marking the first time this accolade was presented at the BLF stage The festival also hosted the Tribal

Art Fair, featuring exhibitions and workshops by Gond and Baiga artists, alongside a modern art display showcasing the works of Padma Shri awardee Bhuri Bai. A live poetry reading competition continued throughout the day, adding a creative touch to the event's diverse literary offerings. One of the standout sessions featured former RBI Governor D. Subbarao, who shared personal anecdotes, including his UPSC interview experience, which he humorously described as a disaster. Recounting his early career struggles and his first-ever taxi ride, he emphasized the importance of resilience and learning from setbacks. His memoir, written during the COVID-19 pandemic, encapsulates life lessons fabric.

Kapooriya Memorial Award, drawn from his career and decision-making experiences at the grassroots level.

Veteran journalist and author Neerja Chowdhury led a compelling discussion on leadership and governance, drawing insights from her book, which analyzes six major decisions made by six Indian Prime Ministers. The book sheds light on Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1977, Rajiv Gandhi's policies on caste and communitv, V.P. Singh's reservation decision, Narasimha Rao's handling of the Babri Masjid issue, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's nuclear test decision, and Dr. Manmohan Singh's Indo-US deal. The session revealed intriguing political anecdotes, including Vajpayee's battle with cancer during the Emergency in 1975, and highlighted how each leader's decisions shaped India's democratic

A special session at Rangdarshini spotlighted Iconic Trees of India, authored by botanist S. Natesh. Moderated by Abhilash Khandekar, the discussion chronicled Natesh's extensive travels across more than 20 states to document 75 remarkable trees. The book features ancient and ecologically significant trees, including two from Madhya Pradesh's Katni district and the legendary Parijat tree of Uttar Pradesh, believed to be 5,000 years old. Natesh emphasized the need for conservation, sharing his journey of discovering trees that hold historical, cultural, and botanical importance. A thought-provoking session titled More Art or Heart? explored the evolution of contemporary poetry. Moderated by Asma Rafat, the discussion featured poets Sanjay Jaju and Jamshed, who reflected on their poetic journeys. Jamshed's book

Bhopal: Depressed over long ill-

ness and suffering from mental

issues 61-year-old woman

jumped from fourth floor of her

doctor. When he returned, he saw

her body lying in the basement. The woman was suffering from

illness for the last 6 months and

was suffering from depression.

The incident took place in the TT Nagar area on Saturday morning.

Anita Mangal (61) lived in flat B-

401 of Tulsi Tower. She was the

wife of Sanjay Mangal, a retired officer of MES (Military

Sanjay had gone to show his

medical report to the doctor on

Saturday morning. Anita was

Wetlands conservation with community engagement

To ensure their long-term

preservation, efforts must be

aligned with models that help

foster a synthesis between these

formations and local communi-

These wetlands are also famous

for hosting migratory birds. In

Engineering Service).

suicide at

Syahi delves into contemporary themes through a philosophical lens, while Jaju shared his spiritual poetry, including Mujhme Ram Baste Hai Aaj, inspired by personal introspection and faith. He also spoke about the rising popularity of Haiku poetry in the digital era and advised budding poets to experiment with ghazals. The session concluded with a compelling discussion on whether poetry leans more toward structured artistry or heartfelt expression. The final moments of the festi-

val saw an award distribution ceremony, followed by closing remarks from Society Chairman Mr. Raghav Chadha. Expressing gratitude to participants and attendees, he officially announced the conclusion of the Bhopal Literature and Art Festival, promising to return with an even more enriching experience next year.

Woman ends life by jumping from Tulsi Tower



Economist and former Reserve Bank of India Governor Duvvuri Subbarao in conversation with Dr KP Krishnan during Bhopal Literature and Art Festival (BLF) at Bharat Bhawan in Bhopal on Sunday.

Delhi needs BJP's double-engine govt for development: CM



Members of the Gayatri Parivar perform Yagna on the occasion of Basant Panchami festival at Gayatri Shaktipeeth in Bhopal on Pioneer photo

tickets priced above Rs 18,000.

Indigo has introduced three fare

categories for this route: Saver

Fare at Rs 9,134, Flexi Plus Fare

at Rs 9,943, and Super 6E Fare at

Rs 10,709. Bookings for these flights have already begun, and

travelers are encouraged to

secure their seats early due to

high demand, especially with the

ongoing popularity of the Mahakumbh.

In addition to the new Indigo

service, Alliance Air has also

been running a weekly flight

between Indore and Prayagraj,

which has already seen strong

booking numbers. According to

reports, Alliance Air's flights are

nearly fully booked for the next

### Flight for Prayagraj from Feb 5 to 14

Bhopal: In a move to facilitate travel for devotees attending the ongoing Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, Indigo Airlines will be operating special flights between Indore and Prayagraj from February 5 to 14.

The daily flights are designed to cater to the surge in passengers heading to the religious event, offering convenient and efficient travel options. The special flights, 6E2413 and

6E2415, will depart from Prayagraj at 12:55 PM, arriving in Indore at 2:20 PM. The return flight will leave Indore at 2:55 PM and reach Prayagraj at 4:20 PM

Each flight will have a journey time of 1 hour and 25 minutes. ensuring that passengers can

#### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL journey are set at approximate-Rs 9,000, with round-trip

the occasion of World Wetlands Day on Sunday, a top expert advocated the need for sustainable socioecological policies that help preserve these formations, which have been under considerable pressure from a growing population in recent decades. Professor Surabhi Mehrotra, a

member of the National Wetlands Committee (NWC) and a professor at the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT), emphasises that city planning must take national wetlands into account and that their use should be community-based and wise. Wetlands are formations where

Bhopal, the Upper and Lower Lakes together form the Bhoj Wetland, which is among the few Ramsar sites in the world. Named after the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Ramsar sites are designated rare and unique wetlands of international importance that play a

ties.

crucial role in conserving biodiversity. Among all the Ramsar wetlands in India, Bhoj Wetland is one of

building Tulsi Tower to commit inquired from the neighborhood and then went to the basement, In the state capital, wife of a where he found his wife's body retired army officer committed lying. suicide by jumping from the fourth floor. The husband had Áfter retirement, Sanjay Mangal was serving as an expert in gone to show her reports to the

husband returned, he knocked on

the door. There was no response

from inside. On suspicion, he

Bhopal Metro, but due to his wife's deteriorating condition, he recently left the job. His entire focus was on taking care of his wife, but due to mental stress, Anita took this step. According to the police, both the

daughters of the deceased live abroad and in Gurgaon. The body has been kept in the mortuary and the postmortem will be done on Sunday in the presence of the family members. Police station in-charge Sudhir Arajaria said that at present it is being investigated as a case of suicide.

population depends on this lake

for water supply, and it helps

maintain the water level across

Bhoj Wetland attracts around

180 species of migratory birds,

including the Large Cormorant,

Siberian Stonechat, Common

Chiffchaff, Black-headed Gull,

Purple Heron, Eurasian Coot, Spot-billed Duck, Lesser

Whistling Duck, Eurasian

Wryneck, Greylag Goose, Glossy

Ibis, Redstart, Common Snipe,

Northern Shoveler, Common

Teal, Red-crested Pochard.

Common Pochard, Black-head-

ed Ibis, Bluethroat, Lesser

Whitethroat, Green Sandpiper,

Painted Stork, Brown-headed

Gull, Red-naped Ibis, Black-

headed Bunting, and many

65 percent of the city.

#### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL alone in the house. When the

hief Minister Mohan Yadav addressed public gatherings and intellectual conferences in several assembly constituencies of Delhi, including Vikaspuri, Uttam Nagar, Najafgarh, and Malviya Nagar, on Sunday. He also conducted a roadshow in Nangloi to garner support for BJP candidates.

During his speech, Dr. Yadav emphasized that only 48 hours remained before the elections, urging party workers to remain vigilant. He warned that those with deceptive intentions would try to mislead voters with false promises and conspiracies. He called upon every BJP supporter to pledge their commitment to the party until the last vote is cast, urging them to act as warriors for the cause of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Dr. Yadav invoked Hindu mythology, drawing parallels between the struggles of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna against evil forces and the present political landscape. He claimed that forces similar to the mythological demons were once again attempting to deceive the people. He stressed the need to support the BJP to uphold truth, humanity, and nation-

al progress. Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dr. Yadav stated that India's global stature had risen under his leadership. He highlighted that Modi is the first non-Congress leader to form a government for the third consecutive term. He credited the BJP government for its inclusive governance, working for all sections of society without bias. Reflecting on his own political journey, Yadav pointed



out that he had no political lineage, yet the BJP had entrusted him with the position of Chief Minister, demonstrating the party's commitment to recognizing grassroots workers.

Dr. Yadav criticized the Congress for monopolizing power after independence, stating that the party had turned governance into a family-run affair. He argued that while freedom fighters like Chandrashekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, and Subhas Chandra Bose had sacrificed their lives for democracy, Congress had centralized power within a single family. He alleged that the party had systematically prevented common citizens from ascending to top leadership positions. He further claimed that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was now following the same path as Congress.

Targeting Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Yadav compared him to the accusing him of deceiving the people for political gains. He alleged that Kejriwal had betrayed his initial promises of living a simple life and not forming a political party, only to later indulge in

mismanagement. He criticized the deteriorating condition of Delhi, citing garbage accumulation and water scarcity in the Yamuna River, and claimed that Kejriwal's governance had pushed the city into decline. Dr. Yadav expressed confidence that Delhi residents

capital 03

had made up their minds to elect a BJP government for the city's progress. Speaking at a conference in support of BJP candidate and Madhya Pradesh BJP co-in-charge Satish Upadhyay in Malviya Nagar, Satish Dr. Yadav praised the Union Budget presented by the Modi government, stating that it addressed the needs of every section of society. He reiterated that Modi's governance was committed to strengthening democracy and the Constitution. He claimed that the people of India were rejecting those who had previously undermined democracy and

cities while participating in the Mahakumbh festivities. The flights, operated on an Airbus A320 Neo, will offer a variety of fare options to cater to different passenger needs. Starting fares for a one-way

indicating the high demand for flights to the Mahakumbh region. With the introduction of Indigo's special flights, there are now even more travel options for those looking to participate in the

provide a habitat for fish, aquatic organisms, and avian species. Due to climate change and modern lifestyles, wetlands have suffered severe damage, affecting the people living nearby either religious gathering in Prayagraj. | directly or indirectly.

road runs along the lake, allowing visitors to enjoy breathtaking views. The Upper Lake covers an area of 31 sq km, has a water catchment area of 361 sq km, and is about 30 feet deep. Around 30 percent of Bhopal's

Professor Mehrotra, who conducted extensive research on the Loktak Wetland in Manipur, says that the key to preserving wetlands is in harmonising the relationship between the local population and the wetlands.

essed confid Delhi voters would deliver a strong message in the upcoming elections. National spokesperson Nalin Kohli and a large number of intellectuals were present at the event.

### Wails behind the veil: Life and times of Nawab Shah Jahan Begum

### AKBAR KHAN BHOPAL

orn in exile in the sum-Biner of 1838, the story of Nawab Shahjahan Begum-the poet princess of Bhopal-is one wrought with deceit and heartbreak.

Shahjahan was not born in Bhopal. She was born at Islamnagar, a few miles away from the fortress town, after her estranged parents parted ways.

Her mother, Sikander Begum, and her father, Nawab Jahangir Mohammad Khan, had often clashed over control of the state until one day, Mir Mange Khan, a confidante of Jahangir, taking exception to Sikander's public spat with the Nawab, drew his sword and gashed Sikander on the arm. She was pregnant at the time.

Sikander was hurt at the impudence. She packed up and left Bhopal-a city founded and ruled by her forebears-with a few of her loyalists to live with her mother, the deeply religious Qudsia Begum, at Islamnagar where she gave birth to Shahjahan a few months later. In exile, Sikander spent her time attempting to convince the British establishment of her husband's 'misrule'. The British did not take her missives seriously. And Jahangir continued to rule Bhopal until his death in 1844. Shahjahan was six years old at the time. The demise of Jahangir saw the

British rule in favour of young Shahjahan's accession to the Bhopal masnad (throne). Sikander was not happy, but she returned to Bhopal and adopted the role of Regent, taking care of the Nawabate on

### behalf of her daughter.

Sikander-whom historians have often likened to Begum Samru of Sardhana-ran the state with an iron fist. She surrounded herself with a coterie of loyalists who had migrated to Islamnagar with her during her exile. The young Shahjahan spent most of her time reading and writing. At 17, Shahjahan was married

to Baqi Mohammad Khan (Umrao Dulha), a nobleman from a clan that was celebrated for its valour during the

1812 siege of the capital by the Marathas. The much older groom took Shahjahan as his third wife.

Sikander continued to manage affairs of the state. Her en masse massacre of rebellious soldiers during the Sipahi Bahadur mutiny of the 1850s is the worst crime Bhopal undertook to please its British masters. Sikander had finally proved her loyalty to the Crown. The British rewarded her by proclaiming her the Nawab of Bhopal in 1860, a little over two years after they had overcome the Rebellion of 1857.

While so much was happening in the state, Shahjahan had maintained a distance from roval duties, dedicating herself to the upbringing of her two daughters-Sultan Jahan and Sulaiman Jahan. Sulaiman, the younger of the two, died of smallpox in 1865. Shahjahan was widowed two years later. She was just 29 at the time. Sikander too died a year later, leaving the princess in control of the state she hated to love. The British had consolidated their hold on the country after



crushing the rebellion of 1857, and Bhopal was no exception. A calm had finally pervaded the city, allowing the ruler to focus on the development of her capital, but the peace was soon shattered after stories of her love affair permeated palace walls and became the talk of the town.

The Mirazi Khel rulers of Bhopal had adopted local customs. Their traditions did not resonate with Islamic cultures in other parts of the world. In their unique Islamic ethos, the marriage of a widow was unimaginable. None of the ladies in the ruling clan had ever remarried. Sikander had gone to the extent of criticising the custom when she first came across it in Turkey.

The town was abuzz with rumours. The gentleman in question was a young scholar who was married to the Prime Minister's daughter. Siddiq Hasan had arrived here from Kannauj. Many now acknowledge him as one of the central figures of the Islamic fundamental movement known as the Ahl-e-Hadith.

The scholarly Siddiq was in the service of the palace when he

met Shahjahan. Impressed with his eloquence, the young ruler invited him as her personal tutor. Shahjahan had already given up her Purdah.

The rumours didn't take long to reach Sultan Jahan, who had grown up under the tutelage of her grandmother Sikander. The heir apparent never forgave her mother for giving her father's place to another man. She rebelled with all her might. Shahjahan married Siddiq in 1871 at the age of 33. The move isolated her from the nobility of Bhopal, who refused to accept Siddiq due to his Shiite ancestry. The young scholar too had plans of his own. He invited several scholarly clans to Bhopal from his native United

Provinces, the move unsettled native noblemen who viewed Siddiq's moves as attempts to usurp power. Shahjaĥan dedicated herself to

the building of her capital and promoting the arts, crafts, culture, literature, and architecture. The new royal enclave of Shahjahanabad came up under her rule, as did the Woking Mosque, the first purpose-built mosque in the United Kingdom. She commissioned the Taj-ul-Masajid, Taj Mahal Palace, and the Benazir Summer Palace.

Sultan Jahan had a running feud with her stepfather, who practiced and preached a form of Islam which was alien to the syncretic culture of Bhopal. When her sons had memorized the holy book, Sultan Jahan had ordered festivities to celebrate the occasion. Siddiq objected to the beating of drums terming it un-Islamic, laments Sultan Jahan in her memoirs.

Siddiq's leanings towards fundamental Islam were soon brought to the notice of the British. He was stripped of his titles and honours. Shahjahan had diplomatic altercations with British officials over their reinstatement, but the British refused to accommodate her demands. The titles and honorary posts were only restored after Siddiq's demise in 1890. Alienated from the noble clans, and her daughter, Shahjahan died a lonely death in 1901, leaving the state to Nawab Sultan Jahan and later her youngest son, Nawab Hamidullah Khan, who seemed to have inherited his mother's hatred for his grandmother.

The Taj Mahal was allowed to fall into disrepair. The once magnificent palace was used to house refugees who arrived in the city from Pakistan in 1947. The palace, regarded as the love nest of Shahjahan and Siddiq, was soon turned into cubbyhole dwellings. The Taj-ul-Masajid, planned as one of the largest mosques in the world, remained incomplete for generations. Shahjahan was laid to rest at Nishat Afza, next to Umrao Dulha, far away from the Bada Bagh graveyard, where the only white marble mausoleum in the city stands in memory of Siddiq Hasan.

A gifted poet, and author of several books, Shahjahan received various titles, awards, medals, and honours. The second of her two reigns saw Bhopal witness wealth and grandeur, and even romance, but the lady ruler will forever be remembered for the very intrigue that tried to destroy her footprint on the city.

### Guv stresses importance of lifelong learning for students

last link of the society.

Patel said that while moving

ahead in life, never forget the

hard work, sacrifice and ded-

ication of the parents and

teachers who brought you to

the path of success. He said

that by enhancing the inherent

talent of the future generation

and instilling knowledge and

culture, university students

can be made capable to serve

### **STAFF REPORTER** BHOPAL

overnor Mangubhai .Patel on Sunday attend-Jed the fourth convocation of Maharaja Chhatrasal Bundelkhand University Chhatarpur. Governor Shri Patel awarded gold medals and degrees to the students in the ceremony. He also launched the publications of the university. The Governor conferred the degree of MCBU Doctor of Science on the Saraswat guest of the ceremonv and Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi.

Patel said that in the rapidly changing global competition of today's technological era, continuous pursuit of knowledge is the need of the hour. That is why students should keep updating their knowledge and skills continuously to get new opportunities in life and

### Scooty, laptop to students Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan

Yadav stated that the Madhya Pradesh government has ensured the seamless implementation of schemes for all sections of society. He emphasized that the fundamental structure of any government scheme remains unchanged. Yadav said that the work of providing laptop amount to the students will be done soon by the state government. Simultaneously, the students who have been included in the merit list at the school level of higher secondary schools are also being provided scooty. He said that according to our basic plan, we will give this gift to our children. No change has been made in the form of public welfare schemes.

find solutions to new chalthe nation and society effectively. He told the youth that lenges. Dreams come true with courage and patience. all of you are the fortunate gen-All that is needed is to learn eration of Amrit Prasanga of developed India, which has got from failure, change yourself the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra and move forward. He told the teachers that for success in life, it is necessary to have strict Modi. The result of his forediscipline, complete self-consight is the new National fidence and a sensitive per-Education Policy, which pro-vides the youth with an opporsonality. The significance of tunity to touch the infinite the work done with your talent, knowledge and skills lies heights of success in life and in bringing a smile on the face make India a superpower of of the deprived person at the knowledge.

In the ceremony, Higher Education Minister Shri Inder Singh Parmar congratulated the students who received the degree. He said that students should be proud of India's knowledge base. They should move forward with the aim of spreading this knowledge across the world through research and work for the welfare of the world.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that my party, Aadhaar Housing Finance Limited Khandwa. Area known as Khandwa Taraf Mankar, Bhandariya Road Khandwa, P.H.N. 86, (Now P.H.N.06) R.I.C. Khandwa, Vikas Khand Khandwa Tehsil Khandwa, Distt. Khandwa M.P., bearing Khasra No. 133/2, (Now Khasra No. 133/3/1/1) Paiki admeasuring East west 20 ft. and North south 30ft. area 600 sqft. which is recorded in the name of Mr. Raju S/o Mr. Bondar Jatthap (Jagtap) R/o Adarsha Nagar Bhadariya Road, Khandwa, Tehsil Khandwa, Distt Khandwa M.P. having following Boundaries East :- Common Road, West : Land of Asha Jaiswal, North :- Land of Satyanaryan Jaiswal, South : Land of Kamal Bondarji. Aadhaar Housing Finance Limited branch Khandwa is providing loan to the prospective borrower Mr. Raju S/o Mr. Bondar Jatthap (Jagtap) R/o Khandwa, Tehsil Khandwa, Distt Khandwa M.P on the property of the said revenue records. If any person, institution, body, bank, government, semi-governmen department, local government department etc. have any objection regarding the loan given on the said property, then all concerned may write to us within 07 (seven) days of publication of this open notice. Got proof. Otherwise, no objection will be valid after the expiry of the time period. Please know the information Date 02.02.2025

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# **RSS-affiliate SJM says Budget of this** year 'prudent', addresses key concerns

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Hailing the Union Budget as "pru-dent budget amidst challenges", the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) on Sunday said it has tried to address all the key concerns to take the country's economy forward and also make it selfreliant. The SIM is an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Presenting the Union Budget for 2025-26 in Lok Sabha on Saturday, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made a slew of announcements and also exempted annual income of up to ₹12 Lakh from income tax, rejigging tax slabs. In her budget speech, she laid out a blueprint for next-generation reforms, including raising the FDI limit in the insurance sector, simplification of tax laws and cutting duties on intermediaries while providing enhanced fiscal support for welfare measures.

It's a "prudent budget amidst various challenges" the country was facing, the SJM co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said in a statement.

"Concerns were being expressed about health of the economy due to deceleration in GDP growth in last two quarters, depreciating rupee, continuing inflation, decline in consumption, rising trade deficit,



growth, push for self-reliance in agriculture, support farmers and address imbalance in agriculture production, reduce dependence on foreign countries regarding pulses and edible oils, and also give tax relief to middle-income taxpayers, and address the inflationary concerns at the same time, Mahajan

added. "Budget 2025-26 has tried to balance all these concerns and take the economy forward," he added. Mahajan said the Budget has given a

push to the manufacturing sector in declining forex reserves," he said. the country. The MSME It was a "real challenge" for the manufacturing mission, enhanced government to spur manufacturing credit guarantee for the MSME,

credit card for micro-enterprises, the extension of the PLI beyond an earlier list and several other measures proposed in the Budget to improve manufacturing will insulate the country from "Chinese

dominance", he said. 'The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch was demanding well-defined manufacturing policy in the country for a long time. The present endeavour of the government will go a long way towards this goal," he added.

Mahajan said the Union Budget has also tried to remove obstacles in the clean tech path, by way of push given to lithium batteries, motors for

electric vehicles and other clean-tech

manufacturing. "It's important to note that due to our excessive dependence on imported batteries, motors for electric vehicles and also solar cells, our import bill and also solar cells, our import bill has been rising and in future, the nation could be even exploited due to our dependence on imported components," he said. "Therefore, it is giving a push to Aatmanirbhar Bharat and saving the nation from exploitation by

nation from exploitation by foreigners," he added. The SJM co-convenor said the

Budget has also tried to give a push to the health and agriculture sector and bridge the rural-urban gaps as well.

"Budget 2025-26 does much more to push rural incomes. Apart from raising the Kisan Credit Card limit, agriculture push, food processing push and many more efforts to raise rural incomes can go a long way to reduce rural-urban disparities," he said.

Allocation of ₹98,311 Crore for the healthcare sector in the Budget indicates a "significant push" for growth, Mahajan said.

Key measures like customs duty exemptions on life-saving drugs and the establishment of daycare cancer centres are some of the essential steps the Budget has made, he said.

"The SJM welcomes the budget announcement for recognising gig workers," Mahajan added.

Mysterious deaths in J-K's Rajouri: AIIMS Delhi team meets patients

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

A five-member team of Aexperts from AIIMS Delhi, including specialists in toxicology, has spoken to 11 patients who are undergoing treatment for a mysterious illness that has claimed 17 lives in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, and recorded

Rajouri district, and recercical their clinical history. The team would visit Badhaal village on Sunday where three families suffered casualties due to the illness, and collect samples from their sealed homes and surrounding areas.

'The samples would tested to know the cause of toxicity. The experts will also interact with the other villagers," a source said.

The AIIMS team headed by its director Dr M Srinivas comprises Dr A Shariff, professor in clinical toxicology, Dr Shailendra Kumar, additional professor, anesthesia and critical care, Jamahed Nayer, professor, additional emergency medicine, Dr Jagdish Prasad Meena, additional professor, pediatrics, and Dr Javed Qadri, assistant professor, clinical toxicology.

According to sources, the team arrived in Rajouri on



Friday night, interacted with the patients and their relatives at the Government Medical College (GMC), and made several queries about the entire episode.

They also examined some of the patients who are under observation.

The doctors at GMC Rajouri are treating the 11 patients using Atropine, an antipoison drug, the sources said. Besides the AIIMS Delhi team, a team of experts from PGI Chandigarh is also investigating the cause of toxicity.

Meanwhile, no new case has been reported in the past nine days from Badhaal village, which was shaken by the unexplained deaths of 17 people belonging to three families between December 7 and January 19, officials said. To mitigate the situation and prevent further casualties, 87

families comprising individuals were shifted from the village to three isolated centres in Rajouri --Nursing Government College, Government Boys Higher Secondary School, and Government Medical College where they are under observation.

nation 04

To ensure the safety of the remaining 808 households, comprising 3,700 individuals, in Badhaal, the village has been divided into 14 clusters monitored by multi-department teams of

182 officials, sources said. All shops and establishments in the village have been sealed, and ration is being provided under strict supervision, an official said. The remote village has been declared a containment zone and prohibitory orders have been imposed on all public and private gatherings.

Maha Kumbh Gangster Joginder Gyong deported from SC to hear on February 3 plea seeking safety stampede: Philippines, handed over to Delhi Police measures for devotees at Maha Kumbh Congress

### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

Wanted by police and fac-ing Interpol Red Notice, gangster Joginder Gyong Was deported from the Philippines to Delhi on Sunday, the CBI said.

Joginder Gyong was wanted by Haryana Police in a case of criminal conspiracy and murder registered against him in Panipat. He was handed over to Delhi Police upon landing at the Indira Gandhi International Airport as he was also wanted by the

force here, officials said. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) got a Red issued Notice against Joginder Gyong from the Interpol on October 25, 2024, which was circulated to all the law enforcement agencies globally for tracking the wanted criminal, an agency



in the murder of a victim ransom," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police said Gyong was apprehended by the Philippines Bureau of Immigration (PBI) from Bacolod City, acting on India's request for his extradition. According to PBI officials,

Gyong was identified as an "Indian-Nepalese national" and a key figure in a separatist terror network,

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

The Supreme Court is sched-L uled to hear on Monday a plea seeking implementation of specific guidelines and regulations to ensure safety of devotees attending the Maha Kumbh where at least 30 people were killed and 60 injured in a stampede on January 29. According to the cause list on

February 3 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar is slated to hear the PIL filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari.

The petition seeks to prevent stampede incidents and protect the fundamental rights of equality and life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The plea, which made the Centre and all the states as



Uttar Pradesh government and other states to ensure the availability of doctors and nurses at the venue, it said.

"All states shall establish in their proper manner facilitation centres at the Maha Kumbh. These centres shall provide and display the

slams BJP Mauni Amavasya, one of the most auspicious days of the

Hindu calendar. The plea cited several past incidents of stampedes at religious gatherings, emphasising the need for proactive safety measures, and said in 1954, over 800 deaths took place due to overcrowding on a narrow bridge at the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

Around 200 people were killed in a stampede triggered by restricted access at Kumbh at Haridwar in 1986, it said, adding 39 deaths and over 140 injuries took place in 2003 at Nashik.

for

The Kumbh Mela is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, taking place in rotation among four major locations: Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh), Haridwar (Uttarakhand) Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh), and Aaharashtra Given the massive influx of pilgrims from all states, the petition stresses the need for collective responsibility in ensuring proper crowd management, medical facilities, transportation, and security

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI The Congress on Sunday asked why the BJP government is not revealing the actual number of those who died in the Maha Kumbh stampede and claimed that the whole matter shows that it is trying to

escape blame. In the January 29 stampede at Sangam, at least 30 pilgrims died and 60 were injured with the police blaming overcrowding for the incident. blaming Congress general secretary incommunications charge Jairam Ramesh cited a media report which said the state administration has not given an update on the number of deaths even after four days of the incident.

"The BJP government, which ves the number devotees visiting the Maha Kumbh every day, is not revealing the actual number of dead even after five days. It is clear from the whole matter that this government is the culprit and wants to escape blame," Ramesh said.

information and assist their protocols to attendees. respective residents There is a need in coordination between the emergencies It also sought installation of signage and announcements

in multiple languages to help pilgrims navigate the event with ease.

The plea also sought regulation of VIP movement and said public safety should be given priority over VIP basic information regarding

protocols to prevent congestion and ensure smooth crowd movement.

okesperson statement.

"On the strength of the Red Notice, subject Joginder Gyong was deported from the Philippines via Bangkok to Delhi," he said.

cases in various states of India, including Delhi and Punjab, for the offences of robbery, murder, attempt to While on parole, he murder, putting person in committed the murder in fear of death or of grievous

whom the subject suspected

of disclosing the real identity

and location of his gangster brother Surender Gyong to

the police. Surender Gyong

was killed in an exchange of fire with the police," the

Joginder Gyong allegedly planned and murdered the

victim to avenge the death his

"The subject was also

brother, the CBI said.

statement said.

Delhi Police said involved in criminal Gyong was convicted to life imprisonment in Haryana for illegal firearms possession. Panipat in December 2017 "The subject is a gangster hurt in order to commit and later fled abroad, police wanted by the Haryana Police extortion and kidnapping for said.

to the Centre and the state governments to work collectively in ensuring a safe and secure environment for devotees at the Maha Kumbh. It said all states should establish facilitation centres at Prayagraj to provide safety

guidelines to the persons coming from their states. In emergency these centres shall be ready for any assistance," it said.

The plea said SMSes and WhatsApp messages be used disseminate to safety

top court to direct the Uttar government to Pradesh submit a status report on the stampede incident and initiate legal action against those responsible for negligence.

The stampede took place on January 29 on the occasion of

### PIL in Delhi HC seeks CBI enquiry into forgery by **Drone Federation India**

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $D_{\rm (DFI)}^{\rm rone\ Federation\ India}$ Drone Federation of India is under intense scrutiny following proof of forging official documents to manipulate regulatory approvals had surfaced.

As per sources, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed on January 29, 2025 before the Delhi High Court seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) investigation against the forgery of government documents by DFI. The PIL, submitted by Right to Information (RTI) activist Tej Pratap Singh, claims that DFI forged the NOC to bypass legal obstacles and change its company name. The fraudulent document, submitted to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MĆA), aimed to rebrand the "Drone organization as Federation India," of potentially misleading the public into believing it was government-affiliated. The relevant documents are in possession of The Pioneer. In addition to the forgery, DFI is accused of using lobbying tactics to unfairly influence tenders to certain select member companies,



File photo of a drone

thereby suppressing competition in the UAV industry. Further scrutiny has arisen over DFI's occupancy of office space at the former Air India Building, allegedly secured through questionable recommendations. Sources said MCA has

initiated an inspection and the PIL calls for urgent action seeking a CBI investigation to ensure transparency and accountability. Drone accountability. Federation India now face serious legal consequences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for criminal forgery under Section 61, 316, 336, 337, 338 and 340 of BNS, 2023 which are cognizable and non-bailable in nature.

When contacted to the company officials, a DFI official said, "DFI is a renowned think tank, not a drone company, and the claim in question is fake," commented the DFI official.

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

India's apex auditor is build-Ling the necessary infrastructure and processes to harness artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning for auditing processes and to audit AI applications themselves as the country aims to become a USD 30trillion economy by 2047, CAG K Sanjay Murthy said.

Speaking at the World Forum of Accountants hosted by ICAI on Saturday, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Murthy said a USD 30-trillion economy will be necessarily digital, as organisations expand into emerging areas, and global

champions are born. Accounting and auditing professionals will have to provide the required support. "Adopting new technologies would help bring required efficiencies in the accounting and auditing processes. Taking a leadership role in developing and adapting innovative technological practices would also help Indian firms to become global champions," he said, while addressing the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) programme here on Saturday.

Underlining the key role of digital technology as a major enabler as well as disrupter, the CAG said the range of



CAG building infra and processes to

harness AI and ML: Sanjay Murthy

technological solutions that are now available have transformed the scale and potential at which organisations can achieve higher performance outcomes.

"For us, it's an exciting challenge as the India of 2025 moves towards becoming a Viksit Bharat of 2047 which aspires to have an economy of USD 30 trillion. More larger companies and government budgets cannot be handled by physically replicating existing structures and processes. Technology will have to be leveraged to keep up and deliver," he said. The CAG's address covered the gamut of technology and innovation in auditing and accounting, pointing out how AI, machine learning, robotic automation and blockchain technology revolutionised the field. "The evolution of technology

and adaptation will require a transformation in intellectual infrastructural and capacities," he said. Referring to the recent 'The

Future of Jobs Report 2025' by the World Economic Forum, Murthy noted how it has highlighted the drivers of transformation and skillsets

needed in coming years. "We have embarked upon a comprehensive digitisation journey. We are committed to further integrating advanced technologies to bolster audit capabilities. Recognising the transformative potential of AI and ML, we have already taken the leap of faith and started building area started building necessary infrastructure and processes to harness these technologies to use them in auditing processes and to audit AI applications themselves," he said Talking about the CAG's

digitisation journey, he said a

major development is the implementation of the One IAAD One System (OIOS), an end-to-end Audit Information Management System (AIMS) and a webenabled IT application that supports multiple languages, offers offline functionality, and includes a mobile application for audits in a fully digital environment.

Digital initiatives in areas of internal administration, including eHRMS and eOffice, have also been mainstreamed.

He said the CAG has also implemented state-of-the-art data analytic capabilities through its dedicated centre to enable analysis-driven audits.

Remote sensing techniques and image analytics have also been widely used. It will be our endeavour to access other applications for smoothening the process of auditing for greater transparency, Murthy added.

The World Forum of Accountants is an annual conference, and it was ICAI's turn as host this year. The World Forum of Accountants brings together

some of the brightest minds from among accountants, auditors, and finance professionals, business leaders and regulators of the accounting and auditing profession.

SC conference deliberates issues faced by State judiciary

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

**▼** dentification of bottlenecks in case disposal and strate-gies to reduce backlog of cases at different levels came up for discussion at a national conference organised by the Supreme Court here on issues faced by the State judiciary.

The conference held on Saturday witnessed participation of judges of the top court, the High Courts as well as the District judiciary.

"The idea behind this conference was to engage in a meaningful dialogue with different stakeholders and functionaries in the state judiciary, especially the district courts, to first understand the challenges being faced by them and thereafter, chalk out a plan to address the same," the apex court administration said in a release.

The conference had four technical sessions which covered diverse topics affecting the performance of state judiciary. The technical sessions were chaired by the judges of the apex court, including Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna. It said the first session witnessed discussions on ways to narrow the gulf between institution and disposal of

cases, identification of case types flooding judicial dockets, identification of bottlenecks in case disposal and strategies to reduce backlog of cases at different levels. The statement said in one of

the sessions, the feasibility of having a uniform case categorisation in different courts was explored. "In this session, ways to leverage technology and better to optimise the judicial processes were also deliberated upon," the release said.

It said discussions were also held on timely recruitment of judicial officers and court staffs, continual recruitment or empanelment of public prosecutors or legal aid counsels, creation of a permanent IT and data cadre in all high courts and district courts and measures to enhance objectivity in the process of recommending suitable candidates from district judiciary for elevation to the high courts. Discussions on career progression and continuous performance evaluation of judicial officers, need for establishing a common curriculum for training and capacity building of judicial officers and ways of ensuring accountability of judicial officers and court staff were also held during

the sessions.



# **Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb shines as Muslims** extend hospitality to pilgrims in Prayagraj

### BISWAJEET BANERJEE PRAYAGRAJ

The spirit of communal har-The spirit of communal har-mony was on full display during the Maha Kumbh's grand Mouni Amavasya bathing festival, as Muslim families in the old city opened their homes to stranded Hindu pilgrims.

With roads leading to the rail-way station blocked due to the overwhelming rush, local resi-dents stepped in to offer food, shelter, and warmth to the devotees

Among them was Rameshwar Prasad, a pilgrim from Madhya Pradesh, who found shelter at a house near Chowk. "I had nowhere to go when the roads were closed, and I was shivering in the cold," he recalled. "A kind man named Rashid invited me in, gave me food, and even offered me a blanket. I will never forget his kindness.

The historic Jama Masjid in Chowk also turned into a refuge for dozens of pilgrims. Community kitchens in Muslim-majority areas ran throughout the night, serving

hot meals to those in need. With the success of these efforts, locals have now begun preparations to assist devotees on Vasant Panchami, another major bathing festival. During

in Chowk, where members of the Muslim community volunteered to provide food and accommodation. Gauhar Kazmi, the college manager, confirmed that arrangements Mouni Amavasya, thousands of are now being made for Vasant devotees spent three days at Panchami as well. Radha Devi, a devotee from Yadgare Husaini Inter College

Varanasi, shared her experience: "I was tired from the journey and had no place to rest when a young man named Areeb guided me to the school, where they provided us with meals and warm bedding. Their generosity reminded me that humanity comes before reli-

Pilgrim bus plunges into gorge

Local businessman Rashid Sagir, who had opened Shaharara Bagh Mosque for pil-grims and distributed blankets during Mouni Amavasya, is preparing similar arrangements for Vasant Panchami. "It is our duty to help those in need, regardless of religion," he said. Understanding the need for concerta arrangements for separate arrangements for women, Rashid had also opened his restaurant for female devotees. Sunita Mishra, a pilgrim from Kanpur, expressed her gratitude: "I was hesitant at first, but they treated me like family. The women in Rashid bhai's house took care of me as if I was their own sister. In addition, Haseeb Ahmed organised a langar in Chowk,

serving food to hundreds of devotees. He has now started preparations to host more pilgrims on Vasant Panchami. Recognising the struggles of those walking long distances, young leader Adil Hamza arranged for vehicles to trans-port devotees. "Religion teaches us compassion, not division,' he said.

### Maha Kumbh: BHU scientists conduct DNA and COVID immunity study BISWAJEET BANERJEE

PRAYAGRAJ

Scientists from Banaras Hindu University (BHU) are conducting a groundbreaking study at the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj to analyse the genetic diversity of attendees and assess immunity levels against COVID-19. The study aims to determine what percentage of India's genetic makeup is represent-ed at the religious gathering and whether COVID antibodies are still prevalent in the population.

A five-member team of researchers has begun collecting samples from approximately 1,000 participants. Professor Gyaneshwar Chaubey, who is leading the Gyaneshwar study, stated that the research focuses on two primary objec tives.

The first is to conduct antibody tests to gauge the level of immunity developed against COVID-19 among devotees.

The second is to analyse the diversity of DNA present in the crowd, given that pilgrims from across India converge at the Maha Kumbh.



"By using random sampling methods, we aim to map the genetic diversity of attendees and assess how well their DNA represents the broader Indian population," Professor Chaubey explained. The data collected will pro-

vide insights into migration patterns and genetic ancestry, contributing to a deeper understanding of India's demographic composition. The sample collection began on January 24 and will contin-

ue till February 7. The team is using saliva samples for genetic analysis and conducting antibody tests to evaluate Covid immunity. Initial findings indicate that most participants have been vaccinated and retain a degree of immunity, reducing the likelihood of major outbreaks

at the Maha Kumbh. The scale of the investigation will be vast, with the researchers analysing data from 25,000 individuals.

**Eight naxalites** 

Chhattisgarh

district on Saturday were senior cadres carrying cumulative rewards of ₹16 Lakh, police said.

The members of the outlawed

Maoist organisation were

gunned down during an anti-

Naxal operation in a forest near

Todka village under the Gangaloor police station area. Two personnel of the District Reserve Guard, a unit of state

police, were also injured in the

Of the neutralised Naxalites,

Kamlesh Neelkanth (24), a member of the Gangaloor area

committee under the west Bastar

exchange of fire.

killed in

### Last naxalite of Karnataka, Lakshmi surrenders in Udupi



### PNS BENGALURU

Lakshmi, said to be the last Naxalite in Karnataka, unconditionally surrendered on Sunday in front of Udupi Deputy Commissioner Vidya Kumari and Superintendent of Police Arun K.

According to police, Lakshmi, who had been hid-ing in Andhra Pradesh, has had three cases at Amasebail and Shankaranarayana police stations in Kundapur Taluk in the Udupi district. These cases date back to 2007-2008, and they pertain to the exchange of fire with police, and pushing ssault



deep gorge in Gujarat's Dang dis-trict early Sunday morning, police said.

Among the injured persons, 17 were grievously hurt, they said, adding the victims were on a trip to religious places across various states in the country. The accident took place at 4.15

am when the bus driver lost control over the wheels near the Saputara hill station, in-charge Superintendent of Police SG Patil said.

The bus, carrying 48 pilgrims, broke the crash barrier and fell at a depth of about 35 feet into the gorge, he said.

for Dwarka in Gujarat from Trimbakeshwar, a religious place in Maharashtra's Nashik district. They made a brief stop at Saputara for tea break before

Shankaranarayana in Kundapur taluk. DC Vidya Kumari said Lakshmi comes under the 'A' category candidate for surrender, and as a surrender package norm the Naxalites coming under this category led to get

and



resuming their journey when the accident occurred 2.5 kilometres from the hill station, the official said. "Five persons died on the spot and 17 others suffered serious injuries and have been rushed to a civil hospital at Ahwa. Some others have sustained minor injuries. The rescue operation is nearly over," the offi-The bus driver was among the

deceased, comprising three men and two women, according to police. A total of 35 passengers

munity health centres (CHCs) for treatment, and 17 of them were four different buses on December places across various states, he Patel said the unfortunate incifell into the gorge.

### action over 'poor thing' remark on President Murmu

Sonia Gandhi faces legal

PNS MUZAFFARPUR

Acomplaint was filed against Congress leader Sonia Gandhi before a court in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district for her 'poor thing' remark on President

Droupadi Murmu. Sudhir Ojha, a Muzaffarpur-based lawyer, filed a complaint on Saturday against Gandhi seeking registration of an FIR against her for allegedly disrespecting the country's highest constitutional

Ojha also named Leader of the Ópposition in the Lok Sabha-Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as co-accused and sought legal action against them as well.

'Sonia Gandhi has insulted President Murmu by making the 'poor thing' remark. It's disrespect to the highest constitutional authority in the country. Rahul and Priyanka are co-accused in it. A case should be registered

encounter against them under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)," Ojha told reporters after PNS RAIPUR The eight naxalites killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur

filing the complaint before the CJM court in Muzaffarpur. The court will hear the matter on February 10. After the President's joint address to Parliament ahead of the Budget session, Sonia Gandhi was asked by reporters outside the House about Murmu's nearly hour-long speech.

"The President was getting very tired by the end. She could hardly speak, poor thing," Sonia Gandhi, the former Congress chief, was heard saying in clips in what appeared to be a reference to how long the address was.

Rahul described the speech as "boring" in one of the clips. Priyanka was also present there. The Rashtrapati Bhavan had, later, released a statement, calling the remark "unacceptable" and saying that Murmu was not tired.

division of Maoists, carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh on his head, a senior police official said on Sunday. Two others, identified as Tati Kamlu and Mangal Tati of the Gangaloor LOS (local organiza-

tion squad), carried a reward of Rs three lakh each on their Adityanath said that women volheads, he said. dentifi Potam (40), Shankar Tati (26), Raju Tati, Vijju Padam (22) and Sannu Tati (40), were active in various wings of Maoists and carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh

### Wetlands crucial for ecology, must be protected from encroachers: CM Yogi

PNS LUCKNOW

The passengers started at night

cial said.

# were taken to the nearby comauthority.

referred to the civil hospital at Ahwa in the district, Patil said. The pilgrims, hailing from Madhya Pradesh, had set out on 23, 2024 on a trip to religious said. Dang Collector Mahesh dent occurred after one of the four buses carrying the pilgrims

literature in villages and small towns

Police said Lakshmi originally belonged to Thombattu of Machchattu village in Kundapura taluk.

She was accompanied by the State Naxal Surrender Committee member Sripal and her husband Salim, a former Naxalite who had surrendered in 2020 in Andhra Pradesh.

After severing her connection with her family 15 years ago, Lakshmi had gone underground and was active in pushing the Naxalite agenda in Chikkamagaluru and Udupi districts.

"I tried to get in touch with the district officials and wanted to surrender after the Karnataka government had announced the surrender protocol and package, but it had not happened for some reason. Now that the surrender committee was formed, The 'A' category has been denominated for the Naxals originating from Karnataka state, Kumari added. "The surrender packages will be given in phases extending

my surrender has been facil-

itated," Lakshmi told journal

ists after her surrender today.

She thanked Chief Minister

Siddaramaiah for the gener-

ous surrender package and appealed to the district

administration to relieve her

of all charges laid against

her in the police stations in

Amasebail

to three years, and in addition, depending on the core capacity of the Naxals who surrendered, facilities like education, rehabilitation, and employment will be offered," added the DC

Sripal of the State Surrender Committee, told the journalists present that the committee had recommended to the government to expeditiously dispose of the cases filed against the surrendered Naxalites, helping them to lead a normal life in society. "Due to the efforts of the Committee, 22 Naxal activists have surrendered in 2025 so far and Lakshimi happens to be the last one in the state to surrender. Karnataka is now a 'Naxal-free' state," he said.

by them

the day.

pus for years.

ferent this year.

Students of the two colleges

have been separately organis-

ing the puja on the same cam-

The situation, however, is dif-

Basu, who was accompanied

by local Trinamool Congress

MP Mala Roy, was greeted by

'We Want Justice' slogans from

the female students as he went

Tttar Pradesh Chief Minister Uttar Pratesi Cinci .... Yogi Adityanath on Sunday emphasised on the ecological importance of natural wetlands and said that many of them are suffering due to encroachment. Addressing an event at Gonda on the occasion of World Wetlands Day, themed "Wetland Future, Our Future", the Chief Minister said natural wetlands are vital for

our ecosystem. They play a key role in groundwater conservation, irrigation, drinking water availability, flood and drought control and carbon storage, he said.

Wetlands also play an important role in conservation of aquatic ecosystem-dependent vegetation, wild animals, migratory and local birds and provide food, medicine, livelihood, as well as income resources, he said. Adityanath launched a programme on "Conservation of Wetlands for the Future of All of Us" at Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary and also released sev-

eral books, the Uttar Pradesh government said in a statement. The Chief Minister visited an exhibition, and felicitated winners of various competitions, the statement said.

He said wetlands not only sustain aquatic life but also preserve nature in its original form. "Parvati and Arga natural lakes are a symbol of India's heritage, formed hundreds of years ago by

the Saryu river. Even today, migratory and local birds arrive here from thousands of kilometers away," Adityanath said. Highlighting the economic potential of tourism, he said

eco, heritage, and spiritual tourism generate employment. "In 2016, Ayodhya saw only 2.35 lakh tourists. After improving connectivity and facilities, 16.11 crore people visited in 2024, sig-

nificantly boosting employment and businesses like hotels, taxis, restaurants, and local handicrafts," he said.

He added that efforts are underway to integrate nearby villages into the Parvati Arga Wetlands conservation initiative and encourage women self-help groups to market their products online in collaboration with Amazon.

in the direction of self-reliance and to achieve the target of one trillion dollar economy, every family will have to be made self reliant.

The Chief Minister also said that Tikri forest would be developed as an open safari, turning the Awadh region into a major ecotourism hub.

The state government will ensure connectivity and link the Parvati and Arga wetlands with the Saryu Canal National Project, he said.

"In a survey conducted 8 years ago, Gonda was the dirtiest district in the country, but today its ranking is good. Today a medical college has been built here. The Vantangiyas who did not get rights for 100 years, have are also living a respectable life with rights," he added.

Speaking about carbon emis-sions, Adityanath said that Prime Minister Modi has asked to take steps towards achieving the target of net zero in 2070.

each, he said. One Insas rifle, one Barrel Grenade Launcher (BGL) and its 10 shells, two 12-bore rifles, four muzzle-loading rifles and a

huge cache of explosives items were recovered from the encounter site, he said. So far this year, 49 Naxalites have

been killed in separate encounters in the state. Of them, 33 were killed in the Bastar division comprising seven districts, including Bijapur.

On January 20-21, police said, 16 Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security person-nel in the state's Gariaband district, which is a part of the Raipur division.

Last year, 219 Naxalites were neutralised by security forces in separate encounters in the state, as per police.

### Row over Saraswati Puja continues in Kolkata college Manipur CM hails Himanta for taking tough measures against illegal poppy cultivation

### PNS KOLKATA

West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu on Sunday faced protests by a group of students of a Kolkata college, who alleged that out-siders led by a Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad (TMCP) leader threatened them for organising Saraswati Puja on the institute campus. Following a row between two groups of students in Jogeshchandra Law College premises over organising the Puja, the Calcutta High Court on Friday asked the Kolkata Police to ensure that the ceremony can be held by law college students with adequate security.

Matters came to a head on January 29 when students of the law college, majority of them women, alleged they were being prevented from organising the puja on college premises by members of

TMCP-led by ex-student Sabir and met them.

Ali and even faced rape threats "I am here to talk to you. None will coerce you, terrorise you One of the girl students then or threaten you. If anyone has issued any threat, we will take moved the Calcutta High strong action against him," Court seeking its intervention and the judge ordered that the the education minister said. students must be allowed to Several of the female students celebrate the festival and asked broke down before him and alleged that while entering a top-ranked official of Kolkata Police to monitor the college, they were threattheir security posting enough personnel at the college gate. A general college and a law ened with assault and rape by some "outsiders" "I have met the students, I had

a darshan of the idol and college are run in the same building at different times of offered prayers. I have assured the students we will look into their grievances and appropriate action will be taken after inquiry, Basu said

He said he would meet them and the college authorities on February 5-6 to discuss the issues

Rejecting the allegations, Ali said, "We are organising the Saraswati puja of the day section in the adjacent lane of the inside the law college campus college. No threats have been

issued against anyone. They cannot show any such video (of issuing threats).

He also added that being an alumnus of the day college, he has every right to be part of the Saraswati Puja.

Mala Roy said, "Saraswati Puja is not the occasion to shout slogans demanding justice." The MP said she and the education minister visited both puja pandals erected by the students of the two colleges. "There has been no provocation or aggression shown by the Saraswati puja organises of the day section. Everything is being conducted as ordered by the honourable high court in the presence of the police.

"There are reasons to suspec that those demanding justice are backed by political elements who want to disrupt the academic functioning of the law college and foment trouble during the Saraswati puja,' she said.

PTI 📕 IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday hailed his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma for taking tough mea-sures against illegal poppy

cultivation and drugs in the state. He said both the states remain resolute in building a future where youth are protected

from the shadow of drugs. Replying to media queries on Sarma's post on X, Singh said at the sideline of a programme in Imphal West district, "I appreciate the chief minister of Assam. He is taking up counter drugs activities very actively. We have to be

generations from drugs." Later in a post on X, Singh appreciated his Assam coun-

united and save the future

HILLINNS.

against illicit poppy cultiva-

'My deep appreciation for the decisive measures taken in Assam, under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister

tion.

where every youth of the NE is protected, nurtured, and given the opportunity to thrive free from the shadow of drugs," the Manipur CM posted on X.

The Assam CM on Sunday said around 170 bighas (over 56 acres) of poppy farming worth more than ₹27 Crore were destroyed in Goalpara district of the state in January this year.

"Dear Local Pablo Escobars, Sorry to spoil your planned Udta Assam party! Because @Goalpara\_Police destroyed 170 Bighas of poppy cultivation in the Char areas worth ₹27.20 Crore in January, Sarma said in a post on X. He also uploaded a video, showing a tractor smashing the purported poppy plantation amid the presence of a huge posse of policemen.

Shri @himantabiswa ji, in terpart in taking measures addressing the challenges posed by the cultivation of

poppy," he said. "We stand together and remain resolute in our shared goal of building a future







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PAPER WITH PASSION-

### **Boost for middle class**

Tax reliefs, agricultural boosts and support for gig workers define Union Budget 2025, but concerns about economic growth persist

inance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2025-26 on February 1, 2025, focusing on stimulating economic growth, supporting the middle class and enhancing agricultural productivity. The Union Budget 2025-26 with a total expenditure of Rs 50,65,345 crore, focuses on economic growth, middle-class relief and agricultural development. On the infrastructure front, capital expenditure there is a modest increase to drive development, though specific figures were not detailed. Meanwhile, the fiscal deficit is projected to be 4.4 per cent of GDP for 2025-26. While the budget lays out ambitious plans to stimulate various sectors, its effectiveness will depend on implementation and overall economic conditions. What must come as big relief for the middle class is raising of the income tax limit. The budget introduced significant tax relief for the middle class by raising the income tax exemption threshold to Rs 12.75 lakh per annum, effectively exempting individuals



with an average monthly income of up to Rs1 lakh from paying income tax. This move aims to boost

household savings and consumption. A six-year programme has been announced to increase the production of pulses and extra-long staple cotton and help farmers. The government plans to support farmers by purchasing pulses at guaranteed prices and investing in research and development to enhance cotton yields, thereby reducing dependence on imports. The budget has also proposed registeration of one crore gig workers on the e-Shram portal. This initiative aims to formalise the gig economy workforce and improve their access

to healthcare and welfare schemes. An allocation of Rs 11.21 lakh crore was made for capital expenditure, reflecting a modest increase from the previous year. This investment is intended to stimulate infrastructure development and economic growth. Some analysts, including Moody's Ratings, have expressed concerns that the tax relief measures for the middle class may have a limited effect on overall economic growth. The effectiveness of these measures in significantly boosting consumption and investment remains uncertain. The budget's capital expenditure increase was modest, which may not be sufficient to drive the desired level of infrastructure development and economic expansion. While the budget outlines ambitious programmes, the success of these initiatives will depend on effective implementation at the ground level. Past challenges in executing government schemes could pose hurdles to achieving the desired outcomes. The Union Budget 2025-26 introduces notable measures to support the middle class and agriculture, but its potential impact on broader economic growth and the effectiveness of implementation remain areas to watch. While the budget's initiatives are promising, concerns linger about their impact on economic growth and the effectiveness of their implementation.



# Rethinking the Places of Worship Act 1991



The Supreme Court's interim order barring civil courts from hearing suits related to places of worship has reignited debate over the Places of Worship Act, 1991

special bench of the Supreme Court led CJI Sanjiv Khanna, on December 12, 2024, had barred all the civil courts from entertaining any fresh or pending suits related to the places of worship, in effect, validating the Act for an interim period, even before hearing the constitutional challenge to it.

The Places of Worship Act was enacted to serve as a legislative firewall against religious disputes over the places of worship. It seeks to bar conversion of places of worship and freezes their religious character as they existed on August 15, 1947, with an exception for the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dis-

Judicial Review and the Rule of Law

The abatement of suits and other legal proceedings in relation to the places of worship, as sought to be done through Parliament by a legislative fiat in 1991, goes contrary to the basic feature of the rule of law and judicial review as held in Indira Gandhi vs Raj Narain, among others. In India, and other parliamentary democracies, the view of the Parliament, served through its members, often portrayed as an eternal "will of the people," free from all fetters, is misplaced: it is not only anathema to democratic and constitutional thoughts of our republic but also problematic in its philosophical underpinnings from where it stems out.

The Parliament's act of granting immunity to certain legal disputes is based on a fallacious hypothesis that Parliament is a symbol of the continuous 'will of the people' and, consequently, not answerable to the courts. However, the Indian constitution establishes the principle of constitutional supremacy, as opposed to unchecked parliamentary sovereignty, which ensures that even parliamentary legislation, though reflecting the will of the people, is subject to judicial review. This is trace-



The Places of Worship Act, nevertheless, made its effect inapplicable to the hitherto Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri Masjid dispute, by way of Section 5, acknowledging its special significance emanating from being present at a particular site while excluding other similarly placed temples, viz Kashi Vishwanath and Krishna Janma Bhumi, also derive their significance from being located at specific sites/places. In this manner, the Act has created an unreasonable and arbitrary classification against Article 14 of the Constitution by treating Ram Janma Bhumi as a separate class in itself. The Supreme Court in Royappa has held that "equality is antithetic to arbitrariness. In fact, equality and arbitrariness are sworn ene-

Where an act is arbitrary, it is implicit in it that it is unequal both according to political logic and constitutional law and therefore violative of Article 14." In addition, under the two-pronged Article 14 test, first settled by the Supreme Court in Anwar Ali Sarkar, any legislative classification that provides advantages and disadvantages on a

THE PARLIAMENT'S ACT OF GRANTING **IMMUNITY TO CERTAIN LEGAL DISPUTES IS** BASED ON A FALLACIOUS **HYPOTHESIS** THAT PARLIAMENT IS A SYMBOL

OF THE CONTINUOUS WILL OF THE PEOPLE'

than Ram Janma Bhumi will ease communal tensions in the country.

Even assuming so, a routine law and order situation cannot be the basis for the suspension of a constitutional right. The unreasonable classification carved out by the Act and placing a bar on parties attached to disputes concerning places of worship from knocking on the court's door warrant serious re-evaluation.

The door of the courts, in a functioning democracy, based on a written constitution, must always be ajar to the victims of wrongdoings. Having said that, invalidating the entire Act, at this stage, may not be the most pragmatic course of action. In that case, following the terms of "ut res magis valeat quam pereat" (it is better for a thing to have an effect than to be void), a more measured approach would entail reading down the Act to extend the benefit of Section 5 [exemption from the Act, as done with Ram Janma Bhumi] to two other similarly placed temples (Kashi & Mathura), rather than inval-

guishes those that are grouped from those that have (b) if that differentia does not have a rational relation to the object sought to be achieved The classification made under

able from Article 13(2), which reinforces that parliamentary of law in a republic while the laws cannot override the funda-mental rights guaranteed by the caprice of an absolute Constitution and remain subject monarch.

mies; one belongs to the rule

AND CONSEQUENTLY, NOT ANSWERABLE TO THE COURTS

sification is devoid of any factual basis and based on a premise that abatement of legal proceedings for reclamation of religious sites other

**Govt schools show improvement** 

differential ground will be

declared as unconstitutional:

(a) if there is no intelligible

differentia between the clas-

sification made, which distin-

by the statute in question.

the Act is unconstitutional for

First, the exemption accord-

ed to Ram Janma Bhumi

presumes the rights of the

parties attached to the

Ayodhya dispute to be more

equal and holier than the

rights of similarly placed par-

ties about the other two reli-

gious sites (Kashi &

Mathura); secondly, the clas-

two primary reasons:

been excluded;

idating it entirely. (The author is a practising advocate in Delhi, with inputs from Vaidushya Parth; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Budget 2025-26: A leap toward 'Viksit Bharat' with fintech at the forefront



S SUNDARARAJAN

Finance Minister has unveiled a forward-looking Budget that reinforces India's commitment to financial inclusion, innovation and sustainable economic growth.

fintech sectors.

trade hub.

transactions, and bolstering

India's position as a global

Higher Credit Availability

for MSMEs and Startups -

Enhanced credit card limits

for micro-enterprises, along-

are well-positioned to: Scale

digital banking and embed-

ded finance solutions to cater

to unbanked and under-

banked segments, fostering a

Minister, inance ➡ Nirmala Sitharaman has presented a forwardthinking and progressive Union Budget 2025-26 that reinforces India's steadfast journey toward Viksit Bharat. This year's budget is a reflection of the government's unwavering commitment to fostering financial inclusion, driving innovation and ensuring sustainable economic growth. By laying a robust foundation for a digital-first economy, it not only addresses the present needs of businesses and individuals but also sets a visionary course for the future of India's financial ecosystem.

The fintech sector has been a cornerstone of India's digital transformation, playing an instrumental role in expanding financial accessibility, empowering MSMEs, and accelerating the adoption of digital transactions. The government's continued emphasis on fostering a light-touch regulatory environment, strengthening digital public infrastructure, and enhancing credit availability for small businesses and startups is a significant step forward in unlocking new avenues for



fintech innovation. These strategic measures will help fintech companies drive greater financial inclusion and economic resilience across the country.

Some of the most impactful side expanded guarantee highlights of this budget for cover programs, will provide vital financial support to budthe fintech ecosystem include: Grameen Credit Score ding entrepreneurs and small Framework - A groundbusinesses, fueling economic breaking initiative aimed at growth and job creation. transforming rural financial As we look ahead, the fiscal year 2025-26 presents enorempowerment by enabling better credit access for Selfmous opportunities for fintech players like us at i-exceed Help Group (SHG) members and underserved rural comto drive groundbreaking munities. This will facilitate innovations in banking and financial services. With strong greater participation of rural enterprises in the formal regulatory support and government-led initiatives, we economy.

Revamped Central KYC **Registry** – A much-needed step toward simplifying compliance requirements for financial institutions, reducing redundancies, and more inclusive financial landenhancing the ease of doing scape.

Leverage cutting-edge tech-nologies such as AI, business across banking and **Expansion of Digital Public** blockchain, and automation to enhance regulatory compli-Infrastructure – Initiatives such as BharatTradeNet will ance, improve credit risk play a pivotal role in streamassessment, and strengthen lining trade financing and fraud prevention mechadocumentation processes, nisms. ensuring seamless digital

Accelerate the adoption of digital lending and payment solutions by seamlessly integrating with India's rapidly evolving financial ecosystem, thereby enhancing user experience and operational efficiencies. The budget's strong focus on inclusive growth, digital empowerment, and financial accessibility aligns perfectly with our vision of creating next-generation fintech solutions that bridge gaps, simplify processes, and unlock new growth opportunities for businesses and individuals alike. The year ahead promises to be a transformative one for India's fintech landscape. We must seize this momentum, foster collaboration, and continue to innovate relentlessly.

(The writer is co-founder and CEOCompany: i-exceed technology solutions; views are personal)

### **PEOPLE-CENTRIC BUDGET**

Madam — The Union Budget 2025 may be hailed as the budget of the people, for the people. The FM has admirably identified the middle class's dedication towards nation building, so apart from targeting the indices, ratios and vital parameters to showcase the country's march towards the third largest economy, she has presented a grassroots budget swaying over every aspect of the middle class from largesse on tax benefits, MSMEs, farmers and entrepreneurs. The synergy of the middle class in service, industry and business will have a multiplier effect on the GDP in coming years. The new Income Tax Bill is expected next week and commensurate with the budget, comprehensive amendments and simplification are expected.

Our country has unlimited resources, but they need to be tapped through reasonable and promotional tax legislation and encouraged for wealth creation through ease and promotional legislation. The GDP has a fair ratio of revenue collection of more than sixty percent. So the revenue policymakers, particularly the GST administration, should tune their policy by lowering GST slabs and doing away with the irrelevant concepts of luxury goods. The media has missed the defence outlay increase of 9.53 per cent at Rs 681,210 crores, but looking at the huge investments in defence by neighbouring China, the resources have to be mobilised for the modernisation of infrastructure, sixth-generation missiles, aircraft, artillery, and Navy warships. It is now the turn of the state governments to present their budgets conforming with the union budget, targeting the rural industrialisation and infrastructure, modernising their existing industrial estates and promoting the industry. **Vinod Johri** | *Delhi* 

### **END EXPLOITATIVE WORKWEEKS**

Madam- The articles 'Beyond the 70hour workweek: Redefining productivity' (January 30) and 'A 90-hour workweek: Path to success or recipe for burnout' (February 1), both in The Pioneer, are

ndoubtedly, the general public has a negative image of government schools. As soon as the economy improves slightly, people are eager to send their children to pricey private schools. However, the findings of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2024) offer new optimism. The ASER report, which was conducted on pupils from

timely and well argued. The suggestions regarding 70 to 90 working hours per week by some leading industrialists and capitalists of India are highly reactionary and exploitative.

The suggestion shows their greed for more profits in the name of increased productivity and efficiency. Both the authors have given pertinent arguments against this proposal. All work and no play makes young people dull, unhealthy and unproductive. Extended working hours will make the young population of the country hypertensive, heart patients and mentally deranged. It will cast the young population of India into fire. Despite labour laws, many companies in India are taking 60 hours of work per week from their employees without paying them extra money. Due to fear of unemployment, young people are compelled to work for long hours. All righteous persons, employers and labour union leaders should oppose this proposal tooth and nail. A 5day, 35 to 36.5 hour workweek is considered ideal internationally.

Vinay Kr Malhotra | Ambala Cantt

### rural areas, demonstrates that the reading abilities and mathematical skills of youngsters aged six to fourteen in the crisis. Students' basic mathematical skills

country improved following the Corona have improved in schools at both the government and private levels.

Children in class five can solve division problems. The good news is that learning standards have increased in schools across the country. This level remained steady until 2010, after which it began to decline. According to the ASER research, as enrolment rates have improved, so has digital literacy. It is encouraging that, following the Corona period, there has been a renewed emphasis on education in schools. Awareness has also been demonstrated among parents.

**Abhijit Roy** | *Jamshedpur* 

### INDIA T20 WIN: 17TH TIME IN A ROW

Madam -- India clinched a record 17th consecutive T20 series on home soil with a thrilling 15-run win in the fourth match against England in Pune on Friday. This match will be remembered for a long time for the scintillating batting performance of Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dubey, whose half-centuries helped India bounce back from early jolts.

But it was bowler Harshit Rana who stole the show. He made his debut in the match as a concussion substitute for Shivam Dubey and claimed three scalps. However, his impressive performance did not go down well with some foreign players who questioned the entry of Harshit Rana, a bowler, as a concussion substitute for an all-rounder player. But their misplaced criticism does not belittle his feat. These are the same players who seal their lips over bad umpiring against India in their countries

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

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# **FIRSTCOLUMN**

### **THE SCIENCE OF MUDRAS**

Rooted in the five elements, the five pranas and the three doshas, mudras have therapeutic properties



### RAVI VALLURI

ord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says, "There is nothing as sacred as knowledge." Knowledge can be acquired by the human mind through the 5 Ds-dedication, determination, dynamism, devotion and discipline and one H-Humility. The science of mudras, is intrinsically related to the esoteric knowledge of yoga and which can be further segregated into the five elements, the five life forces (or subtle forces of energy called the pranas) and the three doshas. The five elements are namely - Akash (ether or space), Vayu (air), Agni (fire), Jal (water) and Prithvi (earth); the five life forces or pranas are Prana, Udana, Samana, Apana and Vyana and the three doshas are Vata, Kapha and Pitta. Humans unconsciously practice mudras. For instance, the Namaste Mudra or a young child begins learning to walk with his thumbs raised which is called the Meru Dand Mudra. An infant even in a deep slumber, his index finger would involuntarily touch the thumb and the other three fingers are on the base of the palm (Chinmaya Mudra). The universe in its auto-mode conjures these processes to take place and we are oblivious to the occurrence. Some other mudras which need to be practised are:

(a) Jnana mudra: This is performed to increase brain power, improve memory and for the removal of negative thoughts. Thereby one attains peace and bliss.

(b) Prithvi mudra: This helps in balancing the five sense organs, improves blood circulation and enhances our energy levels. Practice of this mudra assists in increasing our alertness.

(c) Apana mudra: This facilitates an improved elimination process, revitalising the digestive system, improving the gums and strengthening immu-

(d) Prana mudra: This mudra addresses the problem of fatigue; it also



provides essential vitamins to the body besides increasing stamina and vigour to the human body. It also helps in maintenance of the health of our eves

(e) Dhyana mudra: Essentially, this mudra helps in making us mindful and wakeful and we are at peace with ourselves. Over a period, we attain peace of mind.

(f) Shunya Vayu mudra: Practice of this mudra helps in combating problems of flatulence and gastric ailments. The gut houses our solar plexus, which is also referred to as the second brain. We need to take adequate care of our abdomen as most human ailments arise from this part of

# Cornered in the wild: Trapped tigers spark conservation debate

As human encroachment, tourism and habitat fragmentation continue to blur the boundaries between nature and civilisation write BKP Sinha and Arvind Kumar Jha

viral video capturing a distressing scene of a tigress and her cubs blocked by a throng of safari vehicles in Maharashtra's Umred Pauni Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary has recently stirred significant concern and legal action. The Bombay High Court has taken suo-motu cognizance of the incident. Soon after, the Supreme Court sought a uniform national policy for managing the country's tiger reserves. The harrowing sight of the tiger family, seemingly gripped by fear while navigating the available space, serves as a poignant metaphor for the troubling dynamics between humans and wildlife, whether inside a tiger reserve or not. Mankind's relentless drive to dominate and exploit nature has led to a disturbingly eroded sense of ecological sanity. Tigers, magnificent predators endowed with a formidable set of adaptations, have long been revered for their prowess. Their sharp teeth and claws, exceptional vision and hearing, flexible spines and explosive bursts of speed enable them to effi-

ciently stalk and capture prey. Their striped coats act as camouflage, making them elusive both as hunters and as well as prey. Tigers, being solitary creatures, are known to be fiercely territorial, marking their domains with scents, claw marks, and vocalisations.While frequent and close encounters with tigers may thrill tourists, these experiences come at a significant cost to the animals' well-being. Increased human presence not only exacerbates stress and vulnerability among these majestic creatures but also alters their natural behaviour. After several populist initiatives to regularise forest encroachments, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) was legislated in 2006. It marked an era of mass-scale recognition of habitation, self-cultivation, and community forest resource rights. However, it has also resulted in new encroachments and a notable influx of human populations into forest areas increasing the proximity and chances of conflict between wildlife and humans.

The data from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs shows that by November 2024, an over-whelming 4.35 million (85.7 per cent) out of 5.07 million claims under the FRA had been disposed of. Titles on forest rights in 33 million acres of forest land having been FOREST OFFICIALS given, illegal occupation continues in the rejected cases which are 36.5 per cent in leftwing affected states and 60 per cent in others

The absence of a final deadline for claim submission, ease of securing recommendations from Gram Sabhas that many times are not held, the prevalent use of the FRA as a political tool, and the quality of scrutiny at the authorities' levels have created an environment encouraging encroachers confident of RESPONSIBILITIES regularisation. In Gujarat, 434 cases have been disposed of, and Maharashtra accept- AND CHALLENGES ed 4,322 new individual forest rights claims in November while distributing 498 titles. Triggered by legislation, such a trend of ingress into wildlife habitats is unprecedented. There has been a significant surge in recognition of community forest resource rights (CFRR) after the FRA Rules were amended in 2012. Management rights of forests have been granted to communities by violating the eligibility conditions stipulat-ed in sections 3(1)(i) and 4(3) of the FRA. Not sparing even tiger reserves and National Parks and Sanctuaries, such rights are granted, for example, in huge areas in Chhattisgarh in Dhamtari (5,544 ha), Achankmar and Sitanadi Udanti tiger reserves (12,527 ha), 60 per cent of Billigiri Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, and the



UNPRECEDENTED MOVE, THE **ODISHA STATE** GOVERNMENT

ACCOUNTABLE FOR TIGER

Tansa Sanctuary in Maharashtra. Such actions do trigger a surge of human presence within wildlife habitats. As regards human casualties resulting from tiger attacks, they were recorded at 110 in 2022 and 82 in 2023. Data from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), however, sheds light on troubling trends in tiger mortality. In 2021 and 2022, tiger deaths within reserves exceeded those outside. However, this pattern reversed in 2023 and 2024, with more tiger fatalities occurring outside protected areas. As of January 2025, 17 tiger deaths have been reported, 12 of which occurred outside reserves. The conversion of spared areas into shared spaces impacts the behaviour of wildlife. Tigers are no exception.

They naturally respect territorial boundaries but get forced to venture into human habitations due to encroachment and habitat degradation. It does result in harm to ocals, mostly accidental and out of hunger rather than retaliatory or revengeful. People, however, in contrast to their erstwhile prevalent spir-DEATHS WHICH it of toterance and to catcher mostly respond now through retalit of tolerance and co-existence,

tion, such as artificial lighting from streetlights, homes and recreational areas disrupts wildlife in numer-

analys \$ 07

It can interfere with their natural movement patterns, making it difficult for animals to navigate their habitats, find food, or avoid predators. Light pollution can also impact predation, as predators might find it easier to spot prey, or conversely, prey might become disoriented and more vulnerable. Additionally, artificial lighting can affect reproductive behaviours, as many species rely on natural light cues for mating rit-uals and timing. The current approach of providing electricity etc. to interior forest habitations, seemingly beneficial for human populations, does pose a significant threat to long-term wildlife conservation. Along with this, large-scale proposals such as those recently announced in Telangana and Nagarhole (Coorg district) of Karnataka must consid-

er their potential impact on humanwildlife conflict too. Mitigating adverse impacts on wildlife necessitates more than merely avoiding times when human activities overlap with wildlife activities. Even if human disturbances occur outside of wildlife activity periods, the large-scale nature of such disturbances can still have a profound effect on wildlife. These disturbances often displace ani-mals from their natural habitats, causing significant behavioural changes that can threaten even their survival. Instances from the area near Pench National Park in Maharashtra highlight the negative consequences of the changed behaviour of tigers. In one such case, a tiger in Parshiwni village attacked only tethered cattle, easy prey. During the necropsy of this tiger,

excessive fat was found due to

changes in its behaviour and diet. In the Ramtek area tigers have

exhibited a concerning loss of ter-

ritorial instincts indicating a break-

down in their natural order and

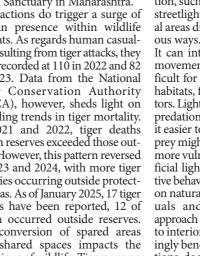
social structure. Another tiger from

the Kanhan region displayed unusu-

consuming its kill. Such avoidance

suggests, prima facie, a high level of stress and disturbance. Such instances are alarming as they simply indicate that the natural predator-prey dynamics and status of the health of the tiger population are compromised. Minimising disturbance to wildlife is paramount inside tiger reserves. However, with the current onslaught by humans and the pace of blurring of ecosystem boundaries, a more nuanced approach is necessary which requires a deeper understanding of the spatial and temporal dynamics of wildlife movement, recognition of the varying levels of sensitivity among different species, and consideration of a broader ecological context that includes fragmented landscapes, human settlements, and the impacts of climate change.

While the whole country is eagerly waiting for an early decision in the matter of Wildlife first and Ors Vs Union of India & Ors (109/2008) from the Supreme Court, the need for a national policy framework for not just tiger reserves but for all habitats cannot be overstated. It should be implemented by State Governments while duly considering the local contexts and the unique challenges faced by each region. Evicting illegal encroachments on forest and wildlife habitats and relocating the genuine right-holders onto non-forest areas with adequate infrastructure should be the first step towards restoration of the ecological integrity of our natural systems. The impacts of climate change and natural disasters are no longer theoretical threats but stark realities. Recognizing the broader public interest in wildlife conservation and ecosystem sustainability, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the National Tiger Conservation Authority, and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs must collaborate closely to develop and implement effective conservation strategies that address these challenges. (The writer are former PCCFs, UP and Maharashtra; views expressed are personal)



the body.Therefore, there is enormous merit in the adage, "Health is in your hands"

Sudarshan Kriya: The unique breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya is the fulcrum of the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living. Su means proper, Darshan implies vision and Kriya is a purifying action. Through the actions of our breath, we appreciate a proper vision of who we are. It is momentous to understand that nature runs on a rhythm. For instance, the sun rises and sets at a particular time, similarly, seasons arrive and exit at predetermined times. Humans feel hungry or sleepy at certain times. Our emotions, feelings and thoughts are all cast in the symphony of rhythm. We are unable to distinguish between cacophony and symphony in this frenetic pace of life which is cannonaded by innumerable thoughts, continuous action and noise. When sounds are harmonised by the syllable of Soham, we can term it as magical music. Enlightenment is not accruing anything providential but harmonising our whole being rhythmically. During the breathing process participants feel varied sensations, emotions, tingling sensations, laughter, weeping among others. This wonderful knowledge and wisdom have triggered humanness to blossom when every cell is energised.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

HAS STIRRED iation or out of vengeance resulting in the escalation of human-wildlife CONVERSATIONS conflict.

In an unprecedented move, the ABOUT THE Odisha state government issued an order in 2024 holding forest officials accountable for tiger deaths which has stirred conversations about the responsibilities and challenges faced FACED BY by foresters in balancing conserva-FORESTERS IN tion efforts with the rights and safety of people. The interaction between humans and wildlife BALANCING species that are naturally active CONSERVATION during the day (diurnal) or at dawn and dusk (crepuscular) face substan-**EFFORTS WITH** tial behavioural changes when their THE RIGHTS AND activity patterns overlap with human activities. In the case of recreation-SAFETY OF al activities in parks also, animals that typically forage or hunt during PEOPLE these times may alter their routines due to the presence of people, leading to stress and changes in feeding, mating, and territorial behaviours. al behaviour by regularly avoiding Inside and near forests, light pollu-

### Budget 2025 puts sustainability at the forefront, but execution holds the key

With substantial investments in renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture and afforestation, the budget lays a strong foundation for a greener future

◄ he Union Budget 2025 signals a decisive shift towards environmental sustainability, reinforcing India's commitment to a cleaner, greener future. With a strong focus on renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, afforestation, waste management and climate resilience, the government has intended to balance economic growth with ecological responsibility Expanding solar, wind, and hydro energy, along with incentives for green hydrogen, is a welcome step toward reducing India's carbon footprint. The emphasis on electric vehicles (EVs) and battery storage solutions will further bolster the transition to

clean energy, reducing



chemical

RAJ KUMAF **SRIVASTAVA** 

dependence on fossil fuels. However, the chal lenge remains in efficient implementation and ensuring accessibility to these technologies, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Agriculture, often at the crossroads of economic and environmental policies, has the received a much-needed sus- Afforestation

tainability boost. The PM Management Authority Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi (CAMPA) Yojana and Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses are moving in the right direction, ensuring climateresilient farming and reducing excessive reliance on fertilisers. However, agroforestry, regenerative farming and watershed management need further integration into mainstream agricultural pol-

icy to create a truly sustainable food system. The budget's allocation for afforestation and biodiversity conservation reflects an increased understanding of the role that forests and ecosystems play in mitigating climate change. With Compensatory Fund

receiving enhanced support, there is hope that India's forests will be managed with greater transparency and scientific precision. However, urban greening and nature-based solutions in city planning deserve stronger commitments, given the growing challenges of urban heat islands and pollution.

The circular economy model gets a notable push with incentives for waste-to-energy projects, stricter plastic waste management, and extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations. These are positive steps, but enforcement remains a crucial hurdle. Ensuring that industries comply with waste management norms and



moving towards a zerowaste economy will require robust monitoring and public participation.

The budget's recognition of climate resilience, particu-

larly through disaster management investments and early warning systems, is a commendable effort. Coastal and flood-prone regions will benefit from increased fund-

ing for disaster-resistant infrastructure, but a longterm climate adaptation roadmap needs further detailing. One of the most promising

aspects of Budget 2025 is the expansion of India's Green Finance ecosystem. With tax incentives for Green Bonds and carbon trading markets, the government is encouraging private sector participation in sustainability efforts. However, ensuring that green investments translate into real environ-mental benefits will require stringent regulatory oversight and transparency.

While Budget 2025 takes significant strides in pro-moting environmental sustainability, its true success will be measured by execution, enforcement, and longterm commitment.

India has demonstrated political will in tackling climate change, but the challenge remains in aligning policy promises with on-the-ground realities. Sustainability is not just a budgetary allocation; it is a mindset shift. To truly achieve a green future, India needs a whole-of-society approach, where the government, private sector, and citizens work together to ensure that economic growth does not come at the cost of ecological wellbeing. With this budget, India has set the direction-what remains is the resolve to act decisively.

(The writer is a retired IFS officer; views are personal)



# **TRUMP PUTS TARIFFS ON CANADA, MEXICO AND CHINA** Spurs trade war as North American allies respond

### PTI PALM BEACH (US)

President Donald Trump on Saturday signed an order to impose stiff tariffs on imports from Mexico, Canada and China, drawing swift retaliation from the country's North American neighbours in an emerging trade war. The Republican president post-

ed on social media that the tariffs were necessary "to protect Americans," pressing the three nations to do more to curb the manufacture and export of illicit fentanyl and for Canada and Mexico to reduce illegal immigration into the US. The action fulfilled one of Trump's commitments to voters but threw the global economy and Trump's own political mandate to lower prices into turmoil. The tariffs, if sustained, could cause inflation to significantly worsen, possibly eroding voters' trust that Trump could as promised lower the prices of groceries, gasoline, housing, autos and other goods.

Trump declared an economic emergency in order to place duties of 10% on all imports from China and 25% on imports from Mexico and Canada. But energy imported from Canada, including oil, natural gas and electricity, would be taxed at a 10% rate. The action provoked an eco-nomic standoff with America's two largest trading partners in Mexico and Canada, upending a decades-old trade relationship with the possibility of harsh reprisals by those two nations. Mexico's president immediately ordered retaliatory tariffs and Canada's prime minister said the country would put matching 25% tariffs on up to \$155 billion in US imports. China did not immediately respond to Trump's action.

Trump's order includes a mechanism to escalate the rates charged by the US against retaliation by the other countries, raising the specter of an even more severe economic disruption.

Canadian Prime Minister

Justin Trudeau on Saturday said that Canadian duties on \$30 billion in trade in American alcohol and fruit will take effect Tuesday, when it was removing American the US tariffs go into effect. He opened his address to Canadians with a message to the tariffs. aimed at American consumers.

"It will have real consequences for you, the American people," he said, saying it would result in higher prices on groceries and other goods. Trudeau channelled the views

of many Canadians who were feeling betrayed by their neighbour and longtime ally, reminding Americans that Canadian troops fought alongside them in Afghanistan and helped them respond to myriad crises from wildfires in California to Hurricane Katrina.

"The actions taken today by the White House split us apart instead of bringing us togeth-er," Trudeau said, warning in French that it could bring about "dark times" for many people. He encouraged Canadians to "choose Canadian products and services rather than American ones.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said she had instructed her economy secretary to implement a response that includes retaliatory tariffs and other measures in defense of Mexico's interests. We categorically reject the

White House's slander that the Mexican government has alliances with criminal organizations, as well as any intention of meddling in our territory," Sheinbaum wrote in a post on "If the United States govern-

ment and its agencies wanted to address the serious fentanyl consumption in their country, they could fight the sale of drugs on the streets of their major cities, which they don't do and the laundering of money that this illegal activity generates that has done so much harm to its population." tries. Meanwhile, the Premier of The Trump administration put

Canadian province of British Columbia, David Eby, called on residents to stop buying liquor from U.S. "red" states and said alcohol brands from government store shelves as a response

In a televised message, Eby deemed the Trump's administration decision as "a declara-tion of economic war against a trusted ally and friend" and that he will stand up for his citizens and all Canadians in general.

Éffective today, I have directed BC liquor sales to immediately stop buying American liquor from red states," he said. "Liquor store employees will be removing the most popular of these brands from government store shelves?

The tariffs will go into effect on Tuesday, setting a showdown in North America that could potentially sabotage economic growth. A new analysis by the Budget Lab at Yale laid out the possible damage to the US economy, saying the average US household would lose the equivalent of \$1,170 in income from the taxes. Economic growth would slow and inflation would worsen — and the situation could be even worse

if the countries retaliate. A senior US administration official, insisting on anonymity to brief reporters, said the lower rate on energy reflected a desire to minimise any disruptive increases on the price of gasoline or utilities.

That's a sign White House offi-cials understand the gamble they're taking on inflation. Price spikes under former President Joe Biden led to voter frustration that helped to return Trump to the White

House last year. The order signed by Trump contained no mechanism for granting exceptions, the official said, a possible blow to homebuilders who rely on Canadian lumber as well as farmers, automakers and other indus-

the tariffs in place to force the three countries to stop the spread and manufacturing of fentanyl, in addition to pressuring Canada and Mexico to limit any illegal immigration into the United States.

The official did not provide specific benchmarks that could be met to lift the new tariffs, saying only that the best measure would be fewer Americans dying from fentanyl addiction. The order would also allow for tariffs on Canadian imports of less than \$800. Imports below that sum are currently able to cross into the United States without customs and duties.

"It doesn't make much economic sense,' said William Reinsch, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former U.S. trade official.

"Historically, most of our tariffs on raw materials have been low because we want to get cheaper materials so our manufacturers will be competitive .. Now, what's he talking about? He's talking about tariffs on raw materials. I don't get the economics of it.'

The Republican president is making a major political bet that his actions will not significantly worsen inflation, cause financial aftershocks that could destabilize the worldwide economy or provoke a voter backlash. AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of the electorate in last year's election, found that the U.S. was split on support for tariffs.

With the tariffs, Trump is honouring promises that are at the core of his economic and national security philosophy. But the announcement showed his seriousness around the issue as some Trump allies had played down the threat of higher import taxes as mere negotiating tactics.

The president is preparing more import taxes in a sign that tariffs will be an ongoing part of his second term. On Friday, he mentioned imported computer chips, steel, oil and nat-

ural gas, as well as against cop-per, pharmaceutical drugs and imports from the European Union - moves that could essentially pit the US against much of the global economy. It is unclear how the tariffs could affect the business investments that Trump said would happen because of his plans to cut corporate tax rates and remove regulations. Tariffs tend to raise prices for consumers

and businesses by making it more expensive to bring in foreign goods. Many voters turned to Trump in the November election on the belief that he could better handle the inflation that spiked under Biden. But inflation expectations are creeping upward in the University of Michigan's index of consumer sentiment as respondents expect prices to rise by 3.3%. That would be higher than the actual 2.9% annual inflation

rate in December's consumer price index. Trudeau said Canada is addressing Trump's calls on border security by implement-ing a CDN\$1.3 billion (US\$900 million) border plan that includes helicopters, new canine teams and imaging tools.

Trump still has to get a budget, tax cuts and an increase to the government's legal borrowing authority through Congress. The outcome of his tariff plans could strengthen his hand or weaken it.

Democrats were quick to say that any inflation going forward was the result of Trump, who is about to start his third week back as president.

'You're worried about grocery prices. Don's raising prices with his tariffs," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York posted on X. "You're worried about tomato prices. Wait till Trump's Mexico tariffs raise your tomato prices. ... You're worried about car prices. Wait till Trump's Canada tariffs raise your car prices," he wrote in a series of posts.



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addresses media following the imposition of a raft of tariffs by US President Donald Trump against Canada, Mexico and China, in Ottawa on Saturday.

## **US** businesses brace for rising costs

Creamery goes ahead with plans to add to its six shops. He

still has painful memories of

the extra equipment costs the

company had to absorb when

Trump slapped massive tariffs

on China during his first term.

The new tariffs will also raise

the price of a customer

favourite - sprinkles - which

Penny Ice Creamery imports

from a company in Whitby,

Ontario. Tacking a 25 per cent

import tax on even something

as small as that can damage a

small business like his.

the year."

#### PTI WASHINGTON

 $F_{\text{California to a medical sup-}}^{\text{rom an ice cream parlour in}}$ ply business in North Carolina to a T-shirt vendor outside Detroit, U.S. businesses are bracing to take a hit from the taxes President Donald Trump imposed Saturday on imports from Canada, Mexico and China — America's three biggest trading partners.

The levies -25 per cent on Canadian and Mexican and 10 per cent on Chinese goods - will take effect Tuesday. Canadian energy, including oil, natural gas and electricity, will be taxed at a lower 10 per cent rate.

Mexico's president immediately ordered retaliatory tariffs and Canada's prime minister said the country would put matching 25% tariffs on up to USD 155 billion in US imports. China did not immediately

respond to Trump's action. The Budget Lab at Yale University estimates that Trump's tariffs would cost the

average American household USD 1,000 to USD 1,200 in annual purchasing power. Gregory Daco, chief economist at the tax and consulting firm EY, calculates that the tariffs would increase inflation, which was running at a 2.9 per cent annual rate in December, by 0.4 percentage points this year. Daco also projects that the US ization agreements between economy, which grew 2.8 per cent last year, would fall by 1.5 in his first term, is believed to per cent this year and 2.1 per ent in 2026 s higher im

of Detroit, that imports cloth-ing from China. She said the 10 per cent tax would increase her costs, though she plans to absorb the extra expense instead of passing it along to customers.

world 08

"I don't like what's going on," she said, referring to the broader impact of the tariffs. "And I think people are going to be truly shocked at the pricing they're going to see on the cars, on the lumber, on the clothes, on the food. This is

going to be a mess. William Reinsch, a former US "The margins are so slim," he said. "Being able to offer that trade official now with the add-on can maybe generate an Centre for Strategic and additional 10 cents in profit per International Studies, said that many companies that stocked scoop. If a tariff wipes that out, up on imported goods ahead that can really be the difference of time to avoid the tariffs. They will be able to draw on between being profitable and being break-even and even being underwater by the end of their piled-up inventories for weeks or a couple of months, In Asheville, North Carolina, Casey Hite, CEO of Aeroflow delaying their customers' pain. George Carrillo, CEO of the Health, expects to take a hit Hispanic Construction because his company gets more than half its supplies — includ-ing breast pumps — from Council, an industry advocacy group, said construction companies have been hoarding Chinese manufacturers, promaterials in anticipation of viding them to American Trump's actions, but he worpatients through insurance plans. Aeroflow Health gets ries about the possibility of

inflation spiking in three to six months. "Once that inventory starts to get low, we're going to start feel-ing the effects," Carillo said in a phone interview Saturday, ahead of the announcement. "Developers and general contractors need to keep up with the pace and they're going to

and it's going to be at a higher

All that will be exacerbated by

huving me

start

price point.

# **Israel's Netanyahu heads to US to discuss 'victory over Hamas' with Trump**

### PTI TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday he will discuss "victory over Hamas," countering expanding diplomat ic relations with Arab countries in his meeting with US President Donald Trump. Tuesday's meeting at the White House will be Trump's first with a foreign leader since returning to office. It comes as US and Arab mediators begin the daunting work of brokering the next phase of an agreement to wind down the war in the Gaza Strip and release dozens of militant-held hostages. Hamas, which has quickly reasserted its control over Gaza since the ceasefire took hold last month, has said it will not release the hostages slated to go free in the second phase without an end to the war and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces. Netanyahu, who is under mounting pressure from farright governing partners to

phase ends in early March, has militant groups across the said Israel is still committed to region, including Hamas.

victory over Hamas and the He said that by working togethreturn of all the hostages cap-tured in the militants' Oct. 7, rity, broaden the circle of peace and achieve a remarkable era of

resume the war after the first referring to Iran's alliance of Under the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, Hamas is to release a total of 33 hostages. eight of whom Hamas says are dead, in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

the second phase in Washington on Monday. Trump, who brokered normal

Israel and four Arab countries

that triggered the war. It's unclear where Trump stands

in all this.

2023 attack

He has been a staunch supporter of Israel, but has also pledged to end wars in the Middle East and took credit for helping to broker the ceasefire agreement. The deal has halted the fighting and led to the release of 18 hostages who had been held for over 15 months, as well as hundreds of Palestinians impris-

oned by Israel Netanyahu embraces Trump's call for peace through strength: In a statement released ahead of his departure on Sunday, Netanyahu said they would discuss "victory over Hamas, achieving the release of all our hostages and dealing with the Iranian terror axis in all its components,"

peace through strength." The war began when thou-

sands of Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostage. Over 100 hostages were freed during a weeklong ceasefire in November 2023, eight have been rescued alive and dozens of bodies have been recovered by Israeli forces.

Israel's air and ground war has killed over 47,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to local health authorities who do not say how many of the dead were fighters. The war has left large parts of several cities in ruins and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people.

Israeli forces have lled back from most areas and allowed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to devastated northern Gaza.

Negotiations on the second phase, in which the war would end and the remaining 60 or so hostages would be returned, are set to begin Monday. If the United States, Oatar and Egypt are unable to broker an agreement between Israel and Hamas, the war could resume in early March.

Aspirations for a bigger deal: Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, joined the yearlong ceasefire negotiations in their final weeks last month and helped push the agreement over the finish line. He met with Netanyahu in Israel last week and the two were expected to formally begin talks on

e seeking a wider and noten. tially historic agreement in which Israel would forge ties with Saudi Arabia.

But the kingdom, which resisted similar entreaties from the Biden administration, has said it would only agree to such a deal if the war ends and there is a credible pathway to a Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem, territories Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war. Netanyahu's government is opposed to Palestinian state-

hood, and a key partner, farright Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, has threatened to leave the governing coalition if the war is not resumed next month. That would raise the likelihood of early elections in which Netanyahu could be voted out

costs dampen consumer spending and business investment? The Penny Ice Creamery in Santa Cruz, California, has had to hike prices of its ice cream — including popular flavours "strawberry pink pep-percorn" and "chocolate caramel sea salt" - repeatedly in recent years as an inflationary surge increased the cost of its supplies.

"I feel bad about always having to raise prices," said co-owner Zach Davis. "We were looking forward to inflation coming down, the economy stabilizing in 2025 ... Now with the tariffs, we may be back at it again."

Trump tariffs, Davis said, threaten to drive up the cost of the mostly made-in-China refrigerators, freezers and blenders he'll need if Penny Ice

insurance Those might take two years to materialise, Hite said, but eventually they would hit consumers' budgets.

paid by insurers at pre-negoti-

ated rates, put in place before Trump decided on his tariffs. Hite said the tax on Chinese

imports would hit the compa-

ny's finances, forcing it either

to purchase cheaper and lower-

quality products or pass high-

er costs along via higher health

"It will impact the patients," Hite said. "In time, patients pay more for the products." Even the made-in-USA absorbent incontinence pads Aeroflow Health buys aren't safe from Trump's import taxes. They may include pulp from tariff target Canada and plastics and packaging from China, according to the Aeroflow Health, which warns of "turbulences" from the tariffs.

"Is this going to affect our business? You bet it is," said Linda Schlesinger-Wagner, who owns skinnytees, a women's apparel company in Birmingham, Michigan, north

additional climate finance for

developing countries, have

stood out for their timeliness

"It is my hope that India will

continue to advance the inter-

ests of the Global South," he

India has rapidly emerged as a

critical enabler of South-South

Cooperation through initia-

tives like the India-UN Development Partnership

Fund which supports sustain-

able development projects in

Least Developed Countries

Developing Countries (LLDCs)

and Small Island Developing

"For all of these reasons, I con-

vey my deep appreciation for

the longstanding and steadfast

commitment that India has

displayed towards multilateral-

ism, and I am confident that

this will continue in the future,

Landlocked

and sincerity," Yang said.

said.

(LDCs),

Yang said.

States (SIDS).

an emerging immigration crackdown that is already spooking the construction industry's labour pool, he said. 'You put tariffs and you put workforce instability, it's going to create major delays in projects. It's going to create an increase in prices because of the lack of availability," Carrillo said. Then there are the industries that don't have the luxury of stockpiling, including supermarkets whose farm products will spoil. So the impact will show up on grocery

shelves within days. "You don't stockpile avocados," Reinsch said. "You don't stockpile cut flowers. You don't stockpile bananas?

### India experienced remarkable transformation in last decade: UNGA President Yang including in other multilater-

### PTI UNITED NATIONS

India has experienced "remarkable transformation" in the last decade, UN General Assembly President Philemon Yang has said, underlining that his upcoming visit to the country will give him an opportunity to see how digital and technological innovation has "fuelled this change"

Yang will visit India from February 4 to 8, his first official visit to the country as President of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.

"As the world's largest democracy, the fifth-largest economy and home to one-fifth of humanity, India is an important member of the United Nations," Yang told PTI in an exclusive interview ahead of his

Responding to a question on the visit's focus, Yang said he looks forward to "understanding, more deeply, India's priorities and vision for the future of multilateralism?

During the visit, he will engage with Indian leadership, includ-

ing President Droupadi Murmu and External Affairs

place. For that reason, I would like Recalling that he had visited India in 2013 as Prime Minister of Cameroon, Yang said that since then, India has experiand heritage

enced a "remarkable transformation" and he expects the visit to give him the "opportunity to see how digital and technological innovation has fuelled this change, all the way to the grassroots level. The visit will also serve to highlight the importance of

information sharing and capacity building in advancing sustainable development in the Global South. India has in many respects led the way through its South-South cooperation," Yang said in the written interview. Yang said his message "to the

people of India, and particularly to the young people of India, is one of confidence and ambition. Confidence in the extraordinary work achieved and ambition in that there is always more work to do, collectively, to make our world a better

Minister Dr S Jaishankar.

to encourage them to continue spearheading efforts in harnessing innovation while also celebrating their rich culture

"As the world's largest popula-tion, the people of India have a huge stake in the work of the United Nations, in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and in ensuring that -indeed- no one is left behind. I therefore look forward to seeing India's continued engagement and leadership within the United Nations," Yang said. Yang began his year-long tenure as President of the 193member General Assembly in

mencement of the 79th UNGA session. As PGA, his priorities include peace and security in Africa, combatting illicit use of small arms and light weapons, eliminating child labour, and turbocharging the SDGs, through digitalisation. Given his focus on digitalisa-

September last year at the com-

tion and how it can advance SDGs, Yang said he is particularly keen to see how India is using digital technology to improve the lives of its people, especially in the health sector. In this connection, Yang said he will be visiting a District

Vaccine Store in Gautam Buddha Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and meet with health workers to understand the role of some Bengaluru and other sites in of these digital public infrastructure (DPI) tools. "I am told the Co-WIN plat-

form was instrumental in delivering two billion doses to India during the COVID-19 pandemic (I have heard it being referred to as the "digital backbone" of the vaccination programme in response to the pandemic).

tions to the multilateral system stand out, Yang listed India's contribution to peacekeeping, efforts as a first responder in numerous humanitarian emergencies and being a strong voice of the Global South.

Yang said that India's most ignificant contribution to the UN has been to its peacekeeping operations, both in terms of financial and human resources. With more than 290,000 Indians having served in 49 of the 71 UN peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948, India's contribution to multilateral efforts towards peace and security is remarkable.

He further said that India has acted as a first responder in numerous humanitarian emergencies within its region and has contributed humanitarian aid, whether in the form of food grains or medical supplies, to countries and regions devastated by war and natural disasters.

Finally, India's consistent efforts to defend and advance the voice of the Global South,

Yang, as UNGA President, presided over the adoption of al forums, particularly on urgent issues like mobilising the Pact of Future in September financing for sustainable devellast year. opment and advocating for

Given his focus on the Pact and its roadmap, Yang said that as General Assembly President, his role is to support the imple mentation efforts of the Pact. "I intend to do this by facilitating inclusive dialogue, creating opportunities for Member States to engage substantively in the implementation of the Pact, and galvanising collective efforts to advance its objectives." When asked what role he envisages for India in this, Yang said India is a strong voice of the Global South, a country that has made great strides at the national level, including on artificial intelligence which is one of the topical areas of the Pact.

"It is for this reason that I think that India, like other countries from the Global South, must not just take an active role in these discussions, but should also lead on national implementation of the Pact's commitments," he said.

Yang also plans to visit the Infosys Campus and the Indian Institute of Science in

Delhi and Bengaluru. When asked to highlight three areas where India's contribu-

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# Zelenskyy says excluding Ukraine from **US-Russia talks on war 'dangerous'**

### PTI KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday that excluding his country from talks between the US and Russia about the war in Ukraine would be "very dangerous" and asked for more discussions between Kyiv and Washington to develop a plan for a ceasefire.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, Zelenskyy said Russia does not want to engage in ceasefire talks or to discuss any kind of concessions, which the Kremlin interprets as losing at a time when its troops have the upper hand on the battlefield. He said US President Donald Trump could bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the table with the threat of sanctions targeting Russia's energy and banking system, as well as continued support of the Ukrainian military.

"I think these are the closest and most important steps," he said in the interview in the Ukrainian capital that lasted for more than an hour.

Zelenskyy's remarks followed comments Friday by Trump, who said American and Russian officials were "already talking" about ending the war. Trump said his administra-tion has had "very serious" discussions with Russia, but he did not elaborate.

"They may have their own relations, but talking about Ukraine without us — it is dan-gerous for everyone," Zelenskyy said.

He said his team has been in contact with the Trump administration, but those discussions are at a "general level," and he believes in-person meetings will take place soon to develop

more detailed agreements. 'We need to work more on this," he said, adding that understandably Trump appeared to be focused on domestic issues in the first weeks after his inauguration. The nearly three-year war in Ukraine is at a crossroads. Trump promised to end the fighting within six months of taking office, but the two sides are far apart, and it is unclear how a ceasefire deal would take shape. Meanwhile, Russia continues to make slow but steady gains along the front, and Ukrainian forces are enduring

severe manpower shortages. Most Ukrainians want a pause in fighting to rebuild their lives. The country faces neardaily Russian attacks on homes, and strikes on power systems have plunged entire cities into darkness.

Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, unable to United States of America,

return to their homes after vast tracts of the country's east have been reduced to rubble. Nearly a fifth of Ukraine is now occupied by Russia. In those areas, Moscow-appointed authorities are swiftly erasing any hint of Ukrainian identity. With Trump back in the White House, Ukraine's relationship with the U.S., its largest and most important ally, is also at a tipping point.

In an initial phone call with Trump during the presidential campaign, Zelenskyy said, the two agreed that if Trump won, they would meet to discuss the steps needed to end the war. But a planned visit by Trump's Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, was postponed "for legal reasons" Zelenskyy said. That was followed by a sudden foreign aid freeze that effectively caused Ukrainian organizations to halt projects.

"I believe that, first and foremost, we (must) hold a meeting with him, and that is important. And that is, by the way, something that everyone in Europe wants," Zelenskyy said, referring to "a common vision of a quick end to the war." After the conversation with Trump, "we should move on to some kind of format of conversation with Russians. And I would like to see the

Ukraine and the Russians at the negotiating table. ... And, to be honest, a European Union voice should also be there. I think it would be fair, effective. But how will it turn out? I don't know." Zelenskyy cautioned against allowing Putin to take "control" over the war, an apparent reference to Russia's repeated threats of escalation during President Joe Biden's administration.

Without security guarantees from Ukraine's allies, Zelenskyy said, any deal struck with Russia would only serve as a precursor to future aggression. Membership in the NATO alliance, a longstanding wish for Kyiv that Moscow has categorically rejected, is still Zelenskyy's top choice.

NATO membership is the "cheapest" option for Ukraine's allies, and it would also strengthen Trump geopolitically, Zelenskyy argued.

really believe that these are the cheapest security guarantees that Ukraine can get, the cheapest for everyone," he said "It will be a signal that it is not for Russia to decide who should be in NATO and who should not, but for the United States of America to decide. I think this is a great victory for Trump," he said, evidently appealing to the president's penchant for winners and business deals.



In this photo released by the Iranian Presidency Office, President Masoud Pezeshkian, third right, visits an exhibition of the defense ministry's latest defense and space achievements, in Tehran, Iran on Sunday,

# Syria's interim president heads to Saudi Arabia on first trip abroad, likely signal to Iran

Syria's interim president made his first trip abroad Sunday, travelling to Saudi Arabia in a move likely try-ing to signal Damascus' shift away from Iran as its main regional ally.

regional ally. Ahmad al-Sharaa, who was once aligned with al-Qaida, travelled to Riyadh alongside his government's foreign minister, Asaad al-Shaibani. A photo published by the state-run SANA news agency showed the two men on a jet, on the table behind them. Saudi state television trumpeted the fact that the first trip by al-Sharaa, first known internationally by the nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Ğolani, would make Riyadh his first destination.

Saudi Arabia had been among the Arab nations that poured money into insurgent groups

that tried to topple former President Bashar Assad after Syria's 2011 Arab Spring protests turned into a bloody crackdown. However, its groups found themselves beaten back as Assad, supported by Iran and Russia, fought the war into a stale-

That changed with the December lightning offensive led by al-Sharaa's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The group was once affiliated with aldenounced its former ties. Al-Sharaa and HTS have carefully managed their public image in the time since, favoring an olive-colored military look similar to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, Volodymyr appointing women to roles and trying to maintain ties to Syria's Christian and Shiite Alawite populations.

Elon Musk's DOGE commission gains access

to sensitive Treasury payment systems

That also includes keeping both Iran and Russia largely at arms' length as well. Iran has yet to reopen its embassy in Damascus, which had been a key node in running operations through its self-described "Axis of Resistance," including Assad's Syria, Lebanon's Hezbollah militia and other partners.

Russia meanwhile would like to maintain access to air and sea bases it has in Syria, but took in Assad when he fled Syria during the advance. Those moves appear aimed at reassuring the West and trying to get crippling sanc-tions lifted on Syria. Rebuilding the country after over a decade of war will likely cost hundreds of billions of dollars, not to mention covering the needs of Syria's people, millions of whom remain impoverished.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan vis-

Turkey and Qatar, restored ties with Assad in 2023 alongside most of the Arab world. Getting sanctions lifted could go a long way in cementing their relationship. Meanwhile, Syria's interim government still faces challenges from the Islamic State group and other militants in the country. On Saturday, a car bomb exploded in Manbij, a city in Syria's Aleppo governorate, killing four civilians and wounding

ited Damascus in January

and said Rivadh has been

"actively engaging in dia-

logue" to lift sanctions on

Syria. Saudi Arabia, unlike

Al-Sharaa's key allies in

nine, SANA reported, citing civil defense officials. Turkish-backed Syrian rebels had seized Manbij in December, part of a push by Ankara to secure Syrian territory close to its border for a buffer zone.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is for the general information that I VIJA ARORA S/0 LATE SH. PARAS RAM, R/0 1575-J R.R BLOCK, NAVEEN SHAHDARA Delhi 110032, declare that name of mine has been mentioned wrongly written as VIJAY KUMAR in my Adhar Card No 679725922992, The actual name of mine is VIJAY ARORA, which may b amended accordingly. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirement in this connection

# **Pak Army Chief pledges to defeat 'frenemies'**

#### PTI ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir has vowed to hunt down the "frenemies" acting as terrorist proxies targeting the country. Munir's comments came as he visited Quetta on Saturday following the killing of 18 soldiers during clashes with terrorists in Balochistan's Kalat district. Twenty-three terrorists were also killed in clashes.

During the visit, Munir was given a comprehensive brief on the prevailing security situation in Balochistan, the Army said in a statement. Munir said, "Those who are acting as terrorist proxies of their foreign masters who have mastered the art of manifesting double standards of hunting with the hound and running with the hare are well known to us.

"No matter what these socalled 'frenemies' may do, you will surely be defeated by the resilience of our proud nation and its Armed Forces Inshallah For the d our motherland and its people, we will definitely retaliate and 'hunt you down', whenever required and wherever you

PTI 📕 ISLAMABAD

report.

### may be," he said.

Pakistan has been battling two-pronged militancy led by the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Baloch nationalists. The two groups have been fighting for different objectives, with the TTP for the so-called Islamic system like in Afghanistan and the Baloch extremists against the alleged exploitation of Balochistan's natural wealth by the federal

government. Pakistan officials often blame the "foreign hand" for the trouble, which it said uses the local elements – 'frenemies' to create an insurgency-like situation. The Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) also appreciated the efforts of the valiant officers and soldiers of the Army, Frontier Corps and Law Enforcement Agencies for their courage and determination towards fighting terrorism. He reassured the Army's resolve to ensure the security and wellbeing of the people of Balochistan, while also reaffirming its commitment to ng the provincia ernment in its efforts to promote peace, stability, and the security forces as in addidevelopment in the region.

### Five killed as militants attack paramilitary personnel's vehicle in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

### PTI PESHAWAR

Four paramilitary personnel were among five people killed when their vehicle was ambushed by the militants in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday, police said. The incident happened in Dera Ismail Khan district

bordering South Waziristan. According to police, the Karizat Levies personnel were heading to recover a stolen truck in Daraban Tehsil of the district, accompanied by a private driver, when they were ambushed. The attack resulted in the

deaths of four Levies personnel and one civilian The security forces have been

terror operations across the country to curb the menace of terrorism in both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan.

On Saturday law enforce-ment agencies killed 23 terrorists during separate operations in Balochistan.

These operations are part of a sustained effort as the country witnessed a surge in violent attacks since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of KP and Balochistan

Terror attacks have increased since the banned militant Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan group broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the govern-

likely provided by the king-dom, with a Saudi flag visible

mate in Syria.

Qaida but has since with the interim president

carrying o

tion to losses in Balochistan, Saturday was a lethal day for another four security person-

nel and a civilian were killed in Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

### PTI WASHINGTON

The Department of Government Efficiency, I run by President Donald Trump's billion-aire adviser and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, has gained access to sensitive Treasury data including Social Security and Medicare customer pay ment systems, according to two people famil-iar with the situation. The move by DOGE, a Trump administration task force assigned to find ways to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations, means it could have wide leeway to access important taxpayer data, among other things.

The New York Times first reported the news of the group's access of the massive federal payment system. The two people who spoke to The Associated Press spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Ron Wyden of Oregon, on Friday sent a letter to Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent expressing concern that "officials associated with Musk may have intended to access these payment systems to illegally withhold payments to any number of programmes."

The news also comes after Treasury's acting Deputy Secretary David Lebryk resigned from his position at Treasury after more than 30 years of service. The Washington Post on Friday reported that Lebryk resigned his position after Musk and his DOGE organization requested access to sensitive Treasury data.

The Fiscal Service performs some of the most vital functions in government," Lebryk said in a letter to Treasury employees sent out Friday "Our work may be unknown to most of the public, but that doesn't mean it isn't exceptionally important. I am grateful for having been able to work alongside some of the nation's best and most talented operations staff."

The letter did not mention a DOGE request to access Treasury payments.

Musk on Saturday responded to a post on his social media platform X about the departure of Lebryk: "The @DOGE team discovered,

among other things, that payment approval officers at Treasury were instructed always to approve payments, even to known fraudulent or terrorist groups. They literally never denied a payment in their entire career. Not even once? He did not provide proof of this claim.

DOGE was originally headed by Musk and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, who jointly vowed to cut billions from the federal budget and usher in "mass headcount reductions across the federal bureaucracy."



### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Arushi Ahluwalia alias Arushi Puri W/o Deepak Puri, R/o 1013, Indirapuram, Shakti Khand, Ghaziabad-201014, have changed my name to ARUSHI KAUR AHLUWALIA.

PD(1377)A

I, Naresh Kumar Miglani S/o Om Parkash Miglani R/o flat no 103 tower I, Mahindra Aura apartment sector 110A Gurgaon that in some documents name mentioned is naresh kumar & in some name mentioned is naresh miglani . That Naresh kumar, Naresh Miglani & Naresh Kumar Miglani are name of one & same person. That i may be known as Naresh Kumar Miglani for all future

### PD(1378)C

Mother of- No.10136957W Rfn Amit Prasad Gupta, R/o- H.No.-C-21, CTI Complex, Raja Garden, PO- Rajouri Garden, West Delhi, Delhi- 110027, have changed my name from Sangeeta Prasad Gupta to Sangita Gupta, vide affidavit dated 01/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Baliram Prasad Gupta, Father of- No.10136957W Rfn Amit Prasad Gupta, R/o- H.No.- C-21, CTI Complex, Raja Garden, PO- Rajouri Garden, West Delhi, Delhi- 110027, have changed my name from Baliram Prasad Gupta to Baliram Gupta, vide affidavit dated 01/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi

# I, Sangeeta Prasad Gupta,

### PD(1379)C

# purposes.

# tive efforts by all relevant stakeholders-

organizations, civil society, and the private sector. Nations and their leaders must work hand in hand to address complex challenges and leverage innovation," he said. Yang underscored that it has been made clear time and time again that "we can only make progress through collaboration and partnership. World leaders must ensure that the commitments in the Pact are implemented in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. The success of the Pact lies in translating those commitments into tangible, transfor mative outcomes, especially at the national

level. My message to the leaders of the world is clear: we have no time to lose."

To put it bluntly, these payment systems simply cannot fail, and any politically motivated meddling in them risks severe damage to our tame surging inflation. country and the economy," Wyden said. UNGA President calls on member states to commit to Security Council reforms

#### PTI UNITED NATIONS

cent, a whopping 10 per cent

down from 22 per cent in June

last year. It was expected the

decision would help to increase

s the United Nations turns 80 this year, As the officer variations cannot be fit for purpose, UN General Assembly President Philemon Yang has said, calling on all mem-ber states to "engage actively" and commit to reform, including of the Security Council. Yang, who is set to travel to India from February 4 to 8 on his first official visit to the country as President of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, said the global body must acknowledge the need to adapt to the change of times.

"I believe it is imperative for the United Nations to be fit for purpose, to better address the many pressing issues of global concern. As the UN marks its 80th anniversary we must acknowledge the need to adapt to the change of times, to a manifestly different geopolitical context to that of 1945," Yang told PTI in an exclusive interview here. In response to a question on UN reforms, particularly of the powerful 15-nation body

on which the needle has not moved much over the past few decades, he said there is no doubt that the calls for reform have been loudest about the UN Security Council. "Again here, the Pact for the Future provides us with a boost of political momentum for the success of the intergovernmental negotiations during this session. I am fully supportive of the membership to follow through with ambition and determination, particularly at a moment where we see a deadlocked UN Security Council on matters of key importance for the maintenance of international peace and security," Yang said in the

written interview ahead of the visit. Yang added that the Pact emphasises the importance of making the Council more representative. "This includes addressing the historical injustice against Africa as a priority and improving the representation of underrepresented and unrepresented regions and groups. I am hopeful that we will be able to see a consolidated model being agreed to at the end of this session and I call on all

member states to engage actively and commit to reform an institution that is vital for our collective security?

At the landmark Summit of the Future during the high-level General Assembly session in September last year, world leaders had adopted by consensus the ambitious Pact of the Future along with the annexes - the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations.

On UN reform, Yang further said that in this regard, the General Assembly has played and continues to play a key role

"In fact, since the end of the Cold War, the General Assembly has been constantly reviewing its effectiveness and efficiency through the process of revitalization of the work of the Assembly.

Yang emphasised that as the most representative body in the United Nations system, the General Assembly has the potential to lead the way into the future. As it was exemplified in September 2024, at the Summit of the Future, the Assembly was able to adopt by

consensus the Pact and its annexes, charting the way forward for humanity.

India has been at the forefront of years-long efforts to reform the Security Council, saying the UN body does not reflect current geopolitics realities and underscored that it rightly deserves a permanent seat at the horse-shoe table. India last sat at the UN high table as a non-permanent member in 2021-22. In response to a question on how nations and leaders should ensure implementation of the roadmap laid out in the Pact as the world confronts challenges and conflicts, Yang said the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is a key moment for the international community to not only reflect on the collective achievements of the organisation since its foundation but to highlight those areas where urgent action is needed.

The Pact provides a perfect lens through which the international community can undertake this exercise, he said adding that the Pact marked a major step towards the

that is responsive to the realities of today's world and the challenges of tomorrow. It is also a powerful tool to accelerate the process of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, he said. "Its implementation requires collec-

realisation of a renewed international system

member states, international and regional

PD(1380)C

The Dawn newspaper report-Pakistan failed to kick-start economic growth in the ed that despite a steep fall in the interest rate, the monetary first seven months of the expansion remained negative current fiscal year despite a during the first seven months massive 10 per cent reduction of the current fiscal year, noting that the frequent declines in in the interest rate by the interest rates resulted in a mascentral bank during this period, according to a media sive outflow of liquidity from banks to the private sector The State Bank of Pakistan in and non-bank financial instituthe latest cut on January 27 furtions (NBFIs). ther reduced the interest rate by Still, it has failed to stimulate 1 per cent to set it at 12 per

money supply and growth.

economic growth, it said. Bank advances to the private sector and NBFIs increased sharply in the second quarter of FŶ25

While financial experts believe that the impact of high liquidity supply to the private sector will take time to impact the economy, the government fears that inflation may catch the economy again, imports would be higher, and resultantly the current account would face a deficit which was currently surplus with USD 1.2 billion in the first half of FY25. According to the newspaper,

Pakistan's economic growth stalls

despite interest rate cuts: Report

the latest data showed that the M2 growth (money supply) was negative Rs973 billion in July 1-Jan 17, FY25, compared to a net growth of Rs 416 billion in the same period last fis-

cal year. Expanding the money supply is meant to result in lower interest rates and borrowing costs to boost consumption and investment.

The M2 data shows that the broad money expanded by Rs 4.94 trillion in FY24 and Rs 4.17 trillion in FY23. This huge supply, mostly to the government, created only inflation, which reached a record high of 38 per cent in May 2023

It badly hampered economic growth as the State Bank increased the interest rate to



# Budget is by the people, for the people, says Finance Minister

### PTI NEW DELHI

Paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday described the Union Budget as "by the people, for the people, of the people", and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was fully behind the idea to cut taxes for the middle class but it took time to convince the bureaucrats.

"We have heard the voice of the middle class" who had been about complaining their aspirations not being met despite being honest taxpayers, she told PTI in an interview.

With the honest and proud taxpayers wanting the government to do more to limit the impact of factors like inflation, the prime minister was quick to task Sitharaman to look at ways to give relief.

While Modi was quick to agree to tax relief, it took a bit of convincing to get on board the officials in the finance ministry and the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - who are tasked to ensure revenue collection to meet welfare and other schemes, she

Presenting her eighth straight budget, Sitharaman on Saturday announced an increase in the personal income tax threshold below which taxpayers owe no tax to ₹12 Lakh, up from ₹7 Lakh, as well as a rejig in tax brackets that would help those earning higher than that save up to  $\overline{1}$ . Lakh. The  $\overline{5}$  lakh hike in exemption limit is the biggest ever and equals all the reliefs that were given

between 2005 and 2023. "I think the prime minister put it succinctly, he said it's the people's Budget, it is the Budget which the people wanted."

Asked to describe the ethos of the budget in her own words, she said, "As they say in democracy in Abraham Lincoln's words, it is Budget by the people, of the people for the people.

Sitharaman said the new rates would "substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands, boosting household consumption, savings and investment". Explaining the thought that went

behind the big announcement, Sitharaman said the tax cuts were in the works for some time.

One of the ideas was to make the



direct tax simpler and easier to comply with. Ŵork on this started in the July 2024 Budget and now a new law is on the anvil, which will simplify the language, reduce the compliance burden and be a bit more user-friendly.

"It wasn't talking about rate restructuring, although for several years now, we have been looking at wavs in which the rates can be a lot more reasonably taxpayer friendly. And therefore that work was also

going on," she said. "Equally, after the July budget, there was this voice of the middle class, which felt that they were paying tax... But also felt they don't seem to have much in the way of redressing their problems.

There was also this feeling that the government was very inclusive in taking care of the very poor and the vulnerable sections "So the voice, which came

wherever I travelled, was we are

proud taxpayers. We are honest taxpayers. We want to continue to serve the country by being good taxpayers. But what do you think about what kind of things you can do for us?" she said. "And so I had this discussion also with the prime minister who put me on the specific assignment to see what is

it that you can come up with." Numbers were worked, and presented to the prime minister who gave guidance for what was presented in the FY26 Budget on Saturday, she said.

Asked how much persuasion did it take to get the prime minister on board, Sitharaman said, "No, I think your question should be. how much did it take for me to convince the ministry (and) the board (CBDT)."

So, it is not so much the PM, the PM was very clear that he wants to do something. It is for the ministry to have had the comfort level and then go with the proposal," she So, the more work that was said. needed, was needed convincing the Board for that efficiency in collection and honest taxpayers' voice" needs to be heard.

The ministry and CBDT needed

convincing because they have to be sure of revenue generation. "So, they were not wrong in reminding me periodically, saying what would it mean? But ultimately, everybody came around," she added.

The finance minister said the prime minister meets and listens to the voices of people from different sectors and industry leaders and responds to their needs.

"I'm very happy to be a part of this government, which literally hears the voice and responds," she said. Stating that an attempt has always been to widen the tax net, Sitharaman said efforts are to get more Indians, who are in a position to pay and come on board. That attempt of widening the tax

net is a continuous, ongoing exercise," she said. India currently has about 8.65 crore income tax return filers. The

number swells to over 10 crore after people with TDS liability but not filing returns are included. "I think many people who are just outside of the fringe should be

nudged to come in who have never been taxpayers or who have now

reached that level of income, or even those who have avoided tax. will all have to be brought on," she said. "So, that is certainly a task before us. We have to make sure that people are understanding the role of paying tax and bring them on board

Sitharaman defended the modest increase in capital spending at ₹11.21 Lakh Crore in the next financial year starting April compared to a lowered ₹10.18 lakh crore in the current fiscal, saying the quality of spending has also to be seen.

"If we are looking at the numbers, because we have got used to 16 per cent, 17 per cent increase (in capital spending) every year from 2020, and saying you have not increased it by that number (in the Budget for 2025-26), I would equally want to ask you to please look at the way in which the quality of spending has happened, particularly capital expenditure," she said.

She was also appreciative of the states which received the 50-year interest-free share of the money which went from the central government's side as capital expenditure for them.

# Industry experts hail steps for boosting clean energy



### PTI NEW DELHI

Industry experts hailed steps for boosting clean energy like nuclear mission, incentives for critical minerals and renewable equipment in the Budget presented on Saturday by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharman. Sitharaman announced a ₹20.000-crore nuclear mission and duty exemptions for crucial minerals and capital goods for electric vehicles to step up energy transition. Rajat Verma, Founder and CEO, LOHUM said, "The budget marks a 2025

watershed moment in India's journey toward clean energy ntv circular economy leadership. The government's strategic vision for domestic manufacturing and critical minerals recycling remarkable demonstrates foresight in securing our sustainable future." The elimination of import duties on lithium-ion battery scrap, cobalt powder, and an array of critical mineral wastes

### production, and hybrid renewable projects will drive innovation, job creation, and economic growth, he opined. Sunil Mathur, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Siemens Ltd said that the announcements are a shot in

batteries.

demand

sector.

Capex

Budget

the arm for consumption,

are welcome steps, he said.

With a 10 per cent increase in

spending

and

unlocks unprecedented opportunities. Coupled with the duty exemption expansion to 63

additional capital goods for EV and mobile battery production, this creates a robust foundation for India's manufacturing renaissance,

he opined. The landmark ₹20,000 Crore investment in private-sector R and D for emerging technologies signals transformative shift in building a sustainable critical minerals ecosystem, Verma said.

Executive Devansh Iain. Director, INOXGFL Group, "The emphasis on wind the Nati energy mal Green Hydrogen Mission, and EV infrastructure, along with dedicated support for Clean Tech manufacturing, marks a transformative step toward sustainability." By fostering domestic value addition in solar PV cells, EV batteries, motors, controllers, electrolysers, wind turbines, high-voltage transmission

equipment, and grid-scale PTI NEW DELHI the budget strengthens India's clean The food inflation rate in India has remained firm energy ecosystem, he stated. Investments in offshore wind capacity, green hydrogen

2025

over the past two years defying the global trend, and frequent extreme weather events are one of the reasons, the government said in its latest Economic Survey

Tabled in Parliament on Friday, the report said that the decline in onion and tomato production over the which will in turn drive past two years can be partly then attributed to frequent manufacturing in the private extreme weather events in major producing states The National Manufacturing compared to other regions. Mission, the focus on clean Extreme weather events in technology and measures to 2023-24 damaged crops in support Start Ups and MSMEs major horticultureproducing states, leading to inflationary pressure on horticultural commodities, in it said.

infrastructure over the revised "Over the past two years, India's food inflation rate estimates, the Government stays on course in its commitment of building a remained firm, has diverging from global trends world class infrastructure in the country, he added. Bikesh Ogra, MD and CEO, of stable or declining food inflation. This can be Jakson Green said, "Crucially, attributed to factors such as the budget emphasises power supply chain disruptions sector reforms, incentivising exacerbated by extreme weather events an reduced harvest of some food items,' the report read. Citing data from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the report said that the total crop area damaged in 2024 was higher than in the previous two years due to extreme weather conditions. The government also

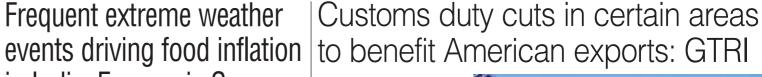


India referred to Meteorological Department (IMD) data, which shows a significant rise in the frequency of extreme weather events, especially heatwaves.

Between 2022 and 2024. heatwaves were recorded on 18 per cent of days, compared to 5 per cent in 2020 and 2021, the report said.

The Economic Survey acknowledged that recent shocks like geopolitical conflicts and extreme weather have caused price fluctuations, but their impact has now subsided, leading to more variation in commodity prices.

For long-term price stability, the report suggested developing climate-resilient crops, strengthening data syst réducing crop damage, and minimising post-harvest losses. Saturday, On the government announced a six-year mission to increase pulse production, aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in three widely consumed varieties - tur, urad, and masoor.



### PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

The customs duty reduction announced in the Budget on products such as motorcycles and synthetic flavouring essences would benefit American exports, economic think tank GTRI said on Sunday. The Global Trade Research

Initiative (GTRI) said that despite the repeated criticism of Îndia as the biggest tariff abuser and tariff king by the Trump-administration, the Budget country's has introduced significant tariff on multiple reductions products, many of which benefit the US exports.

With key tariff cuts on technology, automobiles, industrial inputs, and waste imports, India appears to be taking steps toward facilitating trade even as the global trade environment remains tense. Whether these reductions will alter Washington's view of India's trade practices or become a point of contention in the US election cycle remains to be seen," it added.

Among the key tariff reductions, India lowered the duty on fish hydrolysate for the manufacturing of aquatic feed from 15 per ner cent, a move that directly impacts US exports, which amounted to \$ 35 Million in 2023-24. For the automobile sector, India has reduced tariffs on motorcycles based



cent, while for motorcycles above 1,600cc, the tariff has been slashed from 50 per cent to 30 per cent.

'The US motorcycle exports to India stood at \$ 3 Million in FY24, and this tariff cut could help expand market access for American manufacturers," the GTRI said.

Similarly, it said, tariff cut on ethernet switches (carriergrade) under the others category from 20 per cent to 10 per cent would help American exporters. The US exported \$ 653.4 Million worth of these products to India in the last fiscal, "making this a significant trade benefit",

trade activity in this category. Additionally, the Budget has proposed elimination of tariffs on specific waste and scrap items, reducing duties from 5 per cent to zero. America exported a total of \$ 2.5 Billion worth of waste and scrap of all types to India in

tariff

latest

multiple

 $202\bar{3}-24$ While Trump has long India's criticised structure, these reductions indicate a shift in Founder policy that could boost US Ajay exports across

Srivastava said. India has also

GTRI

supplied \$ 92 Million worth of these products in FY23, Srivastava said. However, in the last financial

year, these imports dropped significantly to \$ 0.07 Million,

suggesting a sharp decline in

modern distribution and transmission infrastructure that is essential for seamlessly integrating Resources into the grid and ensuring a stable power supply. The proposed PPP supply. The proposed PPP model for infrastructure development, coupled with substantial interest-free loans, will catalyse investments in RE projects."

on engine capacity. For motorcycles with an below engine capacity 1,600cc, the tariff has been cut from 50 per cent to 40 per

duties on synthetic flavouring essences from 100 per cent to 20 per cent, a category in which Washington exports stood at \$ 21 Million in FY24. "In the space sector, tariffs on ground installation for satellites, including spares and consumables, have been reduced to zero, benefiting American exporters who

vastava During April-November 2024-25, the US was the second largest trading partner of India with \$ 82.52 Billion bilateral trade in goods (\$ 52.89 Billion worth of exports \$ 29.63 Billion of imports and \$ 23.26 Billion trade surplus). During 2021-24, America was the largest trading partner of India.

### Focus on infrastructure, manufacturing, sustainability to push steel sector growth

### PTI 🗖 NEW DELHI

The stainless steel industry has hailed the Union Budget 2025-26, saying the focus on infrastructure, manufacturing, and sustainability will push the sector's growth. Union Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman presented the record eighth straight Union Budget in the Lok Sabha on Saturday.

"The industry lauds the Union Budget 2025-26 for its robust focus on infrastructure, manufacturing, and sustainability, crucial for the stainless steel industry's growth," apex industry body Stainless Indian Steel Association Development (ISSDA) said in a statement. The Budget offers a balanced

roadmap for long-term growth in the stainless steel industry. The focus on infrastructure, manufacturing, and sustainability will elevate the sector's economic contribution and reinforce India's position as a global leader in stainless steel production and innovation, the association said.

Jindal Stainless Managing Director Abhyuday Jindal said, "Infrastructure remains central to India's growth, and the Budget sustains this momentum with a 10.08 per



cent hike in capex to ₹ 11.21 Lakh Crore and ₹1.5 Lakh Crore earmarked for state capital expenditure. The ₹10 Lakh Crore Asset Monetisation Plan (2025-30) will unlock funds for new projects, while increased public-private partnerships will drive private investment in transport, urban development, and energy". The digital skilling initiative aimed at equipping youth with Industry 4.0 technologies has the potential to revolutionise both manufacturing and

services. In the stainless steel industry, automation and where advanced manufacturing are on the rise, these efforts will ensure a workforce capable of navigating rapid change and expansion, Jindal said.

The newly introduced credit cards for micro-enterprises and the growth of Funds of Funds for startups will encourage entrepreneurship and innovation across sectors.

## Global trends key drivers for markets: Analysts

### PTI 🗖 NEW DELHI

RBI's interest rate decision, quarterly earnings and global cues would be the major driving factors for equity markets this week, analysts said adding that the impact of the Union Budget could linger on this week.

Trading activity of foreign investors will also be a key driver for the markets, experts noted. India's

ʻUS and manufacturing PMI for January to be released on Monday, will be the key macro data to watch out for. Investors will closely study the fine prints of the Budget policies and market focus will shift back to the corporate earnings/outlook and RBI's interest rate decision to be announced on Friday," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. From the earnings calendar, Asian Paints, PC Jeweller, Tata Power, Titan, Apollo Tyres, Bharti Airtel, ITC,F,

SBI, LIC, MandM and NHPC would announce their earnings this week. Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said, "Will the RBI soften its stance and announce any rate cut in this week's credit policy that would be interesting to



investors need to watch out for global developments, as any uptick in US bond yields and FII selling could dampen sentiment. data for

PMI manufacturing and services would also be tracked by investors.

"As we look to this week, there are several important events on the horizon, including the MPC outcome, the Delhi state election, and developments regarding US tariffs. These events present an opportunity for market participants to remain engaged and informed, as they are likely to introduce some volatility," Krishnan, Sr Osho Krishnan, Analyst, Technical and Derivatives of - Angel One, said.

Krishnan further said, "Now, the major Union Budget is behind us, and it appeared as watch out for? However, a non-event but practically

speaking, FIIs participation was very minimal. Hence, the actual reaction is likely to be witnessed on Monday and hence, we need to wait the

for a day or two to understand whether the market has really discounted the Budget factor or not." Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced significant income tax cuts for the middle class and unveiled a blueprint for nextgeneration reforms for Viksit Bharat as she treaded a fine line between fiscal prudence and providing a

thrust to growth. The Budget for April 2025 to March 2026 fiscal (FY26) proposed to raise foreign limit investment in insurance sector to 100 per cent from current 74 per cent and continued spending spree on infrastructure while

raising allocations for social sectors as well as providing for measures for poor, youth, farmers and women. "The Union Budget largely

played to our expectations, particularly with the muchneeded income tax relief for the middle class, which will drive consumption and economic growth. No changes were made to Securities Transaction Tax or capital gains tax, as anticipated." anticipated," Pranav Haridasan, MD and CEO, Axis Securities, said.

Equity markets were open on Saturday due to the presentation of the Union Budget.

week, the BSE Last benchmark jumped 1,315.5 points or 1.72 per cent, and the NSE Nifty went up by 389.95 points or 1.68 per cent.

Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said, "The impact of the Union Budget could linger in the next session, particularly in the consumption sectors. Additionally, with the earnings season set to take center stage again, traders should focus on stock selection, Mishra added.

On Saturday, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex eked out a marginal gain of 5.39 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 77,505.96. The Nifty dipped 26.25 points or 0.11 cent to settle at 23,482.15.

Exporters demand extension of interest equalisation scheme

### PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

The Indian exporting community on Sunday urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to extend the interest equalisation scheme (IES) for getting affordable rates of credit, as their demand was not mentioned in the Budget.

The scheme ended on December 31 last year.

The scheme, according to exporters, has helped them avail of rupee export credit at competitive rates at a time when the global economy is facing headwinds. Exporters used to get subsidies under the scheme for pre and postshipment rupee export credit. Sanjay Budhia, Chairman of CII National Committee on EXIM, said though the Budget announcements would help boost outbound shipments, "We sincerely request the Finance Minister to kindly reinstate the scheme for all exporters to make them globally competitive." similar views,

Sharing Federation of Indian Export (FIEO) Organisations President Ashwani Kumar said the commerce ministry has allocated funds of ₹2,250 Crore under export promotion scheme of covering IES and MAI (Market Access

Initiative). The IES may be extended immediately with effect from January 1 with a cap of ₹10 Crore and international events for 2025-26 may be approved immediately.

Budhia also said that measures announced in the Budget such as cutting customs duties on certain inputs, and rolling out of national manufacturing mission would help boost

exports and job creation. He added that the proposed export mission to improve export credit, and support to MSMEs to tackle non-tariff measures in overseas markets would surely help in getting greater market access for domestic goods.

"The reduction of basic customs duty on several inputs for production rationalisation of customs tariff structure for industrial goods will boost the export potential of the country significantly," Budhia, who is also MD of Patton Group, said.

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# the pioneer



Get your skin analysis at the KorinMi's clinic that brings authentic Korean skincare to Delhi, writes ABHI SINGHAL

ver wanted to have glass skin looking at all those viral Instagram reels and products? Ever wanted to get a 3D analysis of your skin like it happens in Korea? Then the quest for the radiant, flawless "glass skin" just got easier. KorinMi, India's Korean skin clinic has expanded its footprint with a new location in Defence Colony

in Delhi. Korean glass skin is a skincare trend that emphasises achieving skin that looks incredibly smooth, radiant, and intensely hydrated, almost like a pane of glass. The term originated from Korean beauty (K-beauty) and has gained global popularity for its focus on achieving a naturally luminous complexion.

To get your skin have qualities for the glass skin, there is KorinMi, at the the prestigious Centre for Skin & Hair Pvt Ltd, under the guidance of dermatologist Dr. Deepali Bhardwaj. The new space promises a transformative skincare experience. Known for its unique fusion of timehonoured Korean beauty rituals and cuttingedge dermatological techniques, KorinMi offers bespoke treatments tailored to a diverse range of skin concerns

The Defence Colony clinic offers a range of exclusive treatments, including a comprehensive 3D Skin Analysis & Consultation to personalise treatment plans. Clients can also indulge in various K Glow Treatments targeting specific



concerns like brightening and anti-aging, sensitive skin, and acne and pore control. For those seeking a quick and effective radiance boost, the KorinMi Glass Skin Resurfacing Treatment promises visible results in just three days. And for special occasions, the KorinMi Diamond Glass Skin Treatment delivers an instant glow and brightness.

"The overwhelming response and remarkable results we've seen at our Gurgaon clinic inspired





vivacity

us to bring KorinMi to Defence Colony," says Reshbha Munjal, Co-founder of KorinMi. "This new location makes authentic Korean skincare more accessible to Delhi, providing a luxurious and personalised experience designed to address every skin need. We're thrilled to continue our mission of helping clients achieve radiant, glass skin through the elegance and expertise of Korean beauty traditions."

Bhardwaj adds another layer of expertise to *KorinMi's* offerings. As an internationally trained *Skin Allergy Specialist, Dr. Bhardwaj* brings a wealth of knowledge to the table, particularly relevant in today's environment of increasing pollution and skin allergies. "I've incorporated an Indian scientific perspective into these Korean treatments," Dr. Bhardwaj explains, "which has significantly enhanced the results, helping Indians achieve their desired clear and glass-like skin. It's a fantastic treatment approach, especially with its holistic focus."

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KorinMi's philosophy centres on enhancing natural beauty through safe and effective skincare solutions that embody the elegance and precision of Korean beauty. Every detail, from the personalised care to the luxurious ambiance, is designed to create a pampering and transformative experience. The clinic uses products, treatments, and technologies imported directly from *South Korea*, ensuring authenticity and quality.

This expansion isn't just about opening another clinic; it's about making the transformative power of Korean skincare accessible to a wider audience. For those seeking the coveted "glass skin" look and a truly personalised skincare journey, KorinMi's new Defence Colony location offers a unique and exciting opportunity. It's an invitation to experience the best of Korean This exciting collaboration with Dr. Deepali beauty, right here in Delhi.



# Holistic Wellness in the Digital Age



global movement-one that includes not only personal well-being but also the well-being of the planet. By promoting responsible consumption and environmental conservation, they are not just selling jackets; they are selling a lifestyle that speaks to the core values of their audience.

### By ANURAAG BHARDWAJ

s we spend increasingly more time indoors, it's essential to consider how our built environments impact our physical health. A welldesigned residential building can significantly boost occupants' mood, sleep quality, productivity, and overall well-being.

### NATURAL LIGHT AND VENTILATION:

Exposure to natural light and fresh air is crucial for our physical and mental health. Natural light regulates our circadian rhythms, influencing our sleep-wake cycles, hormone secretion, and mood. Adequate ventilation, on the other hand, removes stale air, reducing the concentration of pollutants and allergens.

To incorporate natural light and ventilation into your residential building design:

Orient windows to maximize natural light exposure.

Incorporate skylights, clerestory windows, or solar tubes.

Use light-coloured interior finishes to





reflect natural light. Install ventilation systems that provide a consistent supply of fresh air.

#### ERGONOMICS AND ACCESSIBILITY: A

Well-designed should space accommodate occupants of all ages and abilities. Ergonomic design principles prioritize comfort, reducing the risk of injury and strain.

To design ergonomic and accessible spaces:

- Incorporate adaptable fixtures and furniture
- Ensure sufficient clearance for wheelchair navigation

 Install grab bars, non-slip flooring, and tactile signage

Design spaces with flexibility in mind, accommodating different user needs

INDOOR AIR QUALITY: The air we breathe indoors can be up to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Indoor air quality is influenced by various factors, including building materials, ventilation systems, and occupant activities. To improve indoor air quality: Specify low-VOC (volatile organic compound) materials

Install effective ventilation systems, including air filtration

Incorporate plants, which naturally purify the air

Implement regular maintenance schedules for HVAC systems

THERMAL COMFORT: Thermal comfort significantly impacts our mood, productivity, and overall well-being. A well-designed thermal environment should maintain a consistent, comfortable temperature range. To achieve thermal comfort:

Install efficient HVAC systems with precise temperature control

Incorporate passive design strategies such as insulation and shading

Specify materials with high thermal mass, which absorb and release heat

Design spaces with flexible thermal zoning, accommodating different occupant needs

By incorporating these design principles into your residential building, you can create a healthier, more comfortable indoor environment that supports the well-being of occupants.

The author is an architect and is the founder of Anjaney Vastu & AB Architects





the world is changing rapidly, and with it, the way we think about wellness. Gone are the days when wellness was simply about hitting the gym or following the latest diet trend. Today, wellness is a multi-faceted, deeply personal journey, one that goes beyond physical fitness to encompass mental, emotional, social, and even environmental wellbeing. It's no longer just about feeling good; it's about being whole, in mind, body, and spirit. And in this digital age, brands are stepping up, weaving holistic wellness into their DNA to foster deeper connections with consumers.

### A SHIFT IN CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS:

The wellness movement began quietly at first a small ripple in the wellness community, but over time, it turned into a tidal wave that reshaped industries. We saw yoga studios spring up, organic food brands gaining prominence, and mindfulness apps becoming household names. But as technology began to play an even larger role in our lives, the scope of wellness began to widen.

Today's consumer is informed, engaged, and expects brands to be more than just a product or service. They want companies that reflect their values, understand their needs, and contribute to their holistic well-being. The conversation around wellness has evolved into something much larger than simply improving physical health. It's a fusion of mind, body, soul, and environment, all wrapped into one. As a result, brands have a unique

opportunity. The challenge, however, is in how to craft campaigns that not only resonate with consumers' needs but also inspire them to live healthier, more sustainable lives. It's not enough to sell a product; brands now have to sell a





lifestyle like the one that nurtures wellbeing on every level.

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION: In a world where social media dictates trends and influencers have the power to shape movements, the digital age has been both a blessing and a challenge for brands trying to tap into the wellness space. The power of digital platforms cannot be overstated.

The most successful brands are those that recognise this and align their core values with the principles of holistic wellness. Take Patagonia, for example. outdoor apparel brand's The commitment to sustainability and environmental well-being extends far beyond their product offerings. They have built a narrative that connects consumers with the idea of wellness as a

### PERSONALISED APPROACH TO

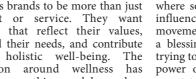
WELLNESS: But it's not only about big, global brands. Small, direct-to-consumer companies are equally making their mark. Take the wellness app, Headspace, for example. Its digital-first approach has made mindfulness and meditation more accessible than ever before. What sets it apart is not just the meditation guides or breathing exercises but it's the way Headspace taps into the emotional wellness of its users.

In the wellness space, there is no onesize-fits-all solution, and brands that can offer personalised, tailored experiences will always be one step ahead. Whether it's a beauty brand offering skincare solutions based on specific skin concerns or a fitness brand offering virtual personal training sessions tailored to your fitness level, the more personalised the experience, the deeper the connection.

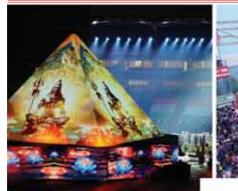
WELLNESS THAT LASTS: Ultimately, the goal of holistic wellness is not just to make consumers feel good in the moment but to empower them to make choices that lead to long-term health, happiness, and sustainability. Brands are now tasked with being more than just vendors. They must be allies in their customers' wellness journeys.

In a crowded market, it's the brands that prioritise education, emotional connection, and authenticity that will truly resonate. Take for example, Lulu lemon - what began as a yoga apparel company has grown into a lifestyle brand that is rooted in the idea of holistic wellness. Lulu lemon has built a community of consumers who don't just wear their clothes; they live by the principles of mindfulness, self-care, and personal growth that the brand promotes. By creating a community around wellness, they are inspiring healthier lifestyles, not just through the products they offer, but through the values they embody.

— Excerpts from Ishani Ghosh, Business Head, Brand Street Integrated



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PERSONAL DATA N DA











# Uttarakhand

Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Uttarakhand is moving forward steadily. Just as the state successfully hosted the G20 Summit, the National Games will also be a memorable event.

> Pushkar Singh Dhami Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

SANKALP SE **SHIKHAR TAK** 

There are two main pillars for the creation of a developed India in the 21st century - pride in our heritage and making every possible effort for development. Today, Uttarakhand is strengthening both these pillars. This decade will be the decade of Uttarakhand.

> Narendra Modi **Prime Minister**



38<sup>th</sup> National Games Organized

under the guidance of



# **Hon'ble Prime Minister** Shri Narendra Modi Ji

### From Devbhoomi to Khelbhoomi

National Games are being hosted in Dehradun, Rishikesh, Tehri, Udham Singh Nagar, Haldwani, Haridwar, New Tehri, Nainital, Almora, Pithoragarh and Champawat.

Around 10,000 players are participating in the National Games.

- Competitions in 35 sports disciplines.
- A historic opportunity for Uttarakhand to host the games.
  - Promotion of sports culture to inspire youth.
  - A milestone for Uttarakhand's sports landscape.

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