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MANIPUR UNDER PRESIDENT RULE



Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh submits his resignation to Governor AK Bhalla, in Imphal on February 9. File Photo: PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

In a quick turn of events in a strife-torn Manipur, President's rule was imposed in the State on Thursday and the State Assembly put under suspended animation. This comes days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post that led to political uncertainty in the northeastern state and within a month of taking over of bureaucrat turned Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla. The Manipur Assembly, which has tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the

Ministry of Home Affairs. Singh, who was heading the BJP government in Manipur, resigned as chief minister after nearly 21 months of ethnic violence that has claimed over 250 lives so far. Singh resigned on February 9 and submitted his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Imphal, hours after his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the national Capital. The Congress which has been continuously raising the issue of Manipur at every platforms including the Parliament, rued the fact that President's rule in the state came after fabric of state's society was allowed to be severely damaged, if not destroyed. "President rule

imposed in Manipur after Home Minister Amit Shah clearly failed to manage state, a task entrusted by Prime Minister. BJP, allies got majority in Manipur in 2022, but their politics led to 'colossal tragedy' 15 months later," the Congress said in a statement. The decision to impose the Central rule was taken after the governor sent a report to President Droupadi Murmu. "After considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of that state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India," the notification said.

New I-Tax bill to be simpler

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Income Tax Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha on Thursday and urged Speaker Om Birla to refer it to a select committee of the House. The much-anticipated Bill will replace terminologies such as "assessment year" and "previous year" with the easier-to-understand "tax year" as part of a move to simplify language while removing provisos and explanations. Following introduction, the Bill was referred to the select committee of the Lok Sabha, which is mandated to submit its report by March 10. Responding to the objections raised by some Opposition members at the introduction stage of the bill, the Finance Minister said Manish Tewari



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi. PTI

of the Congress and NK Premchandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) were incorrect in stating that the new bill has more sections in comparison with the existing income tax law. Finance

Minister said that while in 1961 the present law had fewer sections, after a series of changes over the years it now has 819 sections. The proposed Act only has 536 sections. The simplified Income Tax Bill,

which is half the size of the 1961 Income Tax Act, seeks to achieve tax certainty by minimising the scope of litigation and fresh interpretation, said the Income Tax Department, after tabling of the new bill. The new bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha, has a word count of 2.6 lakh, lower than 5.12 lakh in the I-T Act. The number of sections is 536, as against 819 effective sections in the existing law. The number of chapters has also been halved to 23 from 47, according to the FAQ issued by the I-T department. The Income Tax Bill 2025, has 57 tables, compared to 18 in the existing Act and removed 1,200 provisos and 900 explanations. Provisions relating to exemptions, and TDS/TCS have been made crispier in the bill by putting them in a tabular format.

Modi, Gabbard talk counter-terrorism

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the newly appointed Director of National Intelligence in the Donald Trump administration Tulsi Gabbard, and discussed India-USA friendship, of which he said, she has been a "strong votary". Modi also congratulated Hindu-American Gabbard on her confirmation as the nation's top intelligence official. She was confirmed on Wednesday. "Met USA's Director of National Intelligence, @TulsiGabbard in Washington DC. Congratulated her on her confirmation. Discussed various aspects of the India-USA friendship, of which she's always been a strong votary," Modi posted on X. Discussions also focused on enhancing intelligence cooperation in counter-terrorism, cybersecurity and emerging threats, Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with USA's Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard in Washington DC. PTI

"PM @narendramodi held a productive meeting with US Director of National Intelligence @TulsiGabbard in Washington DC today. Discussions focused on enhancing intelligence cooperation in counter-terrorism, cybersecurity & emerging threats," the post said. Modi arrived in the US capital on Wednesday around 5.30 pm (Thursday, 4 am IST) after a visit to France where he had co-chaired the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron. Modi and Trump will hold bilateral discussions in the White House on Thursday. "Our nations will keep working closely for the benefit of our people and for a better future for our planet," Modi said on X. On Wednesday, Gabbard was sworn in as director of national intelligence on Wednesday in the Oval Office, hours after the Senate confirmed her, The Hill reported.

Attorney General Pam Bondi administered the oath of office to Gabbard, who Trump called "an American of extraordinary courage and patriotism." He noted that she was deployed three times in the Army National Guard and that she is a former Democratic congresswoman, riffing "Can you believe that?" Gabbard, 43, a former Democratic congresswoman from Hawaii, had faced bipartisan scepticism about her suitability for overseeing the spy agencies. Gabbard thanked the president for his trust in her and vowed to "refocus our intelligence community" after she was sworn in. "Unfortunately, the American people have very little trust in the intelligence community, largely because they've seen the weaponization and politicization of an entity that is supposed to be purely focused on ensuring our national security," the new intelligence chief said.

State to announce new IT policy soon

To boost employment, offer incentives to firms
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government is most likely to unveil a new Information Technology (IT) policy. This will offer a range of concessions and exemptions to companies establishing campuses and operating within the State. This move is designed to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and create a more business-friendly environment. The government's incentive scheme aims at invigorating employment within its burgeoning IT sector. Firms are set to receive a one-time financial contribution of Rs 25,000 for every local resident recruited into their services with an upper limit of Rs 50 lakh per company over five years, commencing from the start of commercial operations.

The initiative, part of the draft Odisha IT Policy 2025, seeks to create a vibrant ecosystem for technology investments within the State. It intends to energise technological expansion by enhancing IT infrastructure, thereby positioning Odisha as a preferred destination for IT businesses. Alongside recruitment incentives, the Odisha Government will offer other appealing measures such as ready-to-use, encumbrance-free land and subsidies on office space rental costs. Firms will also benefit from power concessions, tax incentives, and interest reimbursements on long-term loans. Additionally, internet bandwidth expenses will see a substantial subsidy, with a yearly reimbursement of up to 5 lakh for two consecutive years from the commencement of their operations. To sharpen the State's

competitive edge in research and innovation, the policy includes reimbursement of 50% of research and development (R&D) expenditure, capped at Rs 10 crore, subject to governmental approval. This is available for academic institutions, R&D centres and prestigious technical organisations. For IT startups and deep-tech organisations, an impressive allocation of Rs 1,000 crore is envisioned in a support fund. This fund will provide aid through equity investments, convertible debentures and project-based grants. In a move to streamline operations, IT companies in Odisha will be exempt from routine inspections by the Labour Department and will be permitted to self-certify various records, in accordance with the legal provisions of the policy, except where specific complaints are lodged.

Burglary at Niranjan's house

BBSR police nab habitual offender from AP



Stolen gold recovered
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police have arrested the criminal involved in the high-profile burglary at the residence of former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Niranjan Patnaik. The arrested was identified as Karri Satti Babu alias Satti alias Sathesh alias Sathesh Reddy alias Spider Satish alias Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. He was nabbed from the Vizianagaram-Vishakhapatnam area. The Commissionerate police caught the high-profile robber with help of the local police around 17 days after the incident. Karri Satti Babu is a habitual inter-State property offender with more than 100 property offence cases (out of



which 11 cases ended in conviction) registered against him in different States, including Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala and Odisha. He was recently released from Trivandrum Central Jail in Kerala. He was charged twice under Andhra Pradesh Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Dacoits, Drug offenders, Gundas, Immoral Traffic Offenders & Land grabbers Act 1986, revealed the Commissionerate police on Thursday. The high-profile theft had occurred on the night of January 25 at Niranjan Patnaik's home located at IRC Village under the Nayapalli police station in Bhubaneswar. The police complaint notes that cash totalling Rs 2.5 lakh and gold jewellery valued at about Rs 50 lakh were stolen. As per preliminary reports, police have successfully recovered the stolen jewellery from the possession of the thief.

Assembly Budget Session Governor's address focuses on edu, jobs, infrastructure

Envisions 'Bikashita Odisha' by 2036
NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Legislative Assembly's Budget Session commenced on Thursday with Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati's address, setting the tone for the State's developmental agenda. With the traditional 'Jai Jagannath' greeting, the Governor emphasised the government's commitment to eradicating poverty, addressing youth unemployment, supporting farmers and empowering women. Highlighting the State's flagship welfare schemes, the Governor lauded the success of the Subhadra Yojana, which has benefited over one crore women. Reinforcing commitment to agriculture, he announced an increase in the minimum support price (MSP) for paddy by Rs 800, taking it to Rs 3,100 per quintal. Reaffirming the State's cultural pride, the Governor emphasised efforts to rejuvenate and promote the Odia identity. He asserted that Odisha is progressing in line with the national vision of 'Viksit Bharat' with a goal of achieving 'Bikashita Odisha' by 2036. The Governor underlined Odisha's education roadmap with the implementation of the New Education Policy (NEP) aimed at positioning the State as a leader in India's development by 2047. Under the 'Utkarsh Odisha' initiative, the State successfully hosted Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, garnering over 300,000 suggestions for Vision 2036. To boost employment, Odisha has pledged to create 1.5 lakh government jobs over the next five years with 65,000 positions to be filled in the first two years. The weaving sector is set to generate 50,000



additional employment opportunities within the same period. The Kamadhenu Scheme, supporting the agricultural sector, benefits approximately 46 lakh women and children with nutritional aid. At the recent Utkarsh Odisha Conclave, the State signed MoUs worth Rs 12.89 lakh crore, paving the way for significant economic growth. The government reaffirmed its commitment to infrastructure development, promising regular tap water supply to all households by 2026, with 115 urban areas set to benefit. Additionally, the State aims for round-the-clock electricity coverage and comprehensive rail connectivity across all districts. The Governor also praised Odisha's sports talent and ongoing housing initiatives, including the PM Awaz Yojana, which continues to provide shelter to thousands. With these initiatives, the Odisha Government aims to drive inclusive growth, ensuring sustainable progress for all sections of society, the Governor concluded in his address.

Wedding crashers: Leopard joins baraat; sends guests running for cover

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

What was supposed to be a grand wedding celebration in Uttar Pradesh's capital turned into an action-packed thriller when an uninvited guest-a leopard-decided to join the festivities. Akshay Srivastava and Jyoti Kumari's wedding at MM Lawn was in full swing on Wednesday night, with music, laughter, and clinking glasses setting the mood. That was until, at around 11 PM, a four-legged gate crasher made a dramatic entry, turning the dream wedding into a scene straight out of a survival movie. "I thought it was part of the decor at first-until it moved!" said one stunned guest, still catching his

breath. What followed was pure chaos. Guests abandoned their plates and fled in all directions. Some made a beeline for the gate, while one particularly panicked guest decided that jumping off the first floor was a better idea-unfortunately, he ended up with injuries. "I could not believe my eyes. One moment we were enjoying the wedding, and the next, we were running for our lives," said Rajesh Verma, a family friend of the groom. Meanwhile, the bride and groom, proving their teamwork skills early in their marriage, sprinted to their car and locked themselves inside. On the other hand, the leopard,



A leopard is seen in the left image after it entered a banquet hall amid an ongoing wedding, while the bride and others are seen on the right image running to save their lives, in Lucknow



confused by the flashing lights and the screaming people, darted around the venue, looking for an escape. Forest officials and police arrived after an urgent SOS and began what turned into a five-hour game of hide-and-seek with the big cat. To locate the leopard, the

authorities then deployed a drone. The live footage confirmed that the animal was on the roof, crouching in a corner. As the forest department's team cautiously climbed the stairs to approach the leopard, the animal, sensing danger, suddenly leaped down. "It all happened in seconds. One moment the leopard was on the roof, and the next, it was charging toward us. It roared and pounced on our officer," said Mukul Yadav, a police constable. The leopard was eventually located on the first floor, crouching in a room, probably wondering why no one had offered it any biryani. As forest official Muquddar Ali approached the feline intruder,

the animal made its objections clear-by swiping at him with its paw. The next moment, Ali's left hand was covered in blood. "That leopard had no wedding invitation, but it sure had sharp claws," Ali later said, holding his bandaged hand. Finally, at around 3:30 AM, the leopard was safely captured, allowing everyone to exhale for the first time in hours. Two camerapersons, caught up in the chaos, also suffered minor injuries. By morning, with the drama behind them and the leopard safely out of the picture, the wedding rituals resumed-though guests were likely keeping one eye on the mandap and the other on the exits.

Naveen 'confirms' BJD leaders leaning towards BJP

Questions Sanatan Mahakud's 'move'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJD president and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik on Thursday reprimanded Champua MLA Sanatan Mahakud for missing the party's legislature meeting on Wednesday and asked him if he is joining the BJP. Patnaik engaged in a forthright discussion with Mahakud while entering the State Assembly for its Budget Session.



wasn't well yesterday." Patnaik again asked, "Arey, are you leaning towards BJP?"

Patnaik asking Mahakud whether it was his health or he was tilting towards the BJP seemingly confirmed that

Patnaik is aware that several BJD leaders are inclined towards the BJP.

This concern has been underscored by recent events where several BJD leaders, including two Members of the Rajya Sabha and a number of panchayat committee chiefs, shifted their allegiance to the BJP.

Mahakud later told the media, "I will never move to BJP. After winning on the BJD ticket, how can I move to the BJP? I have been with BJD, and I will remain with BJD. As the party supremo, he (Patnaik) has the prerogative to ask such questions."

Meanwhile, a video clip has resurfaced from an event in Champua, conducted in December last year, depicting a moment of camaraderie between Mahakud and Chief Minister Mohan Majhi. In the footage, Mahakud is seen offering cake to Majhi, who humorously reciprocates by playfully spreading some cake on Mahakud's cheek.

In response to it, Mahakud said, "Mohan Majhi is the Chief Minister of the State. He is not the Chief Minister of BJP. Hence, it's my right to go to him for some developmental activities of our (common) district."

Vigilance arrests Remuna Tehsildar

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police arrested Bidyadhar Pati, Tehsildar of Remuna in Baleswar district, on Thursday over a disproportionate assets (DA) case. The arrest followed Vigilance action of searches on his properties, which were found to be 204 per cent of his known sources of income.

Pati was found to be in possession of several high-value properties and assets. These include three high-value flats, two flats in Bhubaneswar, valued at approximately Rs 2.5 crore, and one flat in Baleswar. Pati also owns two plots, approximately 937 grams of



gold and deposits amounting to over Rs 1.12 crore. He was unable to satisfactorily explain the origins of these assets.

Pati was later forwarded to court to face legal action for possession of disproportionate assets.

The investigation into the case is still ongoing. The authorities are continuing to examine Pati's assets and financial dealings to determine the full extent of the alleged corruption.

'Naba Das' family reluctant for CBI probe

Says BJP MLA Jayanarayan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The family of the late Naba Das, former Health Minister, has expressed their reluctance to a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into his mysterious assassination, informed BJP legislator Jayanarayan Mishra on Thursday.

Mishra said that no formal requests have been made by the family either to the court or the government to this effect. He suggested that the family may be under duress, leading to their reluctance.

"The family might be experiencing pressure or fear, which is stopping them from pursuing the matter further," Mishra stated.

Meanwhile, the Orissa High Court has asked the State authorities to submit a detailed report on the progress of the investigation into Das' death. This order arises from a petition filed by activist Pinakpani Mohanty who had filed a peti-



tion requesting a CBI probe, which the High Court is currently considering.

The petition not only calls for an investigation into Das' murder but also seeks inquiries into several other crucial cases.

Mohanty's petition extends to scrutinising the Biju Janata Dal's (BJD) financing during the 2014 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the involvement of BJD leaders in numerous chit fund scams and pressing cases like the Parirape and murder case and the Mamita Meher murder case.

The court has slated the next hearing for these matters on February 19.

In Kendrapada Tuition teacher gets 20-yr RI for raping minor

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Additional District and Sessions Judge -cum-Special Judge under POCOSO Act of Kendrapada, Prangya Parmita Raul, on Tuesday convicted a tutor in a rape case, involving a minor and sentenced him to undergo 20 years of rigorous Imprisonment (RI), besides slapping Rs 50,000 fine on him.

In case of default in payment of fine, the convict has to undergo another year of RI.

The incident had happened under Rajkanika police station on December 20, 2022. Special Public Prosecutor Manoj Kumar Sahoo said the convict is Prasanta Das (36), a resident of Badahalupada under Rajkanika PS.

According to Sahoo, the minor victim used to go to

Das's house for tuition. On December 20, 2022, Das forcibly took the victim to the bed and raped her. The victim after returning from the accused's house brought the matter before her mother.

The father of the victim lodged an FIR at Rajkanika police station. Rajkanika police later registered a case under various sections of IPC and Section 6 of POCOSO Act and arrested Das.

While adjudging the case, the court verified evidence and cross-examined 14 witnesses.

The court also recommended to the government to provide a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the victim for her proper rehabilitation. The Secretary of DLSA, Kendrapada, was directed to take steps for sanctioning of the compensation amount to the victim.

HPC on aviation devpt Focus on regional connectivity, new airports

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a major push to enhance Odisha's aviation infrastructure, the 3rd High Power Committee (HPC) on aviation developments, chaired by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, was convened here on Wednesday. The focus was on strengthening regional connectivity, upgrading airports, and fostering strategic partnerships.

A key highlight was the development of Shree Jagannath International Airport (SJIA) in Puri. The State also prioritised the upgradation of Jeypore, Amarda Road, and Utkela airports, addressing land acquisition and forest clearance hurdles. The Works Department has been directed



to expedite the projects.

The revised Small Aircraft Scheme (SAS) was also discussed to enhance air connectivity in remote areas like Jeypore, Malkangiri, and Jharsuguda, ensuring affordable air travel. Plans for a new greenfield airport at Paradip were deliberated, with instructions for land identification and feasibility studies.

Commerce and Transport Department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee emphasized

financial support through Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to airlines like IndiGo, Alliance Air, and IndiaOne Air, boosting domestic and international flights. The committee also reviewed the establishment of an Aviation Security Training Institute (ASTI) at Chandaka to build a skilled workforce.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary Ahuja highlighted aviation's role in economic growth, tourism, and

connectivity. "Odisha is emerging as an aviation hub with world-class infrastructure and forward-thinking policies," he stated.

Senior officials from Law, Finance, Works, Tourism, Housing and Urban Development, IDCO, and Biju Patnaik International Airport participated. With robust strategies, Odisha is set to become a model State for modern air travel, reinforcing its vision of Viksit Odisha.

Temp crosses 35 deg in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The maximum temperature in the capital city Bhubaneswar crossed 35 degree Celsius for the first time this season on Thursday.

The city recorded the maximum temperature of 35 degree at around 2.30 pm.

The maximum temperature in the State had crossed 37 degree for the first time this season on Wednesday.

The western Odisha town of Jharsuguda recorded the highest maximum temperature of 37 degree, said the IMD Regional Office here.

As many as 10 places across the State recorded the maximum temperature above 35 degree on Wednesday.

The maximum temperature was 34.8 degree in Bhubaneswar and 33.2 degree in Cuttack on Wednesday.

Cong holds demo, alleges excess by Traffic cops

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Members of the Pradesh Youth Congress and Student Congress held a demonstration here on Thursday alleging excesses by the Traffic police.

According to the allegation of one Dipanwita Mishra, her minor daughter was returning from school in a car on February 11 when the cops of the Traffic police station-I detained the driver alleging traffic rule violations. Mishra alleged that Traffic PS IIC Akash Kumar Rana and another cop Pranab Kumar Tudu de-



manded cash payment to be made instead of issuing an e-challan and detained the car.

Mishra's seven-year-old daughter had a torrid time due to the hot and humid conditions for hours. When informed about the child's

plight, the IIC reportedly turned a deaf ear. After an hour, the child's parent reached the Traffic PS and paid Rs 500 and got the car released.

The Congress members said that for police the fine was more important than the

child's life and demanded stringent action against the errant cops. The agitators also lodged a complaint at the Capital police station. Youth Congress leaders Ranjit Patra, Yasir Nawaj and Udit Pradhan were among those present.

Union Budget '25-'26

Allocations for welfare schemes of SCs, STs not adequate

The Budget is an annual financial statement of the government of India under Article 112 of the Constitution. It reflects the trends of economic health of a nation.

The Constitution of India in its Preamble used the words economic justice and socialism which has been defined and interpreted by the Supreme Court on many occasions. It is expected that the budget must follow the constitutional philosophy while allocating financial resources for expenditure under demand for grants while adopting a fiscal policy to shape the economic trends towards fulfilling the constitutional promises.

The budget must follow a policy of welfare of women, children, SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and people in North East regions to see that a proportionate share is reaching the people who are historically deprived of opportunities.

There are regional disparities within the State and inequalities based on gender, caste, ethnicity, economic status, and rural-urban divide.



MANAS JENA

(HCES) 2023-24 shows a gap in consumption expenditure among rural and urban households. The average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) in rural and urban India in 2023-24 is estimated at Rs 4,122 and Rs 6,996, respectively. The bottom 5 percent of the rural population has an average MPCE of Rs 1,677 compared to Rs 2,376 in urban areas. The top 5 per cent have an average MPCE of Rs 10,137 in rural and Rs 20,310 in urban areas. Though the

gap has been narrowing between 2022-23 and 2023-24 but still it is visible.

The average per day consumption expenditure of a bottom 5 per cent rural population is Rs 55 compared to Rs 677 for the top 5 per cent population in urban areas which is about 12 times higher.

It is reported that the social sector spending during the last five years from 2021 to 2025 has increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15 per cent. Expenditure on education has grown at a CAGR of 12 per cent from Rs 5.8 lakh crore in 2021 to Rs 9.2 lakh crore in 2025. Expenditure on health grew CAGR 18 per cent from Rs 3.2 lakh crore in 2021 to 6.1 lakh crore in 2025. Along with health and education, the social sector spending include family welfare, housing, sanitation, water supply, urban development, welfare of SCs, STs, OBCs, religious minorities, labour welfare, social security, nutrition, mid-day meal, relief of account of natural calamities, skill development, legal aid to the poor and training to the police etc.

There are provisions of subsi-

dies, pension, direct benefit transfer, free food grain, subsidised cooking fuel, insurance cover, nutritional supplement and many more schemes of government targeting inclusion.

But a close observation of the 2025-26 Union Budget shows that the budget estimate as reflected in the expenditure statement does not follow the policy as it is observed that the social sector budget, especially the allocation for SCs and STs is not following the guideline of the NITI Aayog. The allocation of 41 obligatory ministries and departments under their 244 schemes have not been adequate for SCs and STs as reflected in statement 10A and 10B.

It has been a practice since 1980 that the budget must have a sub plan under the annual plan to exclusively allocate funds for SC and ST development and the allocation percentage must be in proportion to their population percentage but this has not been followed seriously

while a notional allocation has been made without any target and transparency.

The other most neglected sector is the workers of the unorganised sector who are being deprived of their rights without a fair wage and social security which is available to the workers of the organized sector. There has been no hike in minimum wage and provision of social security schemes. The people earn-

SOCIAL CANVAS

ing Rs 1 lakh per month are exempted from paying tax while the people at the bottom continue to suffer with low wages. However, the economic growth and increase in social sector spending has not contributed to any radical change to fulfil the constitutional promises for the workers in rural areas. Rather, for a long time, many of the basic necessities have not been fulfilled and inequalities continue unabated in economic and social spheres. The countries such as China and others those which got independence at the same time

when India got freedom have gone much ahead of India in terms of growth while ensuring economic inclusiveness of its rural working population but India still continues as one of the most unequal countries in the world having wide gaps among workers.

Education and health are two most important sectors under social sector spending. Though we target inclusive and equitable education for all and plan to ensure no child is left behind, yet we failed to provide equal opportunities to all our children to complete primary education. The Economic Survey 2023-24 shows that almost 40-50 percent schools in the country have no computer and internet facilities. About 5-10 percent of schools have no toilet, library, reading room and electricity etc. The UDISE -2023-24 data says dropout rate in secondary and higher secondary has not been minimized. There are over 24.8 crore students and 14.72 lakh schools and 98 lakh teachers with a government share of about 70 per cent but the trend shows a greater preference towards private schools. The school dropout rate

is 14.1 percent for secondary level. The retention rate is 45.6 per cent for higher secondary (class 1 to 12th) and 63.8 percent for secondary level (class 1 to 10th) which is a matter of concern.

In the health sector though the expenditure has been increased but it is more on current health expenditure that is about 87 percent and only 13 percent is on capital expenditure. The government health insurance schemes constitute about 6 percent share in healthcare financing schemes out of which social insurance schemes like ESIC, CGHS, ECHS have a 3 per cent share and the government voluntary health insurance scheme like Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJA), RSBY and State specific health insurance schemes etc have a 2.63 percent share in health care financing scheme. We must have a universal healthcare scheme for all irrespective of their income and age. Every citizen of the country must have quality education and healthcare service which is a constitutional guarantee under economic justice of Constitution. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

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Tree cutting for road construction NGT orders action against Begunia Tehsildar

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued directives for disciplinary action against the Begunia Tehsildar in Khordha district following allegations of tree cutting for road construction.

trees were felled to construct a road under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. The allegations also stated that tree cutting was not part of the approved plan and that no prior permission was sought from the Divisional Forest Officer. The NGT observed negligence of duty on the part of the Tehsildar during a hearing on January 29 and has now released its final order.

"We find that prima facie there has been a lack of promptitude and sincerity and devotion towards duty on the part of the Tahasildar, Begunia, Khordha in promptly reporting the felling of trees to the authorities which have resulted in grave loss of revenue to the said exchequer," the order stated and mandated disciplinary action against the Tehsildar.

Pollution by D'nal steel unit NGT serves notice, forms probe panel

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) (EZ) has issued notice to the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Rimjhim Ispat Limited and others for violation of pollution norms by the Dhenkanal-based steel plant Rimjhim Ispat Limited.

Sankar Pani submitted that Rimjhim Ispat Limited, Dhenkanal, is creating air pollution and discharging untreated water to the Kisindha Nallah in violation of the Consent to Operate conditions and the guidelines of CPCB. The petition alleged that the steel plant is not collecting and treating the wastewater properly and discharging the wastewater directly to the Kisindha Nallah. The plant is allegedly dump-

ing its solid wastes outside the unit premises and alongside the road which is being used by the villagers of Kurunti. Further, the unit has not activated the online monitoring of stack emission and waste water discharge to the centralised server of OSPCB and CPCB. The unit has not obtained authorisation under Hazardous Waste Management and Handling Rules, alleged the petitioners. The petition also alleged that

the company also illegally acquired forest land violating instructions of the VAN (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhinyam. The unit has set up only two Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (AAQMS) instead of the mandated four. It is also alleged that neither of the AAQMS installed by the company is operational. The company is also accused of extracting water illegally from Kisindha Nallah with-

out obtaining necessary permissions from concerned authorities. The NGT constituted a Committee comprising of Senior Scientist, MoEF and CC, Integrated Regional Office, Bhubaneswar, Senior Scientist, Central Pollution Control Board, Senior Scientist, Odisha State Pollution Control Board and district Collector, Dhenkanal to inspect the site in question and submit its report on affidavit.

In Mayurbhanj 4 held for kidnapping teacher for ransom

PNS ■ BARIPADADA
Police have arrested four persons in connection with an incident in Karanjia of Mayurbhanj district in which a teacher was abducted at gunpoint on February 10. The victim, identified as Rabintra Nath Singh, was abducted by six miscreants near NH-220 at Kuanripoli under the Karanjia police station. The kidnappers forcibly pushed Singh into a vehicle and demanded a ransom of Rs 15 lakh for his release. Upon receiving a complaint, the Karanjia police immediately launched a search operation. Three teams were formed to track down the criminals. The police investigation led them to Talcher, where four individuals involved in the crime were arrested. Singh was rescued from their

custody during the operation. The police said they are continuing their efforts to apprehend the remaining suspects who are still at large. Investigations are ongoing, with authorities examining the case from various angles to uncover more details on the crime and the remaining individuals involved. Rairangpur Additional SP Jadunath Jena said, "As per the complaint filed in the FIR, it has been stated that the ransom was set at an amount of Rs 15 lakh. This was also established during the primary investigation that the motive behind the kidnapping was money. However, we are also investigating into all angles to the case. The investigation is ongoing and we are looking into all the possibilities coming up in our investigation."

Vedanta holds Mines Safety Fortnight



With stress on safety protocols
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Reinforcing its unwavering commitment to safe mining operations, Vedanta organised the latest edition of its Annual Mines Safety Fortnight (AMSF) at its Jamkani coal mine in Sundargarh district. The two-week-long programme, organised in collaboration with the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS), witnessed enthusiastic participation of over 500 employees and business partners. The programme emphasized on the critical importance of safety protocols to prevent

accidents and ensure well-being of employees. Director of Mines Safety, DGMS Bhubaneswar, Prafull Ranjan Thakur said, "I would like to congratulate the Jamkani coal mine team of Vedanta Aluminium for successfully organising the Annual Mines Safety Fortnight Programme. The team's commitment to holding regular safety drills and awareness programmes, strict adherence to safety protocols and a secure one-way access road for heavy earth moving machinery, sets a high benchmark for the industry." Highlighting Vedanta Aluminium's safety-first culture, CEO (Coal Mines) Aluminium, David Stone said, "As an organization, safety has been an integral part of our

core values, and ensuring a zero-harm environment at the workplace remains our key objective." Throughout the fortnight, the mines team of Vedanta Aluminium proactively raised awareness about safety among its employees, their families, and local communities through regular workshops. These include defensive mock drills, fire safety sessions, first aid training programmes and road safety awareness drives. A key highlight of the initiative was the safety inspection carried out by an external AMSF team of 10 experts, comprising an Internal Safety Organisation (ISO) observer and senior officials from Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL).

Entrepreneur Patnaik's biography 'Dear D.R.' released



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Entrepreneur Dipti Ranjan Patnaik's biography "Dear D.R." was released at a function here, organised by the Triveni Earthmovers. Joining as chief guest on the occasion, KIIT and KISS founder and former MP Dr Achyuta Samanta said, "KIIT and KISS has been established because of Patnaik's sacrifice. The biography of an entrepreneur like him will be inspiring for everyone." The guest of honour on the event organised under the presidency of eminent writer Dash Benhur, Professor Sabita Pradhan, Vice-Chancellor of Odia University, said, DR Patnaik is an exemplary man and a good per-

son who keeps his promises. "A person who wants to live a life of values falls prey to deception. He too has been a victim of deception. But he has continued to move forward by forgiving," she added. Former Vice-Chancellor of BPUT Omkarnath Mohanty, who joined as a guest, said DR has a big role in the development of Rourkela. The author of the biography, Dr Sanjay Hati said, "Understanding Dear D.R. was a big deal for me. I was surprised to know that there is such a sad story. All I can say is that his dedication to work has made him a Dear D.R. from the heart. Which is very inspiring for the youth."

Patnaik was emotional while talking about his experience. He said, "I have never considered myself a great person. I have received a lot from the blessings of God. The debts that I can never repay. If I can do more for society, life will be blessed." In his presidential address, Dash Benhur said, "Every successful person should write a biography like DR's which will inspire the people who are losing." Triveni Earthmovers MD B Prabhakaran told many unknown things about his 26-year friendship with D.R. A message by writer Rajendra Narayan Das was read out on this occasion. Patnaik gifted his biography to his wife Indrani Patnaik.

Most Kendrapada canals clogged with silt, weeds

Farmers fail to get water to farmland
PNS ■ KENDRAPADA
In an agricultural economy, irrigation through canals is a lifeline. However, for farmers of Kendrapada, this is becoming a distant memory as multiple canals that once used to feed their farms with fresh water have now become clogged with silt and weeds due to alleged administrative apathy. Sources reported that canals in the Ali region of the district are one of the worst affected with fast-flowing canals either drying up or unable to reach the fields. Aggravating concerns is the fact that the farmers are now left without proper irrigation facilities, severely hampering their livelihood as well as agriculture in the region. "Not a single canal is free of



debris and weed. There is no question of water reaching the fields as all channels are clogged and the remaining water has turned toxic after being stagnant for so long," said farmer from the area Muralidhar Behera. The reports also added that major canals including Badajor, Talajor, Khajirijor, Khamamahara, and Paikira canals, along with their branch networks, were originally connected to fast-flowing rivers, ensuring irrigation for farmlands in Bharigada panchayat of Rajkanika area the district.

As a result, farmers have long relied on these canals for adequate water supply. However, in recent times, locals have alleged that administrative neglect and lack of proper maintenance have led to severe silt buildup, blocking the flow of water completely and severely hampering cultivation in the region. "We are completely reliant on the canals to irrigate our fields. Moreover, our entire livelihood depends on these farms but since there is no water, we are unable to grow crops. The clogged water is so toxic that if we feed it to our

plants, they die," claimed farmer from Ali, Gadadhar Palar. Meanwhile, Kendrapada district Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan said that discussions with relevant departments are underway to take necessary measures for canal restoration. "We are in talks with the Drainage Department for cleaning of the canals and they have begun the process for the same. I will ensure that the de-clogging of the canals is also taken up by the department this year itself," assured the Collector.

Lax security: Criminals enjoy field day in Ganjam

Dist Court premises frequented by gun-wielding hooligans
RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMAPUR
The alarming rise in violent crimes across Ganjam district has left citizens terrified, as criminals operate with impunity under a failing law enforcement system. The politically sensitive district, Ganjam and the bustling silk city of Brahmapur are witnessing an escalation in criminal activities, causing widespread panic. Vehicle thefts, robberies, and broad-daylight looting have become rampant in the city. Despite the presence of numerous CCTV cameras, ineffective policing has emboldened criminals. Previously restricted hardened criminals now move freely within the city, often



armed with deadly weapons. The Brahmapur District Court, handling sensitive political, criminal, and civil cases, has increasingly become a hub for criminal activities. Over the past four to six months, notorious criminals and their associates have been observed carrying weapons within the court premises, posing a direct threat to advocates handling high-profile cases.

Legal practitioners now fear for their safety, raising urgent concerns about the general public's security. The acid attack on lawyer P Rama Rao in Paralakhemundi serves as a dire warning, and the possibility of a similar incident in Brahmapur cannot be ruled out. Despite this, the government has yet to implement concrete measures to ensure the safety of judges, lawyers, and litigants, effectively allowing criminals free rein in court premises. Adding to the unrest, just two days ago, a politician associated with a Cabinet Minister was targeted in a bomb attack, leaving five people injured in violent assaults. This shocking incident has further heightened fear among Brahmapur's residents. Threats have also surfaced in government offices, reminiscent of Bihar's lawless past. Previously, stringent law

enforcement curbed such blatant criminal activity. However, with the current lapse in security, criminals have grown more audacious. The government must take swift action before another acid attack incident unfolds in Brahmapur. Authorities need to enforce strict security measures to protect city residents, legal professionals and court premises while also identifying and eliminating any internal support enabling these criminals. Odisha State Bar Council member Sanjit Kumar Panigrahi said that the deteriorating security situation in Brahmapur poses a grave risk to legal practitioners and the judiciary. He emphasized the urgent need for enhanced security measures to prevent any potential attacks and ensure a safe environment for all stakeholders in the legal system.

Withholding DA/DR arrears during COVID time unjustified

In response to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 172 answered on February 3, 2025, the government reiterated its decision to withhold the arrears of Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for Central Government employees and pensioners covering the 18-month period from January 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary, justified the move by citing the adverse financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fiscal burden of welfare measures, which, according to the government, made the release of the arrears unfeasible. However, this decision has sparked widespread dissatisfaction among the affected employees and pensioners, particularly when examined alongside the government's extensive financial expenditures in other areas. A closer look at these expenditures reveals a glaring dis-



BRUHASPATI SAMAL
parity that questions the justification for withholding DA/DR arrears. One of the major welfare measures taken during the pandemic was the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), launched in March 2020 to provide free food grains to approximately 80 crore people. While the scheme was undoubtedly necessary to mitigate economic hardship, its fi-

nancial burden on the government was substantial. Initial reports from the Press Information Bureau indicated that the expenditure on the scheme amounted to nearly Rs 2.60 lakh crore, and by December 2022, the total spending had risen to Rs 3.43 lakh crore. The government's commitment to ensuring food security for the vulnerable sections of society was commendable, but it also raises concerns about the selective approach in prioritizing fiscal allocations, particularly when the relatively modest DA/DR arrears are being denied to employees and pensioners. Simultaneously, Indian banks have written off a staggering Rs 10.57 lakh crore in bad loans over the past five financial years. This includes write-offs of Rs 2.09 lakh crore in FY 2022-23, Rs 1.70 lakh crore in FY 2023-24, and Rs 2.34 lakh crore in FY 2019-20. The jus-

tification often provided for these massive write-offs is that they help clean up bank balance sheets, but in reality, they represent a significant loss of public funds. These write-offs often benefit corporate defaulters at the cost of the taxpayers, further highlighting the government's misplaced fiscal priorities. Adding to the financial leniency towards corporate entities, in 2019, the government implemented a reduction in the corporate tax rate to 22% for domestic companies and 15% for new domestic manufacturing companies. This move, while aimed at boosting economic growth and attracting investment, it resulted in an estimated revenue loss of Rs 1.45 lakh crore. Such tax concessions to corporate houses stand in stark contrast to the stringent measures imposed on government employees and pensioners, who have been denied their right-

ful arrears on the grounds of financial constraints. Furthermore, the Union Budget for 2025-26 introduced significant income tax cuts, raising the tax-free income threshold to Rs 12 lakh per annum. This move is expected to cost the government approximately Rs 1 trillion in revenue. While these tax reforms are designed to boost consumption and economic activity, they also reflect the government's capacity to forgo substantial revenue to achieve policy objectives. The decision to freeze DA and DR for 18 months was projected to save the government approximately Rs 34,402.32 crore. The amount, when compared to the Rs 10.57 lakh crore in bad loans written off and the Rs 1.45 lakh crore foregone due to corporate tax cuts, appears relatively insignificant. This amount is approximately 1% of the Rs 3.43 lakh crore spent on PMGKAY, about 0.28% of the Rs

12.3 lakh crore in loan write-offs over the past decade, and roughly 2.37% of the Rs 1.45 lakh crore revenue foregone due to corporate tax cuts. The comparison raises questions about the government's fiscal priorities, particularly concerning its employees and pensioners. If the government could absorb these massive financial setbacks without adverse economic consequences, the claim that releasing DA/DR arrears would harm the nation's fiscal health seems unconvincing. The refusal to release the arrears is not just an economic issue but also a question of fairness. Central Government employees and pensioners served the nation through the pandemic, often working under challenging conditions. Releasing the DA/DR arrears would not only provide financial relief to them but also boost consumer spending, thereby stimulating economic ac-

tivity. Denying them their rightful dues while allowing corporate tax cuts and loan write-offs creates a perception of fiscal discrimination. While maintaining fiscal discipline is crucial, it is equally important to ensure that government policies are just and equitable. The decision to withhold DA/DR arrears, despite the government's willingness to incur significant financial losses elsewhere, disproportionately affects government employees and pensioners. Given the relatively minor fiscal impact of releasing the arrears in comparison to other financial commitments, the government should reconsider its stance. Doing so would not only reinforce trust among its employees but also contribute positively to the broader economy. (The author is a service union representative and a columnist. Mobile: 9437022669, eMail: samalbruhaspati@gmail.com)

Government to keep inflation in check: Finance Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the government will continue to take measures to check inflation and ensure that citizens are not burdened.

Replying to the discussion on the Union Budget in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said the retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) reduced to 4.31 per cent in January from 5.22 per cent in December and is moving towards the 4 per cent target given to the Reserve Bank of India.

The House witnessed several instances of altercations between the Opposition and the treasury benches over issues like Budget allocations to Telangana, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

Several Opposition parties staged walkout from the House during the minister's reply, even though Sitharaman stressed that the Modi government has never discriminated against any state.

On Budget proposals, she said they seek to "accelerate growth, secure inclusive development, and invigorate private sector investments", and there has been no decrease in capital expenditure for the next fiscal year.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament New Delhi PTI

during a challenging time, with serious external challenges beyond estimates or forecasts and there has been reduction in sectoral allocations. Despite this, the government has tried to keep the assessment as accurate as possible, keeping India's interests paramount, she said. "There are no models that you can build and understand how the trends will be because they are very dynamic... Despite that, we have tried keeping the assessments as

close as possible, keeping India's interests as topmost... this immense uncertainty is still playing out and many Indian imports which are very critical for our economy to grow are also going to be left with uncertainty," she said. On inflation, she said data showed steep correction in prices of tomato, onion and potato prices, and even pulses. "So food inflation, which gets triggered when you have an adverse weather condition, and supply chain disruptions

are being managed by a group of ministers who are ensuring that timely import happens if there is a shortfall in supply," the minister said. The Reserve Bank of India is keeping a watch on volatility in the Indian rupee, she said. Sitharaman listed out the steps proposed in the Budget to boost agricultural production in the country. "So it is clear that government's attempt to remove the stress of price rise is actually being received in the ground. The efforts will

continue. We shall make sure that price should not be a burden on the ordinary citizens," Sitharaman said.

The minister, who presented her record eighth Budget in a row, also said the Modi government's Budget numbers are always realistic and neither conservative nor overestimated.

Sitharaman told the House that the first advance estimates from National Statistics Office (NSO) has projected India's economy will grow 6.4 per cent in real terms and 9.7 per cent in nominal terms. So for the Budget, "we have kept our goals" such that we are able to accelerate growth, secure inclusive development, invigorate private sector investments, she said.

The minister also highlighted that the government steered the economy very well during the Covid crisis, and the country emerged as the fifth largest major economy in the world. She also recalled that after the global financial crisis of 2008, India was termed as among the "fragile five" economies. The minister also rebutted opposition parties' assertions that income tax incentives would only benefit rich people. She said income tax liability of the middle will significantly come down. The House was adjourned for a recess and will meet again on March 10 to continue the Budget session.

RS Chair asserts Parliament's jurisdiction on HC judge removal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhanekar on Thursday asserted that only Parliament has the jurisdiction to constitutionally remove a high court judge, saying a notice for removal of Justice Shekhar Yadav of Allahabad High Court is pending with him.

Speaking in the House, the chairman also asked the Rajya Sabha Secretary General to share with the Secretary General of the Supreme Court the information that 55 members of the upper house had given a notice to the Chairman for removal of Justice Yadav in December.

"I am seized of an undated notice for motion received on 13 December 2024, bearing 55 purported signatures of the members of the Rajya Sabha seeking removal from office of Justice Shekhar Yadav of Allahabad High Court under Article 124(4) of the Constitution.

The jurisdiction for the stated subject matter constitutionally lies in exclusivity with the Chairman Rajya Sabha and in an eventuality with the Parliament and Hon'ble President," Dhanekar said.

"Taking note of public domain information and inputs available, it is expedient that the Secretary General, Rajya Sabha shares this for information with the Secretary General, Supreme Court of India," he said.



Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhanekar reacts during the Budget session of Parliament, New Delhi PTI

The Supreme Court had sought a report from the chief justice of the Allahabad High Court on the remarks made by Justice Yadav and had later asked him to appear before senior judges of the court.

Members of several opposition parties had moved the notice in Rajya Sabha on December 13, 2024 for impeachment of Justice Yadav over his alleged controversial remarks at a recent VHP event, sources said.

The notice was signed by Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, John Brittas, Manoj Kumar Jha and Saket Gokhale among others.

These MPs met the Rajya Sabha secretary general and handed over the notice for impeachment a few minutes before the start of the day's proceedings, the sources said. Other MPs who signed the notice included P

Chidambaram, Randeep Surjewala, Pramod Tiwari, Jairam Ramesh, Mukul Wasnik, Naseer Hussain, Raghav Chadha, Fauzia Khan, Sanjay Singh, AA Rahim, V Sivadasan and Renuka Chowdhury.

The notice for the motion was moved under the Judges' (Inquiry) Act, 1968, and Article 218 of the Constitution, seeking initiation of proceedings for impeachment of Justice Yadav. The notice mentioned that the speech/lecture delivered by Justice Yadav during the VHP-organised event prima facie showed that he "engaged in hate speech and incitement to communal disharmony in violation of the Constitution of India". The notice also mentioned that the judge prima facie showed that he targeted minorities and displayed bias and prejudice against them.

Delhi HC seeks status on DFI forgery case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi High Court has directed the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) & Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) to submit Status Reports on why FIR was not filed against Drone Federation India (DFI) for forging DGCA documents with the signature of the Director General.

Delhi High Court on Wednesday expressed displeasure with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) while issuing notice on a public interest litigation (PIL) filed against the Drone Federation of India over allegations of forgery.

The bench led by Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyay, also comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, orally remarked that the DGCA should have filed a complaint and registered an FIR regarding the forgery.

Court also directed DGCA, MCA and other authorities to submit separate reports on the status of the investigation. The court fixed the matter for March 19, 2025 for detail hearing.

The bench also orally observed how a private entity could protect itself by presenting itself as a government organisation.

During the hearing, the counsel representing concerned ministries of Union of India submitted that the we looking at the complaint and seriously perusing it. It was also stat-



ed that MCA suspected the authenticity of the provided No Objection Certificate (NOC) and subsequently sent a letter to DGCA.

The concerned ministry stated that an inspection was initiated, which eventually led to an investigation. Senior Advocate PV Dinesh, representing petitioner RTI activist Tej Pratap Singh, stated that the Drone Federation of India (DFI) forged an NOC to bypass legal hurdles and rebrand the organisation.

The fraudulent document was allegedly submitted to the MCA, misleading the public into believing the organisation had official government endorsement. The petition was filed by Advocate Piyo Harold Jaimon.

The plea further alleged that DFI has in collusion with Pioneer Flying Academy (Respondent) issued drone pilot certifications to two individuals, without securing any approval or authorisation from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation or Ministry of Civil Aviation. These certifications were

issued to individuals associated with one, M/s Quiddich Innovation Labs (Respondent), to operate drones. Since the certified pilots had used these certifications for covering Indian Premier League held in Dubai, senior officer of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA) had written to DGCA to verify the authenticity of these certifications, it said.

However, DGCA has failed to initiate any enquiry and has even refrained from cooperating with DCAA. The entity has not only escaped from the investigations but also organised the Bharat Drone Shakti Event at the Air Force Station, Hindan, Uttar Pradesh, where DFI used pilots without valid licenses for flying drones in the Red Zone, plea added.

According to the petitioner, the body, by forging a letter from the regulatory authority, is not only attempting to project patronage from the Government of India but has also evaded accountability for its actions as described above.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the first edition of the SOUL Leadership Conclave by the School of Ultimate Leadership here on February 21, officials said on Thursday.

The two-day event at Bharat Manadpam will bring together leaders from across politics, sports, arts and media, public policy, business, the social sector and the spiritual world to talk about their personal leadership journeys, engaging in insightful conversations and sharing transfor-



mative experiences to inspire a new generation of thinkers. The conclave will feature speakers such as Rail Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, former Chief Justice of

India D Y Chandrachud, former Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das, Spiritual Leader of the Brahma Kumaris BK Shivani, chess world champion D

Gukesh, Piramal Group chief Ajay Piramal, and Bharti Enterprises Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal, among others. "Leadership is not just about guiding others. It is about inspiring them to act with vision, purpose and integrity -- towards the greater cause of public good. Our imperative at SOUL is to help broaden the landscape of political leadership in India through formal training and to include those who rise through merit, commitment and passion for public service and not just from political lineage," said Saurabh Johri, director in-charge, School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL).

"The SOUL Leadership Conclave offers a unique opportunity to spark meaningful dialogue on leadership and its profound impact on society, creating a platform where new ideas can flourish and the next generation of leaders can find inspiration," he added. Located on the periphery of GIFT City in Gandhinagar, SOUL is a privately-funded leadership institution, designed to equip government and public sector leaders with access to tools, skills and expert insights necessary to navigate the complex challenges of leadership in today's world.

President urges Government to embrace emerging technologies



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

It is essential for government departments to modernise their systems by making the best use of emerging technologies to cater to the ever-rising expectations of the public for efficiency in service delivery, President Droupadi Murmu said on Thursday.

Addressing a group of probationers from different government services, she asked them to keep abreast of advanced technologies, skills and strive to create more citizen-centric, efficient and transparent governance systems.

The probationers from the Indian Civil Accounts Service, Indian Post and Telecommunication (Finance

and Accounts) Service, Indian Railway Management Service (Accounts) and the Indian Postal Service had called on the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

There is an ever-rising expectation among the public for greater speed and efficiency in service delivery, along with increased transparency and accountability, the president said. "To cater to these requirements, it is essential for government departments to modernise and digitise their systems by making the best use of emerging technologies," she said. Such technologies include machine learning, data analytics, blockchain technology and artificial intelligence, she added.

Addressing the probationers from the Indian Civil Accounts Service, Indian Post and Telecommunication (Finance

and Accounts) Service and the Indian Railway Management Service (Accounts), the president said a strong public financial management system was the foundation of good governance.

"Keeping pace with the fast-changing technology is another area of challenge. You have to take measures to make accounting and payment systems smooth and effective," she said. Their role goes beyond optimising the use of financial resources and "involves analysing the impact of policies and suggesting inputs to improve governance systems, including the financial management systems", President Murmu added. Speaking to the probationers from the Indian Postal Service, she appreciated the efforts of India Post Payments Bank for

financial inclusion, particularly for rural and under-served populations.

"You have the unique opportunity to make the postal department and services more customer-centric, innovative, digitised, inclusive and sustainable. You have to ensure that the postal network continues to serve as a big uniting factor in a vast and diverse nation as ours," the President said.

"You should remember that you will be able to play a vital role in empowering citizens, especially the less privileged, through enhanced connectivity and financial inclusion," she added.

She expressed hope that the officers would make all efforts not only to excel in their individual careers but contribute to effective delivery of government services.

UPSC introduces new online application module for 2025

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A new module of registration and online application form replacing the Detailed Application Form (DAF)-I and DAF-II has been introduced by the UPSC in civil services examination-2025, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Thursday.

The primary objective for implementing this module is to enhance convenience for the candidates, streamline the application process and optimise the examination cycle, he said in the Rajya Sabha.

The civil services examination (CSE) is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) annually in accordance with the CSE rules notified by the Department of Personnel & Training, said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

Application Form (DAF)-I and DAF-II has been introduced by UPSC in CSE-2025," he said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha.

Singh cited sections of the notified rules that make it mandatory for the applicant to submit requisite information and supporting documents towards various claims, such as date of birth, reservation category and educational qualification among others along with the online application form.

"The failure to provide the required information/documents along with the registration and online application form will entail cancellation of candidature for the examination," read the rules.

The civil services examination is conducted annually by the UPSC in three stages - preliminary, main and interview - to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

India to procure 1,000 surveillance helicopters for high-altitude operations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The government has begun the process to procure nearly 1,000 surveillance helicopters with accessories capable of operating up to an altitude of 5,500 metres above sea level and both during day and night time, as a Request for Information (RFI) was issued.

The RFI says the surveillance helicopters, along with the accessories, are planned to be procured in the spirit of the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programmes. "The preferred categorisation for the project as per provisions of Chapter-II of DAP-2020 may be indicated by the vendors with due justification," it adds.

The defence ministry intends to procure an "approximate quantity of 1,000 surveillance copters (high altitude area) with accessories", according to the RFI document. This RFI is being issued to "finalise SQRs (Service Qualitative Requirements), decide procurement category



and identify probable Indian vendors who are capable to supply surveillance copter (HAA) along with accessories".

The first part of the RFI incorporates the intended use of the equipment and the operational requirement that should be met by the surveillance copter with accessories. The RFI also mentions the terrain conditions under which the "surveillance copters" will be employed primarily in high altitude (up to 5,500 metres), mountainous terrain in India. The surveillance copters with accessories should be operational by day and night and in

commonly encountered weather conditions in all kinds of terrains in the country, the RFI says. "Surveillance Copter (High Altitude Area) is modular in design, thereby lending itself to future upgrades through simple modifications, not leading to design or structural change. It should also facilitate integration and installation, without impacting the performance of any system/sub-system," it added.

The Indian Army is also planning to procure 50 "heavy crawler rock drill" with the government on Wednesday issuing a draft RFI. "The RFI intends to achieve aim

and objectives as per Paragraphs 2 to 4 of Chapter II of DAP 2020," it said.

The Indian Army deployment in Northern, Eastern and Central Commands comprises inaccessible areas with some of the most difficult and treacherous terrain, the document reads.

"Creating sustainable infrastructure in these areas in the shortest time frame is an inescapable operational necessity. Quick development of suitable lines of communication (L of C) is the most critical element of this aspect," it said.

"A self-propelled heavy-duty crawler-based rock drill with an on-board compressor shall be used extensively for moving and positioning the drill machine to the initial formation site for drilling and road cutting in hard rock strata, powering pneumatic/hydraulic motors fitted on the rock drill. "It shall be used for quarry operations and initial road formation cutting by drilling bench holes, toe holes for charging and blasting in mountains," it said.

Aditya Thackeray meets Rahul, Kejriwal on INDIA Bloc unity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya Thackeray met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, days after their losses in the Delhi assembly polls, with a message to strengthen the fight for free and fair elections.

Aditya Thackeray, on a whirlwind tour of the national capital, also met the party's parliamentarians amid reports of dissent in the ranks and some leaders planning to join the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena.

He met Rahul Gandhi late on Wednesday and called on Kejriwal, the former Delhi chief minister, whose party faced defeat in last week's assembly elections on Thursday. "Is there any difference between the BJP and the Election Commission (EC)?... I don't even know where my vote goes. There needs to be more clarity on EVMs (electronic voting machines) and VVPATs (voter-verifiable paper

audit trail)," Aditya Thackeray said.

After calling on Kejriwal, Aditya Thackeray described the meeting as a gesture of friendship. "Governments keep coming and going but relationships continue. We met Kejriwal as a gesture of friendship. However, our democracy is not free and fair. Elections are not free and fair," he told reporters after the meeting.

He was accompanied by party MPs Sanjay Raut, Arvind Sawant, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Sanjay Dina Patil and Bhausaheb Wakchaure, among others.

The Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (SP) had alleged irregularities in the conduct of last year's Maharashtra assembly election, claiming that there were more registered voters in the state than its total adult population. The three parties, which formed the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) grouping, claimed 39 lakh new voters were added between the Lok Sabha elections in May and the November assembly polls.

Smooth traffic ensures seamless holy dip in Sangam for pilgrims

BISWAJEET BANERJEE
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Prayagraj's traffic remains smooth despite the massive Magh Purnima rush, as effective administrative arrangements ensure a hassle-free pilgrimage to the Sangam. According to the Fair police, traffic is moving smoothly on all major routes, including Malak Harhar (Lucknow), Mirzapur Road, Rewa Road, Sahson (Jaunpur), Phaphamau (Lucknow), Andawa (Varanasi route), and Kaushambi. In view of Mahakumbh, security forces and traffic police have been strategically deployed on all major routes to ensure devotees do not face any inconvenience. The Traffic department has urged devotees to adhere to the instructions issued by the administration and avoid unnecessary halts on any route. Chhattisgarh Governor, CM, cabinet take holy dip. On Thursday, a 166-member Chhattisgarh delegation, led by Governor Ramen Deka, CM



Thousands of devotees gathered to take holy dip at Sangam during ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, Prayagraj PTI

Vishnu Deo Sai, and Speaker Dr. Raman Singh, also joined, along with several opposition MLAs. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the divine and grand organization of Mahakumbh. Along with taking a dip in Triveni Sangam, he prayed for

the welfare and prosperity of the people of Chhattisgarh. Later, CM Sai visited the Chhattisgarh Mandap in Sector 7 to check on the well-being of devotees from his state and review the arrangements made for them. Vishnu Deo Sai, accompanied by his wife Kaushalya Sai, Governor Ramen Deka,

Assembly Speaker Raman Singh, MPs, and MLAs, reached Arail Ghat for the holy bath. The entire delegation took a dip in the Sangam together. CM Sai expressed his gratitude to CM Yogi Adityanath, saying, "Today, the Governor, MLAs, MPs, and my entire cabinet have come to take this sacred

dip of faith. We are deeply thankful to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for inviting us to this divine event." Following the holy bath, CM shared his experience on social media, writing, "Today, I took a dip in the Triveni Sangam at Tirthraj Prayag, seeking the happiness, prosperity, and well-being of three crore people of Chhattisgarh. Mahakumbh is a grand festival of divinity and spiritual energy in Sanatan Dharma, where faith transforms into nectar and unites the soul with the divine." Chhattisgarh Assembly speaker Dr Raman Singh emphasized the privilege of participating in the Mahakumbh, saying, "It is a matter of great fortune for the leadership of our Chief Minister, we along with the Governor, ruling party MLAs, and even opposition MLAs have come together to take this sacred bath. Mahakumbh is a blessing for the peace, prosperity, and well-being of our state."

Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi cremated with honors



Bereaved family members of martyr Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi are seen as his mortal remains are being brought to his home, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
HAZARIBAG/JHARKHAND

The mortal remains of Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi, an army man who was killed in Jammu and Kashmir, were consigned to flames in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh on Thursday. The 27-year-old army man who belonged to Punjab Regimental Centre was among two defence personnel killed after suspected terrorists set off an improvised explosive device (IED) near the Line of Control (LoC) in Akhnoor sector on

Tuesday. The air was thick with grief as the body of the man was cremated at the burning ghat in Khirgaon here in the presence of his teary-eyed parents and other people. Bakshi's fiancée, an Army doctor stationed in Jammu, whom he was supposed to marry in April, also stood silently among the crowd. Earlier, Captain Bakshi's body was received by his family. His parents, Sardar Ajinder Singh Bakshi and Neelu Bakshi stood still as they watched their only son embark on his final journey wrapped in a tricolour. The streets were lined with mourners, many of whom knew Captain Bakshi since his childhood. The town that had celebrated Karamjit's engagement a few days ago. His uncle Sardar Amarjit Singh Bakshi told PTI, "Karamjit was like Kohinoor for family and friends. A very charming youth who was always there for people. He had come to Hazaribagh for a week and left on January 24 for Akhnoor where he was posted." The uncle said the deceased was due to be married in Jammu on April 5. "When we were expecting a celebration, we received such a setback," his other uncle Sardar Devinder Singh said. The Army Captain is survived by his mother, father and sister. Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Finance Minister Radha Krishna Kishore and a large number of Army and Civil officials paid tributes to the fallen soldier at the Birsu Munda Airport on Wednesday. Chief Minister Hemant Soren condoled the death of Bakshi and an army jawan in the IED blast.

Haryana cracks down on illegal mining, seizes 324 vehicles



Photo: File photo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH

The Mines and Geology Department, Haryana has stepped up its efforts to combat illegal mining in the state, with district-level officials inspecting 3,950 locations across the state under a special drive, an official statement said on Thursday. The extensive effort from January till February 10 led to the seizure of 324 vehicles involved in illegal mining, it said. According to the statement, the department has set up a robust enforcement strategy including inspections, monitoring, and the use of cutting-edge technology, to conserve natural resources and stopping unauthorized mining activities. Additionally, drones and other advanced tools are being deployed to detect illegal mining operations, while vehicles associated with illicit activities are being seized, it said. The statement said that FIRs are being registered and

hefty fines are being levied on violators. Acting swiftly on a complaint of illegal mining in Bhagwapur village of Yamunanagar district recently, the department conducted an inspection of the area. Investigations revealed that boulders, gravel, sand, and ordinary soil were illegally mined over approximately two acres of land. A fine of Rs 65,37,732 was imposed, and an FIR was registered on February 11, the statement added. As per the guidelines of the mining department, regular inspections are ongoing in every district of Haryana. Notably, in Yamunanagar district, 123 vehicles have been seized, and 116 FIRs have been registered for illegal mining activities during the months of January and February (till February 10). "The department remains committed to fully eradicating illegal mining to ensure the responsible exploitation of the state's natural resources and prevent revenue loss," it said.

Change of Odisha government in 2024 was a declaration of faith: Odisha Governor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati on Thursday said the people of the state opted for a change of government in 2024 general elections and it was not just a political decision, but a "declaration of faith". The people changed the nearly two-and-half decade long government in the state with a vision for the future and hope of a transformation in their lives, he said. The governor said this while addressing the Budget Session of Odisha Assembly which commenced on Thursday. He said the state, despite its glorious past and abundant

human resources, struggled to fulfil its immense potential. "The state's promises often remained unrealised. The people of Odisha, with hope in their hearts and a vision for the future, opted for change over continuity in the 2024 general elections," the governor said. Noting that they were tired of waiting for a transformation that never seemed to come, the governor said: "They (people) embraced the promise of my government that they would listen, understand and act. Their vote was not just a political decision, it was a declaration of faith." The people entrusted his government with the hope of the poor, aspirations of youths,

dreams of farmers and aims of women believing that change would usher in a new era, an era of unmatched prosperity, he said. Kambhampati said that with the mandate of the people and a determined vision for the future, the new government shouldered the onerous responsibility of taking the state forward in the path of prosperity. He said it is just eight months of assuming responsibility and during such a short span of time, the new government has taken various landmark decisions, launched numerous schemes and hosted several programmes in the interest of the people. "The government implemented its flagship

scheme 'Subhadra' which is poised to benefit about a crore of women of the state, rolled out the 'Samrudha Krushak Yojana' to provide input assistance of Rs 800 per quintal of paddy over and above the MSP, opened the 'Ratna Bhandar' of Shree Jagannath Temple honouring the demands of devotees and took up many initiatives to revive Odia Asmita (pride). The governor also highlighted the state government hosting the DG/JGP conference, 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, visit of Singapore President and Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha conclave. He said the state government has received three lakh suggestions for 'Vision 2036' which aspires to

build a developed Odisha targeting a 500 USD billion economy by 2036. Starting his speech by chanting 'Jai Jagannath', the governor said poor, youth, women empowerment are the main pillars of the state government. He said the state has implemented the National Education Policy, Ayushman Bharat in the health sector, Kamadhenu scheme for dairy farmers and others. Stating that 1.5 lakh government jobs to be filled in five years duration, the governor said as many as 65,000 posts to be filled in two years. More than 24,000 posts have been filled in 2024-25. The governor also said the state government will

empower 25 lakh women as 'Lakshmi Didi' by 2027. He said the state government has proposed a new scheme 'Swachha Odisha' to enhance solid, liquid and wastewater management in cities. The state has also launched a new scheme 'Urban Mobility' to ensure seamless transportation in urban areas, and secured approval for development of Hirakud and Satkosia projects to elevate them to a global standard tourist destination, he said. "My government remains committed to a people first approach in delivering essential services, creating livelihood opportunities and developing infrastructures," the governor said.

Centre dispatches teams to tackle bird flu outbreak in Andhra Pradesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Animal Husbandry Minister K Atchannaidu said on Thursday that the Central Government has dispatched teams to assess the Avian Influenza situation in the state following the outbreak of the viral disease in three districts. Over the past 45 days as many as 5.4 Lakh chickens have died in the southern state due to the disease, prompting the Animal Husbandry Department to begin culling birds and creating restricted zones in the affected areas.



Photo: File photo

Badampudi village in Eluru district reported the death of 2.2 Lakh chickens, Velpuru in West Godavari district

recorded 2.5 Lakh deaths, Kanuru Aghraharam in East Godavari district reported 65,000 deaths and

Gampalagudem in NTR district saw 7,000 deaths. "The Chief Minister spoke in detail with senior scientists in Bhopal and the Central Government secretary. Following this, the Central Government secretary dispatched teams to Andhra Pradesh," Atchannaidu said at a press conference at the secretariat. The minister also noted that a senior official from the Centre will visit Andhra Pradesh on February 14. In addition to declaring the affected poultry farms as bio-secure zones, the senior TDP leader stated that officials have been deputed to these areas to ensure the

strict implementation of containment measures. He added that the culling of chickens has been completed at three affected poultry farms and will be completed at the remaining two farms today. According to the minister, officials are monitoring the situation on an hourly basis. Reiterating that there is no harm in consuming boiled eggs and cooked chicken, Atchannaidu assured people that they can eat them without fear. He urged restraint against unnecessary rumour-mongering about the disease on social media and mainstream media.

Criminal with ₹10,000 bounty arrested at India-Nepal border

STAFF REPORTER
GURUGRAM

A criminal with a bounty of ₹10,000 was arrested from the India-Nepal border, who was absconding after out of jail on parole on Wednesday, police said. The accused was identified as Surender alias Choti, a resident of the village Bans Aliyar district Gurugram. According to the police, on September 9, a complaint was received at Police Station Sector-7 IMT Manesar, Gurugram from District Jail Gurugram that an inmate Surender, who was serving a life sentence on murder charges District Jail Gurugram was sent on parole for four weeks on 14.08.2024 and was asked to surrender in District Jail Gurugram on 12.09.2024. The prisoner did not surrender in the jail even after the expiry of parole. On this complaint, a case was registered under the Haryana Good Conduct Prisoners (Temporary Release) Act at Police Station Sector-7 IMT Manesar, Gurugram. During swift action, the police team led by Sub-Inspector Lalit, Incharge Crime Branch Manesar, Gurugram, nabbed the absconding accused from the India-Nepal border on Wednesday. According to the jail records, about 80 charges were registered against the criminal under burglary, attempt to murder, murder and the criminal and he was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing his wife. "The accused was residing in Nepal to avoid police action. Further action is being taken by the police team as per the rules in the matter. The case is under investigation," Sandeep Kumar, spokesperson of the district police said. Apart from this, the Gurugram police have also arrested 6 people from different locations here in the city for possession of illegal liquor.

Will not allow fudging voters list: TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress continued to attack the BJP Government for manipulating elections and warned of adequate counter measures against all efforts to tamper with electoral rolls ahead of next year's Bengal Assembly elections. Questioning the "doubtful appearance or disappearance of names" in and from the electoral rolls in Delhi Assembly seat "which might have been a cause for Aam Aadmi Party's defeat" TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Thursday said that in "Bengal all such moves would be thwarted." "More than 4 Lakh doubtful new names were added in the electoral rolls in the eight months - from June to



Photo: File photo

January - before the Delhi Assembly elections which is unprecedented....four Lakh votes made the difference," Banerjee said. Adding how "in New Delhi seat alone 20,000 names disappeared whereas in some other place 30,000 suspicious names appeared ... this trend has no satisfactory answer and arouses suspicion ... this

election process was not genuine ... and the failure of AAP is that they could not handle it ... but in Bengal such things will not allowed to take place." In Kolkata senior TMC leader and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sobhandeb Chatterjee warned the BJP against trying to make a mess of the electoral rolls.

"They have used this formula in a number of States ... now they are trying to do it in Bengal by allowing online registration of names in the voters' list but we will not allow these names to be finalized until there is a physical verification with relevant credentials ... we are taking this up with utmost priority," Chatterjee said. Earlier Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee too had slammed the BJP for winning elections by fudging electoral rolls. "How will you explain the ghost voters that swell the voters' lists causing you to win elections ... from where 40 Lakh voters came in Maharashtra," Banerjee on Wednesday said alleging that the BJP has been "taking the help of the Election Commission."

Alleging that the voters' lists were manipulated in Haryana and Maharashtra Banerjee said that the Election Commission was made to look the other way. "And if anyone will protest you will send ED and CBI to frighten them ... and here I have reports that the voters' lists are being fudged thousands of names are being added from Bihar we have alerted our people and the administration ... we will thwart all your attempts and once again you will be defeated here," Banerjee said. The TMC leadership's strong comments not with standing the Opposition came out with a sharp reply saying "fear is gradually settling in their hearts ... the Chief Minister and other TMC leaders are afraid of losing elections in 2026."

Accused arrested for ₹20,000 reward in ₹2 Crore ganja seizure case

STAFF REPORTER
GURUGRAM

An accused was arrested from Mathura for allegedly carrying a reward of ₹20,000 in connection with a drug peddling case, police said. The police on August 8, had recovered with more than a tonne of ganja valued at about ₹2 Crore from the suspect hideout from a locked house in Gurugram's Pataudi area. The alleged drug was being transported from Odisha, police said on Thursday. The arrested accused was identified as Deshraj, a resident of Kuni Daulatabad village here in Gurugram. During police interrogation, it was found that the recovered ganja was brought by the accused in a truck from Orissa and was hidden in his closed house. "The estimated cost of the ganja was found to be ₹2 Crore. The ganja was sold in small packets to the customers. Gurugram Police had dealt a tough blow to the smugglers of ganja by seizing such a huge consignment of illegal ganja. Before this drug could be supplied to various places, Gurugram Police had taken major action against the smugglers and recovered

the illegal contraband," Sandeep Kumar, spokesperson of the Gurugram police said. The accused has been produced in the court for further interrogation and was taken on 8 days police remand. During the remand period police will ascertain the whereabouts other members of the accused. Whatever facts emerge in the proceedings being conducted by the police team," the spokesperson said. The investigation team earlier had said that, the crime branch DLF Phase-IV had received secret inputs from their reliable sources that a huge quantity of Ganja was stocked in the Pataudi area. Based on the information a team from the crime branch reached the disclosed spot but found that the house was locked. Meanwhile, the police team somehow manage to trace the owner of the house who gave us in writing to open his house. Police then in the presence of duty magistrate and village head (Sarpanch) opened the house and recovered the huge quantity of illegal contraband. The illegal contraband was stuffed in at least 21 plastic bags.

Arunachal's Tawang district faces power, communication disruptions amidst heavy snowfall

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
ITANAGAR

Tawang district in Arunachal Pradesh has been experiencing heavy snowfall since Tuesday evening, throwing life out of gear in the border district. The entire district has been covered under a thick blanket of snow, district officials said. While snowfall is not

uncommon in the region, the prolonged and heavy nature of this spell has led to disruptions in essential services, including electricity, water supply, and communication. Uprooted trees and the accumulation of thick snow on power and communication lines have caused service disruptions in some areas. Although most shops

remained open, footfall is low as residents step out only to purchase daily necessities. Attendance in educational institutions has significantly reduced, and vehicles are not plying. Various departments, including power, public health engineering, Border Roads Organisation, PWD, and rural works department are working

tirelessly to restore and maintain essential services, officials added. Police and army personnel are actively assisting stranded tourists and commuters at Sela and Jaswant Garh areas. According to the latest weather forecasts, snowfall is likely persist for the next few days. "If the situation continues, further disruptions to

normal life may occur. However, as of now, no reports of significant damage or accidents due to snowfall have been received," the officials informed. The district administration has advised citizens of the border district to take necessary precautions, avoid unnecessary travel, and stay updated with official advisories.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Revamping the tax regime

Nirmala Sitharaman introduces the Income Tax Bill 2025 in Parliament, aiming to replace the 1961 Act with a more taxpayer-friendly framework

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Income Tax Bill 2025 in Parliament on Thursday. This new bill aims to replace the Income Tax Act, 1961, which has become cumbersome due to numerous amendments over the last six decades. The bill focuses on simplification, clarity and ease of compliance for taxpayers while retaining the fundamental structure of the tax system. The bill consists of 536 sections, 23 chapters and 16 schedules within 622 pages, making it significantly more concise than the 880-page 1961 Act. One of the major changes is the replacement of the term 'previous year' and 'assessment year' with 'tax year,' eliminating confusion regarding tax filing timelines. To further enhance clarity, ambiguous terms such as 'notwithstanding' have been replaced with 'irrespective.' The new bill also introduces tables and formulae for key calculations, such as TDS, presumptive taxation, salary taxation and deductions for bad debts. Complex explanations and provisos have been omitted, making the law more comprehensible and user-friendly.



A formal Taxpayer's Charter has been included, outlining rights and responsibilities to promote transparency and fairness in tax administration. All TDS-related provisions have been consolidated under a single clause using simple tabular formats, reducing complexity and improving compliance. Additionally, the bill integrates key court rulings from the last 60 years, providing more legal certainty and reducing disputes. The tax treatment for employee stock options has been refined, offering a more transparent taxation structure to ensure fair and predictable tax treatment for employees receiving stock options. To make tax exemptions clearer, income that does not form part of total income has now been moved to dedicated schedules instead of being scattered throughout the Act. These changes are expected to bring multiple benefits, such as simpler compliance, a clear taxation structure, reduced litigation, an easier TDS framework and greater predictability for employees with stock options. Despite these advantages, the bill faces certain challenges. Taxpayers and businesses will need time to adapt to the new terminologies and provisions. The removal of 'previous year' and 'assessment year' may cause temporary confusion during the transition. Additionally, the introduction of tables and streamlined TDS clauses will require updates in income tax return (ITR) forms, software utilities and reporting systems. The Income Tax Bill 2025 marks a significant step toward a more transparent, efficient and taxpayer-friendly system. While it does not introduce new taxes, its simplification of language, removal of redundancies, and integration of judicial precedents will reduce compliance costs and tax disputes. If successfully implemented, this bill could enhance tax administration efficiency and encourage better voluntary compliance among taxpayers. After deliberation by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, it is expected to come into effect from April 1, 2026. How it will actually work will only be clear then.

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PICTALK



Farmer carries rose flowers during the Valentine's Week, in Agartala

Russia combines diplomatic strategy with military tactics



NISHAKANT OJHA

Russia's military philosophy extends beyond traditional warfare, incorporating hybrid tactics that blend Eastern endurance with Western innovation

Russia's military strategy has long been shaped by its geopolitical position, straddling both Europe and Asia. This dual identity has led to a warfare doctrine that merges Western technological advancement with Eastern strategic depth and endurance. The ongoing evolution of Russian military tactics provides valuable insight into its approach to global conflicts, shaped by a fusion of European and Asian influences. From the European side, Russia has historically adopted a professionalised military structure similar to Western armies, particularly during the Imperial era and through Soviet reforms. Its command structures have evolved to centralise authority while enabling flexibility on the battlefield. The modernisation of weaponry has also followed Western advancements, integrating precision-strike capabilities and network-centric warfare. Drawing lessons from NATO conflicts, Russia has enhanced its rapid manoeuvre warfare strategies, incorporating elements of German Blitzkrieg and modern NATO doctrines, which were evident in its campaigns in Georgia and Ukraine. On the other hand, Russia's Eastern influences are deeply rooted in its strategic patience and attritional warfare, a legacy of the Mongol conquests and Soviet-era endurance strategies. Rather than seeking swift victories, Russia often engages in prolonged, resource-draining conflicts that wear down its adversaries over time. Its embrace of asymmetric and hybrid tactics aligns with guerrilla warfare methods, employing unconventional approaches such as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and proxy warfare. This strategic approach mirrors the methods used by China and other Eastern powers, relying on destabilisation rather than direct confrontation. Furthermore, Russia's influence in regional conflicts extends beyond conventional military engagements, utilising mercenaries like the Wagner Group and supporting separatist movements, a strategy similar to



Iran's and China's use of regional proxy forces.

Russia's military doctrine extends its influence over neighboring states, shaping their security and geopolitical dynamics. Ukraine has been the epicenter of Russia's hybrid warfare, where cyberattacks, military incursions, and disinformation campaigns have been employed to destabilise the country. Belarus remains a critical ally, hosting Russian forces and acting as a logistical facilitator for military operations. The Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—are under constant Russian influence, facing frequent cyber intrusions and political destabilisation efforts, despite their NATO membership. In Central Asia, Russia maintains a military and economic presence in former Soviet republics like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, ensuring their alignment within its sphere of influence. Similarly, in the Caucasus, Russia has engaged in military conflicts, as seen in Georgia, and continues to exert influence in Armenia and Azerbaijan through peace-keeping operations and strategic alliances. Beyond its immediate borders, Russia balances relationships with China and India, maintaining military cooperation with the former while supplying arms to the latter, ensuring its strategic autonomy amid shifting glob-



DRAWING LESSONS FROM NATO CONFLICTS, RUSSIA HAS ENHANCED ITS RAPID MANOEUVRE WARFARE STRATEGIES, INCORPORATING ELEMENTS OF GERMAN BLITZKRIEG AND MODERN NATO DOCTRINES, WHICH WERE EVIDENT IN ITS CAMPAIGNS IN GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

al alliances. The geopolitical strategy of the United States in the Russia-Ukraine war has been pivotal in countering Russian aggression through military, economic, and diplomatic means. One of the most significant aspects of US involvement has been its military support for Ukraine. The US has supplied Ukraine with advanced weaponry, including Javelin anti-tank missiles, HIMARS rocket systems, and Patriot air defence systems, significantly enhancing its defensive and offensive capabilities. Another key aspect of the economic strategy has been reducing Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas. The US has increased its liquefied natural gas exports to Europe and supported alternative energy sources to mitigate Russia's ability to use energy as a political weapon. Additionally, billions of dollars in direct economic aid have been provided to Ukraine to stabilize its economy and sustain its military operations. India, as a key global player, has maintained a delicate balancing act in the Russia-Ukraine war due to its historical ties with Russia and its growing partnerships with the West. Economically, India has continued its energy cooperation with Russia, increasing imports of Russian oil at discounted prices to mitigate global energy inflation. At the same time, India is expanding

its trade partnerships with Western nations to ensure diversification and avoid over-reliance on any single economic partner. In the geopolitical sphere, India has positioned itself as a neutral entity, abstaining from several UN votes condemning Russia and advocating diplomatic dialogue over sanctions. India's military procurement strategy reflects this balance, as it continues to acquire Russian military hardware such as S-400 missile systems while simultaneously strengthening defense ties with the US and France to modernise its armed forces. The broader Indo-Pacific security landscape remains a key concern for India, as it remains wary of deepening Russia-China military ties. Given China's aggressive posturing in the region, India has increased its engagement with Western powers, particularly through the QUAD alliance with the US, Japan and Australia, to counterbalance Chinese influence. Russia's military philosophy extends beyond traditional warfare, incorporating hybrid tactics that blend Eastern endurance with Western innovation. Cyber and information warfare play a significant role in Russia's strategy, heavily influenced by China's cyber tactics.

(The writer is an expert on cyber security and counter terrorism; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COUNSELLING CENTRES FOR COUPLES

Madam — Recently, many cases of divorce rocked the nation. The case of Atul Subhash, who ended his life, giving up due to the mental agony faced by his wife during divorce and another incident where a Karnataka woman demanded Rs 6.16 lakh per month as alimony, raised doubts among youth on the institution of marriage. To curb the rising cases of divorce, the Odisha government has come up with a welcome initiative to open a pre-marriage counselling centre in the state. CM Mohan Charan Majhi, following a proposal from National Commission for Women (NCW) Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar, took this thoughtful initiative. With the changing times, the mindset of the young couples is changing. The word 'divorce' is becoming very common in the country these days.

In case of any conflict, be it external or internal, without giving a second thought, the married couple is straightaway heading for a divorce, just like returning a defective product to a shop. Due to a lack of guidance and understanding, some couples don't even put effort into fixing their marriage, which later leads to affairs and family disputes. This practice needs to change; this is where the pre-marriage counselling centres will help the couples. There are some conflicts that can be resolved under proper guidance and advice that the pre-marriage counsellors will provide to couples. This initiative will pave the path for young couples to take the right call at the right time without falling prey to any misjudgments and misunderstandings. The initiative from the Odisha government is a commendable approach to curb divorce cases and to ensure the mental and emotional wellbeing of married couples.

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

IAF CHIEF CRITICISES HAL

Madam — Indian Air Force Chief Air Marshal Amar Pratap Singh has said his confidence in defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) continues to

Supreme Court slams freebies



Recently, during the hearing of a PIL seeking shelter for the homeless in Delhi, the Supreme Court's bench deprecated the distribution of freebies ahead of elections and remarked that it would be better if the homeless were sought to be integrated into mainstream society so that they could contribute to the nation. The order has been passed in the backdrop of a chart handed over in the court by a petitioner in person, which showed the statewide position with regard to the number of homeless persons, the

number of shelters available, and the number of persons who could be accommodated in the said shelters. The Supreme Court expressed concern over political parties promising freebies and asking whether it was not "creating a class of parasites" instead of bringing people into the mainstream workforce who could contribute towards the nation's development.

The bench has also remarked that people are not willing to work due to the lure of cash transfer schemes like "Ladkhi Behin" and free rations. Shooting down his submission, Justice B R Gavai recounted his personal experience of how agriculturists in Maharashtra were not getting labourers as they were getting things free at home. SC's strong observation comes at a time when political parties go all out to woo voters by promising freebies like free electricity and water with little concern for state finance.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

INVEST IN AI

Madam —The Chinese DeepSeek has motivated the major countries including India seeking deep into the Artificial Intelligence pursuit. China surprised the world with its latest AI application but it is the hard work of their government, fund managers, institutions, regulatory authorities for two decades with the investment of billions of US Dollars. The global cooperation in developing the latest AI technology to excel ahead of DeepSeek is welcome. Our 23 IITs and 26 IIITs, IISC have thousands of students, researchers and the most competent faculty who can synergise their efforts, resources and infrastructure to develop our own advanced AI. The Government should immediately thrust their concerted efforts with the regulatory framework, funding and infrastructural resources and pool our top and globally prestigious engineering institutions to develop our own AI at a fast pace.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The true cost of 5G: Why prices are high now—but will not stay that way



GAURAV GANDHI

New technologies start costly but become more affordable as adoption grows. With economies of scale, 5G costs will drop, unlocking new opportunities for businesses

The 5G technology is widely recognised for its ability to deliver lower latency, faster speeds and improved connectivity, supporting a vast number of devices simultaneously. However, many consumers perceive 5G as an expensive innovation, primarily due to the high cost of chipsets, while overlooking broader cost factors. Although chipset expenses are a component, they do not represent the complete financial picture. The Cost of 5G Hardware When considering 5G, it is common to focus on the price of chips. While 4G chips are priced below \$10, 5G chips currently exceed \$100. However, focusing solely on chipset costs ignores the larger financial framework. The primary expense of 5G stems from the extensive infrastructure required to support the network. Telecom providers must invest in building new base stations, fibre-optic networks, and antennas to enable 5G connectivity. Historically, new technologies such as cloud computing and smartphones were expensive when first introduced.



However, as demand grew and adoption increased, prices gradually decreased. A similar trend is anticipated with 5G.

The Inevitable Drop in 5G Costs

Technological progress consistently follows a pattern: initial prices are high, but they decline over time. A case in point is the smartphone market, where the average cost dropped from \$443 in 2011 to \$372 in 2013. Similarly, cloud computing services have become significantly cheaper over the past decade. The same economic principles apply to 5G. As technology advances and adoption rates increase, costs will inevitably decrease.

Economies of Scale and Cost Reduction

One of the key drivers of cost reduction in 5G is economies

of scale. As more telecom providers, businesses and consumers adopt 5G, the cost of deployment will continue to decline. The larger the global 5G network, the more cost-effective its implementation becomes. Research by Juniper predicts that global 5G connections will surge from 5 million in 2019 to 1.5 billion by 2025. Mass production plays a crucial role in reducing costs. Increased production volumes lead to lower prices for 5G hardware, including chips, antennas, and base stations. The 5G base station market is expected to grow from \$37.44 billion in 2020 to \$132.06 billion by 2025, at a CAGR of 28.67 per cent, according to Mordor Intelligence. These massive investments will drive economies of scale, further lowering the cost of private 5G network deployment for businesses.

Affordable 5G Handsets and Private Networks

The competition in chipset manufacturing is already pushing down 5G handset prices. As these prices drop, the overall cost of related hardware and services will follow, accelerating global 5G

The Future of 5G Affordability

As adoption scales up, deployment costs will decline, making 5G a more democratised technology. This affordability will allow businesses of all sizes to embrace 5G, fostering innovation in artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and beyond. The widespread availability of 5G will enable businesses to stay competitive in the digital world.

(The writer is Founder & CEO, Echelon Edge Pvt Ltd; views are personal)

erode over its failure to fix delays in delivery and upgrades to the light combat aircraft Tejas. I think the Air Force Chief should be more circumspect in issuing such statements, which harm our nation globally. He should understand that this will be watched by our enemy countries. Let him air his views with the defence minister or the Chief of all the services. This is not the way one has to mock our own enterprises, that too in the defence sector. He should be aware that the GE firm in the US has been the main obstacle in developing the Tejas, as they are not willing to transfer the technology of the engines because of a lack of certain key materials like titanium. GE might be sending these engines this March, so let us wait for them. The delay from HAL is a combination of various factors. No one should be allowed to speak openly about the state of our defence industries; it's a matter of national security. India should hasten up and ought to go in for Sukhoi/Rafel, as the US can hardly be trusted for reasons well known to all of us.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S AI DIPLOMACY

India's plan to host the fourth global AI summit in Delhi underscores its strategic push for leadership in AI innovation



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visits to Paris and Washington, where he engaged with two of the most influential leaders from the developed world, come at a crucial juncture of shifting geopolitical dynamics. The central theme of these high-level bilateral discussions revolved around advanced technology cooperation in an increasingly fragmented world. India played a significant role as the co-chair of the AI Action Summit in Paris, alongside host nation France. This marked the third global event dedicated to artificial intelligence, drawing comparisons to the Kumbh Mela of technology—bringing together policymakers, corporate leaders, experts, and world leaders.

The summit's primary focus was on leveraging the transformative potential of AI, a technology that has been likened to groundbreaking human advancements such as the invention of the wheel and the mastery of fire. Meanwhile, China introduced DeepSeek, a nimble generative AI tool, posing a serious challenge to the near-monopolistic dominance of US tech giants that have invested billions in AI research and development. Compounding the complexities of global AI governance, former US President Joe Biden, during his final week in office, passed an executive order known as the Interim Final Rule (IFR) on the Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion.

This order imposed export restrictions on critical software and hardware essential for AI development, targeting nations deemed adversarial to US interests—chiefly China—but also impacting close allies



such as India. Global technology stakeholders have since urged the new US administration to maintain consistency with the previously established Regulatory Freeze Order. They have called for the suspension of the AI Diffusion Rule until further review and stakeholder consultations ensure that the regulations align with both national security and international trade interests.

Despite industry appeals, President Donald Trump has yet to overturn the executive order signed by his predecessor. However, his administration issued a fresh executive order on January 23, signalling a possible shift in approach. Within days of assuming office, President Trump reaffirmed the United States' commitment to AI leadership, stating that the country has historically been at the forefront of AI innovation due to its robust free-market economy, world-class research institutions, and entrepreneurial drive. His directive emphasized eliminating barriers that could hinder American AI progress, revoking certain existing AI policies, and reinforcing the US's global leadership in AI. He further asserted that sustaining AI dominance was vital for human advancement, economic competitiveness, and national security. India, aiming for a prominent role in global AI governance, innovation and development, has set forth an ambitious AI mission of its own.

This vision, however, is heavily reliant on high-end semiconductor chips and Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) currently controlled by US technology firms. Any restrictions on access to these critical processors could pose significant challenges to India's AI aspirations. Modi's engagements in Paris, India's announcement to host the fourth global AI summit in Delhi, and his discussions with President Trump and other world leaders signal a strategic move toward securing India's place at the forefront of global AI advancements. These diplomatic efforts mark an essential step in navigating the rapidly evolving AI landscape and ensuring India's stake in shaping the future of this transformative technology.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Will 'Jan Vishwas 2.0' deliver real reform



A S MITTAL

While initiatives like upcoming Jan Vishwas 2.0 aim to ease regulatory burdens, deeper reforms are essential to cut red tape and curb the menace of bribery



Despite concerted efforts to combat corruption, red-tapism and bribery remain formidable barriers to business growth in India. The recent "India Business Corruption Survey 2024" presents a troubling picture: 66 per cent of business entities admit to paying bribes, with 54 per cent stating they were coerced to expedite government processes, obtain permits, ensure compliance, or acquire duplicate licenses. The problem is most acute in sectors governed by over-reaching officials in labour, GST, income tax, pollution, provident funds, property registration, drug and health departments. The economic impact is undeniable.

A survey by EY-FICCI reveals that four out of five respondents believe corruption is a significant deterrent to foreign direct investment (FDI). This underscores the urgent need to overhaul India's compliance framework to foster a transparent, fair, and predictable regulatory environment. While the government initiated compliance reforms two years ago, progress has been sluggish. The Jan Vishwas Act of 2023 was a step forward, decriminalising 180 provisions related to imprisonment clauses that burden businesses and entrepreneurs. However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's 2025 budget announcement about 'Jan Vishwas 2.0' aims to further decriminalise around 100 provisions. While this is a welcome step, it barely scratches the surface—over 20,000 provisions with imprisonment clauses remain untouched.

The Constant Flux of Compliance Rules

For Indian businesses, compliance is already a complex challenge, but its intersection with corruption makes it nearly insurmountable. Regulatory officials often wield compliance provisions as tools to extract bribes. Many businesses report that unofficial payments are still required to secure regulatory approvals, even when all necessary compliances are met. A significant flaw in the system is



FOR INDIAN BUSINESSES, COMPLIANCE IS ALREADY A COMPLEX CHALLENGE, BUT ITS INTERSECTION WITH CORRUPTION MAKES IT NEARLY INSURMOUNTABLE

the enormous subjectivity granted to inspectors, who can threaten imprisonment or factory shutdowns without accountability.

Another pressing issue is the overwhelming frequency of compliance updates, which fosters inefficiency and corruption. Over the past year alone, there have been 9,420 compliance updates—an average of 36 daily changes. This staggering rate of change indicates either regulatory incompetence or a deliberate design to create systemic corruption pipelines. A bureaucracy that needs to update rules at such an erratic pace is either incapable of foresight or complicit in fostering an environment where bribes become inevitable.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) recent directive is a promising initiative to curb this chaos. Effective this January, changes to food label regulations will be announced only once a year, offering a model for predictable regulatory changes. Similar measures should be extended across all regulatory bodies.

Labour Laws: The Elephant in the Room

A significant portion of compliance-related imprisonment clauses stem from labour laws, which fall under the Concurrent List of the Constitution. While India has replaced 29 colonial-era labour laws with four modern labour codes, they remain in limbo, awaiting implementation. Without this critical step, the long-touted "biggest labour reforms in independent India" remain mere rhetoric. State governments must act swiftly to operationalise these reforms.

Simplifying Business Permits: A Digital-First Approach

Establishing a factory in India

requires submitting hundreds of self-attested and notarised documents across more than 40 government departments.

This archaic system breeds corruption and inefficiency. A digital-first approach could transform the process. Imagine a scenario where entrepreneurs can apply for factory permissions using a single business identifier, granting regulators access to verified documents via an entity called Digi Locker. Such a tamper-proof, authenticated repository could cut approval times from months to days, mirroring the success of India's Digi Yatra in streamlining airport security.

One Nation, One Business Identity

India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has revolutionised governance, but business compliance remains fragmented. Entrepreneurs must navigate at least 23 identity numbers issued by various Union and state authorities—from PAN, GSTIN, and CIN to professional tax numbers and factory licenses. Each identifier has its lifecycle, requiring periodic renewals and payments, leading to inefficiencies and corruption. A unified One Nation, One Business Identity system could dramatically simplify compliance, reducing bureaucratic friction and the opportunities for corrupt practices.

A small budgetary allocation toward this initiative could streamline regulatory interactions, enhancing India's appeal as a business destination.

A Global Perspective: The US Efficiency Threat

The global competition for investment and talent is intensifying. The United States is advancing governance reforms, including the proposed

Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), to make business operations seamless. If the world's largest economy (GDP: \$27 trillion) becomes even more business-friendly, why would investors choose India's \$4 trillion economy, where red tape and corruption persist? The answer is simple: they won't. As American efficiency attracts global capital, India risks losing out on both investment and entrepreneurial talent, a fundamental driver of its knowledge economy.

The Way Forward

The time for complacency is over. What was an opportunity yesterday is now an urgent necessity. To sustain its economic momentum, India must dismantle bureaucratic hurdles, create a predictable compliance environment, and eradicate corruption. A clear, well-structured compliance framework—ushered in through Jan Vishwas 2.0—is not just about ease of doing business; it's about safeguarding India's economic future.

The government must act decisively to attract global companies and empower Indian entrepreneurs to innovate, expand, and create jobs without fear or unnecessary regulatory friction. India stands at a crossroads. Whether the High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms embraces a bold compliance overhaul or hesitates, the stakes are high. The choice is clear: modernise or risk being left behind in the global economic race.

(The author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are personal)

Making road safety a national priority: A targeted mission to save lives

To achieve meaningful change and save lives, India must move beyond symbolism and adopt a mission-driven approach, treating road safety as a national imperative

Every year, India observes Road Safety Month, during which various events and programmes are organised by the government and civil society organisations at national and regional levels. These initiatives focus on raising awareness and educating the public on ways to reduce road casualties.

While this acknowledgment is a step forward, the critical question remains—has road safety truly become a national priority? Unfortunately, our approach is often reactive, addressing the issue only after tragic accidents occur, rather than proactively implementing global best practices to prevent them.

A Grim Reality: What the Data Reveals

Road accident statistics paint

a stark picture, suggesting that road safety is yet to be treated as a priority by Indian citizens. Road accidents are an everyday occurrence in India, and there is rarely a day when one does not hear about a fatal crash.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) report for 2022, India witnessed 461,312 road crashes, resulting in 168,491 deaths and 443,366 injuries. Alarmingly, nearly 70 per cent of these fatalities involved young individuals—many of whom were the primary earners of their families.

While the 2023 report is yet to be released, officials have already indicated a steep rise in casualties, making Indian roads even more hazardous. The United Nations Decade of



ASHIM SANYAL

Action for Road Safety aims to reduce road deaths by 50 per cent by 2030, and India is a signatory to this ambitious goal. However, despite past commitments, the recent MoRTH report shows an 11.9 per cent increase in accidents, with deaths rising by 9.4 per cent and injuries by 15.3 per cent compared to 2021. This translates to an average of 1,264 accidents and 462 deaths

per day, or 53 accidents and 19 deaths every hour. Achieving the 50 per cent reduction target by 2030 seems increasingly difficult unless immediate and sustained action is taken at both central and state levels.

Strengthening Laws and Enforcement

The introduction of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, was a significant step toward improving road safety, imposing stricter penalties and regulations. Initially, the law was taken seriously, but its impact faded over time due to inconsistent enforcement. Socio-cultural factors often override the fear of legal consequences, making road safety a neglected concern. The reality is that road crashes are preventable, and the



term "accident" itself is misleading.

The Urgent Need for Action

Adopting a structured and data-driven approach to road safety is imperative. Studies indicate that focusing on key risk factors—such as speeding, non-compliance with seatbelt and helmet laws, and unsafe road designs—can significantly reduce casualties.

Speeding alone contributes to approximately 73 per cent

of all road accidents in India. Scientific speed limits should be enforced on expressways, highways, urban roads and even rural areas where mobility is increasing rapidly. Non-compliance with safety measures is another major concern. In 2022, over 16,715 people lost their lives due to not wearing seatbelts, and more than 50,000 two-wheeler riders died because they were not wearing helmets. These numbers highlight the urgent need to enforce safety regulations strictly and create widespread awareness about their importance.

Road Safety as a National Mission

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has successfully led multiple national missions, including Swachh Bharat

Abhiyan, Skill Development, Yoga for Fitness, Immunisation Programmes, and Child Health Initiatives. These programmes achieved remarkable success through targeted policies, funding and regular progress reviews.

Given the scale of road safety concerns, India must adopt a similar mission-driven approach. Declaring road safety a National Mission would ensure the allocation of dedicated budgets, the establishment of clear targets, and continuous monitoring at both central and state levels. Regular progress reviews, monthly reports, and rigorous enforcement mechanisms would motivate authorities to take proactive steps toward improving road safety.

A Collective Commitment to

Saving Lives

Road safety is not just about reducing casualties; it is about safeguarding the wellbeing of every citizen, strengthening the economy, and securing the future of India's youth. The financial burden of post-crash medical care, loss of productivity and emotional distress on families is immense.

As a global signatory committed to saving lives, India must take decisive steps to ensure road safety is not merely a campaign but an integral part of governance. The time to act is now—by adopting a mission-mode approach, enforcing existing laws and making road safety a top national priority, we can create safer roads for all.

(The author is COO consumer VOICE; views are personal)

Erdogan urges India, Pak to resolve Kashmir issue

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through dialogue between India and Pakistan, with due consideration for the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

President Erdogan, who is in Pakistan on a two-day visit, made the comments after holding one-on-one and delegation talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The leaders also witnessed the signing ceremony of 24 agreements and a Memorandum of Understanding between the two sides.

Following this, they read statements to the media, expressing resolve to strengthen their bilateral ties, during which Erdogan also talked about the Kashmir issue.

"The Kashmir issue should be addressed according to the UN resolution through dialogue and keeping in mind the aspirations of the people of Kashmir," Erdogan said.

"Our state and our nation, as in the past, stands in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers today," he added.

India has repeatedly emphasised that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were, are, and "shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.

The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the spe-



President Erdogan, who is in Pakistan on a two-day visit, made the comments after holding one-on-one and delegation talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

cial status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019.

In his statement, President Erdogan also showed keen interest in promoting ties with Pakistan. "In the seventh session of our council, which we just concluded, we have agreed to further strengthen our relationship," he said.

In the 7th Pakistan-Turkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council meeting, the two countries agreed to continue their efforts to achieve the goal of a USD 5 billion trade volume.

At its conclusion, the two leaders signed a joint declaration to further deepen, diversify and institutionalise their Strategic Partnership.

"Within the framework of this visit, we have signed a total of 24 agreements and MoUs in the fields of trade, water resources, agriculture, energy, culture, family, and social services, along

with science, banking, education, defence, and health." Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz said that Pakistan was the second home of the Turkish leader and added that it was wonderful to have him back after five years.

"The people of Pakistan are extremely happy today to see you, along with your delegation, visiting your brotherly country," he said.

He thanked Turkiye for standing by Pakistan "through thick and thin" during earthquakes and floods. "Your visit to Pakistan today has given a new level to our brotherly relations," Shehbaz said.

He also called Erdogan an important and highly respected leader of Islamic world. "You have also led from the front, speaking for the problems and speaking for the rights of oppressed people, be it people of Gaza, Palestine or Kashmir," Sharif said. "When you speak, not only millions of people in Islamic world hear you very attentively but the globe hears you when you speak," he added.

The prime minister and President Asif Ali Zardari received Erdogan at the Nur Khan airbase when he arrived early in the morning.

The Turkish president was accompanied by First Lady Emine Erdogan and a delegation of investors and business leaders. A formal welcome ceremony was held in Erdogan's honour at the Prime Minister's House, where a contingent of armed forces presented him with a guard of honour. He was also honoured with a fly-past by F-16 fighter jets.

Erdogan and Shehbaz also planted a sapling at the PM House. Later, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir also met Erdogan and extended greetings on his visit.

OUT AT ISRAEL

Turkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lashed out at Israel during a visit to Pakistan on Thursday, speaking up in defence of Palestinians in Gaza and condemning ideas to forcibly displace them from their land.

Speaking at a business forum, Erdogan accused Israel of failing to keep to a ceasefire agreement, warning that the region was being dragged "toward blood and tears again."

Erdogan reiterated his opposition to President Donald Trump's proposal to relocate Palestinians from Gaza. "Gaza belongs to our Gazan brothers and sisters and will remain so forever," he said in a televised speech at a business forum in the capital, Islamabad. Erdogan arrived on a two-day visit on Wednesday night. "The homeland for which the Palestinians have sacrificed tens of thousands of their children is not up for bargaining," he added. Earlier on Thursday, Erdogan held talks on Gaza and bilateral Turkiye-Pakistani trade and cooperation with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "Alongside Pakistan, we strive to provide every effort possible to support to the just cause of our Palestinian brothers, both within the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and other platforms," Erdogan also said.

"We must strengthen this determined stance, especially at a time when there are unlawful and morally unacceptable proposals such as tearing our Gazan brothers from their homeland," he added.

NATO allies insist Ukraine, Europe must be in peace talks

PTI ■ BRUSSELS

Several NATO allies stressed Son Thursday that Ukraine and Europe must not be cut out of any peace negotiations as US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth denied that the United States is betraying the war-ravaged country. European governments are reeling after the Trump administration signalled that it is planning face-to-face talks with Russia on ending the Ukraine war without involving them, insisted that Kyiv should not join NATO, and said that it's up to Europe to protect itself and Ukraine from whatever Russia might do next.

"There can be no negotiation about Ukraine without Ukraine. And Ukraine's voice must be at the heart of any talks," UK Defence Secretary John Healey told reporters at NATO headquarters, as the organisations' 32 defence ministers met for talks on Ukraine. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said: "For me, it's clear ... that Europe must be involved in the negotiations — and I think that's very easy to understand," particularly if

Europe is "supposed to play a central or the main role in the peace order."

Europe "will have to live directly" with the consequences, he added.

Hegseth denied that the US has betrayed Ukraine by launching negotiations about its future without Kyiv's full involvement. After talks with Putin and then Zelenskyy, Trump said on Wednesday he would "probably" meet in person with the Russian leader in the near term, possibly in Saudi Arabia.

"There is no betrayal there. There is a recognition that the whole world and the United States is invested and interested in peace. A negotiated peace," Hegseth told reporters. The European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, expressed surprise that Hegseth and Trump had listed what appeared to be concessions to Russia even before talks have begun in earnest.

"We shouldn't take anything off the table before the negotiations have even started, because it plays to Russia's court," she said. "Why are we giving them everything that they want even before the

negotiations have been started? It's appeasement. It has never worked."

Hegseth warned that the war in Ukraine must "be a wakeup call" for NATO's European allies to spend more on their own defence budgets.

Twenty-three of the 32 member countries were forecast to have met the organisation's guideline of spending 2 per cent of gross domestic product on their national defence budgets last year, but a third still do not.

But Hegseth's French counterpart, Sebastien Lecornu, described the wrangling over greater defence spending as "a false debate," saying that governments and parliaments across Europe are already approving more weapons purchases and bigger military budgets while helping Ukraine staff off an invasion.

Lecornu warned that the future of NATO itself is now in question.

"To say that it's the biggest and most robust alliance in history is true, historically speaking. But the real question is will that still be the case in 10 or 15 years," he said, after the US — by far NATO's biggest and

most powerful member — signalled that its security priorities lie elsewhere, including in Asia.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who was chairing Thursday's meeting, said that whatever agreement is struck between Russia and Ukraine, it is crucial that the "peace deal is enduring, that Putin knows that this is the end, that he can never again try to capture a piece of Ukraine." Touting Europe's investment in Ukraine, Swedish Defence Minister Pal Jonson said European nations provided about 60 per cent of the military support to Kyiv last year and must be involved, especially given US demands that Europe take more responsibility for Ukraine's security in the longer term. His Estonian counterpart, Hanno Pevkur, underlined that the European Union has driven sanctions against Russia, has invested heavily in Ukraine's defence, and will be asked to foot the bill for rebuilding the war-ravaged country. "We have to be there. So there is no question about it. Otherwise this peace will not be long lasting," Pevkur warned.

Aus accuses Chinese fighter of endangering surveillance plane over South China Sea

Melbourne (PTI): Australia protested Thursday what it described as an unsafe and unprofessional interaction over the South China Sea where a Chinese fighter is accused of releasing flares that endangered an Australian military surveillance plane. Chinese J-16 fighter released flares on Tuesday that passed within 30 meters (100

feet) of a P-8 Poseidon surveillance jet in daylight and in international air space, Defense Minister Richard Marles said on Thursday.

The Australian plane usually carries eight or nine crew. The plane was not damaged and no crew member was injured, Marles said. "The J-16 was so close that there's no way you

could have been able to ensure that the flares did not hit the P-8," Marles told Sky News.

"Had any of those flares hit the P-8, that would have definitely had the potential for significant damage to that aircraft," he added.

China's foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun in turn accused the Australian military aircraft of "deliberately" intruding into airspace over the disputed Paracel Islands, which China claims.

"China's measures to drive away the aircraft were legitimate, law-between Chinese and Australian forces that Australia has disclosed in nine months.

Australia accused the pilot of a Chinese J-10 fighter of unsafe and unprofessional behaviour over the Yellow Sea in May last year by dropping flares in the path of an Australian navy Seahawk helicopter.

Australia said the helicopter pilot had to take evasive action

ful, professional and restrained" Guo said.

Australia has protested in its capital Canberra and in Beijing on Wednesday and Thursday, Marles said.

The protest accused the two Chinese pilots of an "unsafe and unprofessional maneuver that posed a risk to the aircraft and personnel," a statement said. The protest highlights that while bilateral diplomatic and trade relations have improved, relations between the two militaries remain dangerous. The interaction is the first significant clash to avoid the flares.

There were no injuries or damage, although experts warned the helicopter could have been forced to ditch at sea if a flare had struck an engine.

China protested at the time that the helicopter had flown close to Chinese airspace and had attempted to carry out reconnaissance on a Chinese navy training exercise.

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I hereby declare that my client RAJ KUMAR BHANDARI owner of the FIRST FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF, PLOT NO. 85, AREA 50 SQ. YDS, KHASRA NO. 794 TO 797, VILLAGE NAWADA, OM VIHAR, PHASE-1, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 and. Pawan Kumar purchase property from Sh. Anil Kumar vide Notarized GSA, AT&S and will dated 17.10.2018. Now Pawan Kumar wants to sell aforesaid property. And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

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| Corporate Office : ReNew, Hub, Commercial Block-1, Zone-6, Golf Course Road, DLF City Phase-V, Gurugram, 122009, Haryana, Phone - 0124-4896 670/ 80 | | | | | | |
| Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024 | | | | | | |
| (Amounts in INR millions, except share and per share data, unless otherwise stated) | | | | | | |
| Particulars | Quarter ended 31 December 2024 | Quarter ended 30 September 2024 | Quarter ended 31 December 2023 | 9 months ended 31 December 2024 | 9 months ended 31 December 2023 | Year ended 31 March 2024 |
| | (Unaudited) | (Unaudited) | (Unaudited) | (Unaudited) | (Unaudited) | Audited |
| Total Income from Operations | 1,266 | 1,214 | 1,053 | 3,589 | 3,083 | 4,214 |
| Net Profit for the year (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items) | 157 | 9 | 183 | 120 | 405 | 140 |
| Net Profit for the year before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items) | 157 | 9 | 183 | 120 | 405 | 140 |
| Net Profit for the year after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items) | 142 | 16 | 183 | 114 | 405 | 189 |
| Total Comprehensive Income for the year (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)) | 142 | 16 | 183 | 114 | 405 | 192 |
| Paid up Equity Share Capital | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) | 128 | (14) | 228 | 128 | 228 | 16 |
| Net worth* | 278 | 136 | 228 | 178 | 228 | 16 |
| Debt Equity Ratio* | 3.36 | 2.63 | 3.76 | 3.36 | 3.76 | 2.39 |
| Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each (for continuing and discontinued operations)) | | | | | | |
| 1. Basic: (in INR) | 14,221.74 | 1,581.51 | 18,304.30 | 11,377.16 | 40,514.97 | 18,869.11 |
| 2. Diluted: (in INR) | 14,221.74 | 1,581.51 | 18,304.30 | 11,377.16 | 40,514.97 | 18,869.11 |
| Debt Service Coverage Ratio* | 0.58 | 1.53 | 11.57 | 0.90 | 10.80 | 2.64 |
| Debt Service Coverage Ratio* | 0.58 | 1.53 | 11.57 | 0.90 | 10.80 | 2.64 |
| Interest Service Coverage Ratio* | 1.79 | 1.53 | 7.65 | 1.52 | 10.80 | 2.64 |
| Current ratio | 1.26 | 1.30 | 1.98 | 1.26 | 1.98 | 2.18 |
| Long Term Debt to Working Capital | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.03 | 1.02 | 1.03 | 1.03 |
| Bad debts to Account receivable Ratio* | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Current Liability Ratio | 0.78 | 0.75 | 0.50 | 0.78 | 0.50 | 0.45 |
| Total Debts to Total Assets Ratio | 0.59 | 0.57 | 0.56 | 0.59 | 0.56 | 0.59 |
| Debtors Turnover Ratio* | 0.27 | 0.36 | 0.31 | 0.81 | 0.99 | 1.24 |
| Inventory Turnover Ratio* | 0.56 | 0.58 | 0.72 | 1.86 | 2.39 | 3.18 |
| Operating margin (%) | 20% | 6% | 23% | 12% | 18% | 8% |
| Net profit margin (%) | 11% | 1% | 17% | 3% | 13% | 4% |

Notes :

- Ratios have been computed as follows :
- Earning per share (Basic & Diluted) = Profit after Tax / Weighted average number of equity shares
- Debt Equity Ratio = Debt (Amount due to Debenture Holders) / Equity (Equity share capital + share premium + quasi equity i.e. Short term borrowing)
- Interest Service Coverage Ratio = Profit before interest, prior period items, tax, extraordinary items and depreciation / (Total Interest Expense)
- Debt Service Coverage Ratio = (Net Profit after taxes + non-cash operating expenses + interest + tax expense) / (Total Interest Expense + Long Term Debt Principal repayments)
- Current Ratio = Current Assets/ Current Liabilities
- Long Term Debt to Working Capital= Non- Current borrowing including current maturities of Non-current borrowings/ (Current Assets - Current Liabilities excluding current maturities of Non-Current borrowings)
- Bad debts to Accounts Receivable Ratio= Bad debts / Average Trade receivables and Average unbilled Revenue
- Current Liability Ratio = Current Liabilities/ Total Liabilities
- Total Debts to total Assets= Total outstanding debts/ Total Assets
- Debtors turnover= Revenue from operation/ Average trade receivables and Average unbilled Revenue
- Inventory Turnover= Revenue from operations/Average inventories
- Operating margin(%)= (Profit before tax + Finance costs - Other income)/ Revenue from operations
- Net Profit Margin (%) = Net profit after Tax/ Revenue from Operations
- Asset Coverage Ratio = (Total Assets) / Debt (Amount due to Debenture Holders)
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly financial results filed with the BSE Limited (BSE) under regulation 52 of the Listing Regulations. The full format of the quarterly financial results is available on the websites of the Stock Exchange and the Company - <https://renew.com>.
- For the other line items referred in regulation 52(4) of the Listing Regulations, pertinent disclosures have been made to the BSE and can be accessed on the URL <https://www.bseindia.com/>.
- The company is in the business of operation and maintenance of wind and solar power plants. There is only one segment (business and/or geographical) in accordance with the requirements of IND AS - 108 "Operating Segments".
- The above financial results of the Company for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2024 have been approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at the meeting held on 13 February 2025.
- The statement has been prepared in accordance with recognition and measurement principles laid down in accordance with the Indian Accounting Standard 34 "Interim Financial Reporting" ("Ind AS 34") as prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act") read with Rule 3 of the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 and relevant rules issued thereunder and other recognized accounting practices and policies.
- Care Rating has assigned long term issuer rating and rating for the outstanding non-convertible debentures of the Company to "CARE A+ (CE)" with stable outlook.
- Previous period figures have been re-grouped / re-classified wherever necessary, to conform to current period's classification.

For and on behalf of the

RenServ Global Private Limited (Formerly known as ReNew Services Private Limited)
Place : Gurugram (Sd./) Sanjay Jagadish Kulkarni
Date : 13 February, 2025 Managing Director, DIN : 07852390

| SAR Televenture Limited | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| CIN: L45202UP2019PLC213062 | | | | | | | |
| Regd. Off.: B-16, First Floor, Sector 2, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301 | | | | | | | |
| Contact: +91-8587050050, Email: info@sarteleventure.com | | | | | | | |
| EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER & NINE MONTHS ENDED ON 31 DEC 2024 | | | | | | | |
| (Rs. in Lacs) | | | | | | | |
| Sr. No. | Particulars | For The Quarter Ended On | | | Nine Month Ended | | |
| | | 31.12.2024 Unaudited | 30.09.2024 Unaudited | 31.12.2023 Unaudited | 31.12.2024 Unaudited | 31.12.2023 Unaudited | 31.03.2024 Audited |
| 1 | Total Income from Operations | 562.90 | 357.90 | 162.76 | 1,101.36 | 484.71 | 644.47 |
| 2 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#) | 335.33 | 155.08 | 35.70 | 514.04 | 90.32 | 147.04 |
| 3 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#) | 335.33 | 155.08 | 35.70 | 514.04 | 90.32 | 147.04 |
| 4 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#) | 236.36 | 116.79 | 27.55 | 378.44 | 66.84 | 106.61 |
| 5 | Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | Equity Share capital | 742.85 | 742.85 | 300.00 | 742.85 | 300.00 | 300.00 |
| 7 | Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | Earning per Share (face Value of Rs. 10/- each (not annualised)) | | | | | | |
| | 1. Basic | 0.64 | 0.38 | 0.69 | 1.02 | 0.69 | 0.73 |
| | 2. Diluted | 0.64 | 0.38 | 0.69 | 1.02 | 0.69 | 0.73 |

NOTES:

- The above Unaudited Financial Results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in their respective meetings held on 13th Feb 2025
- The above Unaudited financial results have been prepared in accordance with Accounting Standards (AS), the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act"), as applicable and guidelines issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI").
- There are no reportable segments, which signify or in the aggregate qualify for separate disclosure as per provisions of the relevant Accounting Standards. The Management does not believe that the information about segments which are not reportable under Accounting Standards, would be useful to the users of these financial statements.
- EPS for 9 months ended on 31.12.2024 has been calculated by taking basis of weighted average no. of shares.
- Figures has been rounded off and regrouped / re-arranged wherever necessary.

For SAR Televenture Limited
Sd/ Pankaj Nagpal
Director

Date: 13.02.2025
Place: Noida

Rescued from virtual slavery in Myanmar, Indians among 260 foreigners being repatriated

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Some 260 people, including Indians, believed to have been trafficked and trapped into working in online scam centres are to be repatriated after they were rescued from Myanmar, Thailand's army announced Thursday.

In a fresh crackdown on scam centres operating from Southeast Asia, the Thai army announced Thursday it is coordinating an effort to repatriate some 260 people believed to have been victims of human trafficking after they were rescued and sent from Myanmar to Thailand.

Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, which share borders with Thailand, have come to be known as havens for criminal syndicates who are estimated to have forced hundreds of thousands of people in Southeast Asia and elsewhere into helping run online scams including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.

Such scams have extracted tens of billions of dollars from victims around the world, according to UN experts, while the people recruited to carry them out have often been tricked into taking the jobs under false pretenses and trapped in virtual slavery.

An earlier crackdown on scam centres in Myanmar was initiated in late 2023 after China expressed embarrassment and concern over illegal casinos and scam operations in Myanmar's northern Shan state along its border. Ethnic guerrilla groups with close ties to Beijing shut down many operations, and an estimated 45,000 Chinese nationals suspected of involvement were repa-

triated.

The army said that those rescued in the most recent operation came from 20 nationalities — with significant numbers from Ethiopia, Kenya, the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan and China. There were also nationals of Indonesia, Nepal, Taiwan, Uganda, Laos, Brazil, Burundi, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Ghana and India. They were sent across the border from Myanmar's Myawaddy district to Thailand's Tak province on Wednesday.

Reports in Thai media said a Myanmar ethnic militia that controls the area where they were held, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, was responsible for freeing the workers and taking them to the border. Myanmar's military government exercises little control over frontier areas where ethnic minorities predominate.

Several ethnic militias are believed to be involved in criminal activities, including drug trafficking and protecting call-center scam operations.

The Thai army statement said the rescued people will undergo questioning, and if determined to be victims of human trafficking, will enter a process of protection while waiting to be sent back to their countries.

Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai, who is also defense minister, said Wednesday that there might be many more scam workers waiting to be repatriated from Myanmar through Thailand, but that Thailand would only receive those that are ready to be taken back right away by their country of origin.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all that my client Mr. Ajay Kumar S/o Sham Sunder and Mrs. Nirmal W/o Ajay Kumar R/o D-93, 1st Floor, Fateh Nagar, New Delhi-110018 have disowned/debarred their son Deepak Valecha and daughter in law Jaya Babuta from all their movable & immovable properties and severed all relations with both of them due to their misconduct. Any person dealing with them shall be doing at his/her own risk. PRAVEEN RASTOGI (Advocate)

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Sh. Manish Sharma s/o Sh. Dhianesh Chand Sharma Owner of Residential House, area measuring 231 sq. yards, siting 153.13 sq. meter, out of Khirsa No. 205, situated at Village Shahdara, Pargana Dabri Tehsil And District Gautam Budh Nagar U.P. Through Registered Gift Dated 04.02.2025 executed Sh. Dhianesh Chand Uf Dhianesh Chand Sharma Vide Reg. No. 4100 at SR-G NOIDA U.P. The above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Fedbank Financial Services Limited. If any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092. Mobile Number- 9811215181.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to public at large that on the instructions of my client, M/s The MN Matrimony Pvt. Ltd., my client, including its Directors, employees, website: www.thematrimonyindia.com, and its subsidiary 'Shivay Services' have no relation, connection, or affiliation whatsoever in any manner with the company named M/s Weblinkin Pvt. Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as 'the said company') or its website. Any customer who chooses to engage with the said company and subsequently approaches my client does so entirely at their own risk and discretion. My client is neither responsible for nor involved in any dealings, transactions, services, or representations made by the said company. Ms. Seema Rani, Advocate For DASK & Co. Advocates & Solicitors E-57, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-110032

PUBLIC NOTICE Sealed item rate tenders are invited from reputed firms for repair of OHT's, Ramps and basement tunnels of Block 2,3 & 9. Tenders can be downloaded from Society website http://www.navsandsad.in/Tenders.aspx and can be submitted in the Society office on or before 28.02.2025. Secretary Nav Sansad Vihar CGHS Ltd. Plot No. 4, Sector-22, Dwarka New Delhi-110077

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, P.H. CIRCLE, NAYABAZAR, CUTTACK-753004. NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-Procurement Invitation For Bids (IFB) No.ACEPHCTC-02/2024-25 Dtd.06.02.2025. Further details can be seen from the web site www.tendersorissa.gov.in

verka Har Din Da, Har Dil Da APPOINTMENTS The Punjab state Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited (Milked Punjab) invites applications/resumes for appointment of one full time consultant (Sales & Distribution) with Head Quarter at Delhi on contract basis initially for period of one year (which could be extended further as per requirement) - Qualification & Experience: The desired candidate should have MBA in Marketing/Equivalent from a reputed institute and should have minimum 15 years of experience in Sales & Marketing, out of which minimum 10 years experience in dairy sector. Preference shall be given to candidates having prior working experience in Delhi-NCR. Salary for the above consultant shall be negotiable. Interested eligible candidates may send their resumes by post/e-mail. The last date of receipt of the resumes is 02.03.2025. Milked Punjab reserves the right to evaluate the resumes and call selected number of candidates for further interview. For further detailed information & updates, may please visit our website https://verka.coop/career/ Dy. General Manager (HR)

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS LOST & FOUND I, Krisna Singh, Mother of JC-472354M Sub Manoj Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill-Medhauna, Tiloi, Dist-Amethi, U.P., have changed my name from Krisna Singh to Krishna Devi, vide affidavit dated 13/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1483)A CHANGE OF NAME I, Jitendar S/o Hukum Singh R/o 846, GF-2, Sector-5, Vaishali, Ghaziabad (U.P) 201010 declare that my name has been wrongly written as Jitender in my Driving License No. P08062005442091. The actual name of mine is Jitendar. In future I will be known as Jitendar. PD(1480)A I, Jheel Jain D/o Shri Praveen Jain R/o B-601, Kushal Vatika Near RTO, Pal, Surat City, Navguy College Surat, Gujarat. I have changed my name from Dixita Pravinbhai Jain to Jheel Jain for all future purposes. PD(1481)C I, Ashish Rathore, S/o Rajinder, R/o Plot No 10-A, Khasra Number 39/14 and 17 Gali No. 9, Gautam Colony, Narela, Delhi - 110040, holder of Aadhaar Number 962154980742 and Pan Card Number FQOPA7225N declare that I have changed my name from Ashish Dewan to Ashish Rathore for all purposes. PD(1482)C I, Chaitanya Arora S/o Mr. Sanjay Arora R/o H.No-2602, Gali No-4, Shadipur Main Bazar, Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008, declare that my name has been written in my 10th certificate as Chatney Arora instead of Chaitanya Arora. My correct name is Chaitanya Arora which may be amended accordingly. PD(1484)C PD(1488)C

ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-104, 3rd Floor, DDA Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020. ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data) Sr No. Particulars Standalone (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data) Consolidated (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data)

PUBLIC NOTICE It is informed in public that my father SH. RAUBIR SINGH was the lessee of 50% share of Plot No. 008, Block P.K. Sector-122, Noida, Dist-Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 measuring 454 sq. mtr. My father SH. RAUBIR SINGH executed a will in my favour on 29-09-2023 of his share which was registered in the office of Sub Registrar-II, Noida Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh at Block No. III, Volume No. 963 at pages 271 to 282 at Document No. 226 on 25-05-2023. My father SHRI RAUBIR SINGH expired on 15-01-2025. I want to mutate above property in my favour on the basis of will, if any body have any objection for above mutation may file objection in the residential plot of NOIDA Authority Sector-6, Noida, within 30 days MOHIT BENIWAL.

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE is hereby given that Mrs. Sareena Singh (hereinafter referred to as the said Mortgagee/Borrower) is purchasing Flat Bearing Pvt. No. 36, 36m. 2750 Sq. Ft., Second Floor, built on Plot No. 9-9, adm. 1,500 Sq. Yds., Southend Castles, Jangra, Mathura Road, New Delhi (hereinafter referred to as 'said property') from Mr. Deepak Agarwal & Mrs. Astha Agarwal who are its owners by virtue of Certificate of Sale dated 28.04.2022 executed in their favour by Deutsche Bank AG India through its Authorized Officer: Mr. Vishal Charan, Regd. as Doc. No. 2548 on 09.05.2022. The Borrower will create mortgage in respect of the said property in favour of our clients Indusind Bank Limited, 12th Floor, Hyatt Regency Complex, Brijkaj Plaza, New Delhi-110065. Any person, body, individual, institution having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, inheritance, testamentary disposition or otherwise or having in their custody any title documents pertaining to the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claims of such person shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the 10 days shall not be binding upon the said property or purchaser. Mr. Ankit Gupta (Advocate) Khatian & Khaitan A-38, Kalkasa Colony New Delhi. 110048 Tel. + 1149714545/99

PUBLIC NOTICE Reg. Portion of Property bearing No. B-61B, area measuring 64 sq.yds. 'said portion' out of total land area measuring 850 sq.yds., falling in Kharsa No. 12/18, Situated at Village Karawal Nagar in the abadi of Mukand Vihar, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi (Hereinafter referred to as the 'Said Property'). Be it known to all that our clients, Mr. Bantu Kumar & Mrs. Pooja (hereinafter called the 'Purchaser') intend to purchase the said portion from Mr. Jayant G.P.A of Mr. Narendar Kumar (hereinafter called the 'Attorney-holder') in this connection, the Attorney-holder has informed the purchaser that he is the sole and absolute attorney holder in respect of the said property vide POA documents viz., GPA (registered as Document No. 12333 on 25.03.2003, and Will (registered as Document No. 5485 dated 25.03.2003) executed by Mr. Narendar Kumar in his favour. The Attorney holder has further informed that Mr. Narendar Kumar owned the said property by means of Revenue records. Thus, the Attorney holder is the sole and absolute attorney in respect of the said property including the said portion. The Attorney holder has also informed the purchaser that the said portion is not mortgaged anywhere and there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending regarding the said portion. Any person including Banks, Financial Institutions, relatives having any claim, right, title or any interest of any nature whatsoever into or upon the said portion is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice and in the event of no response having been received to the notice, the title of the attorney-holder in respect of the said portion shall be deemed to be clear of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our clients/Purchaser, in any manner whatsoever. Shivkant Arora, Advocate M/s Intelective Law Offices A-74, LGF, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED CIN: L74899DL1994PLC059252 Regd. Office: 110, Bahar Road, New Delhi - 110 001. EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2024 (Rs. in Lacs)

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED CIN: L74899DL1994PLC059252 Regd. Office: 110, Bahar Road, New Delhi - 110 001. EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2024 (Rs. in Lacs)

ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-104, 3rd Floor, DDA Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020. ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data) Sr No. Particulars Standalone (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data) Consolidated (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data)

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Sh. Gopal S/o Ram Lubhaya, residing at House No. C-19, Rani Garden, Shastri Nagar, East Delhi, Delhi-110031, disowned/severed all relations with his brothers, Karan and Prem, along with their wives, Jyoti & Sonia and Jyoti, excluded them from any claim to his movable /immovable properties. Engaging with them is at your own risk, my client shall not be held liable for any dealings/ actions involving them, arising from their misconduct and unavul behavior towards him, and their failure to adhere to his instructions. Tushar Malhotra (Advocate), Ch. No. G-720, Karkardooma Court Shahdara, Delhi-110032.

PUBLIC NOTICE M/s R R TEXKINT LLP, is pleased to inform that the Grant of Environmental Clearance had been accorded with Environmental Clearance vide Environmental Clearance No. EC24C3801DL556057N Dated 13.01.2025 from the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate change (MoEF& CC), Delhi. The copies of the clearance letters are available with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, New Delhi and can also be seen on their website and on our website (www.rtxkint.in) M/s R R TEXKINT LLP Sd/- Rakesh Kumar Sharma Designated Partner

PUBLIC NOTICE General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Susmitha Watsi W/o Late Sh. Naresh Watsi R/o 32/GF/SBI Colony, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063 applied for transfer of ownership of flat No. T-3/0702, & customer ID No. KLH4/0038/16-17 Plot Floor, LAKE HEIGHT, Sonpat, Hariana in her/his name claiming her/his legal heir of deceased Late Sh. Naresh Watsi S/o Harbans Lal Watsi per document dated 04.02.2017 in records of office i.e. TDI INFRACORP (INDIA) LTD. Having its office Vandana building-11, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001. Any person having any objection for transfer of the said flat in favour of Mrs. Susmitha Watsi Late. Sh. Naresh Watsi may send at the above noted office of company with supporting documents through email customer.care@tdiinfacorp.com to the undersigned at B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110019 within 15 days of the publication of this notice otherwise it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed transfer of the said flat in his/her name. After that company shall not be liable for any claim whatsoever after 15 days. TDI Infacorp India Ltd. Having its office Vandana Building, 11, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001, Phone No. 011-43111111

MY MONEY SERVICES LTD. CIN : L67120DL1992PLC047890 Regd Office : 10-A, UNDERHILL, LANE, CIVIL LINES, DELHI-54 Ph : 011-47087300, 2323055, EMAIL : mymoneyviews@outlook.com Extract of the Standalone Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and nine months ended 31st December, 2024 (Rs. in Lakhs)

Table with 8 columns: S. No., Particulars, Quarter Ended, Quarter Ended, Quarter Ended, Nine Months Ended, Nine Months Ended, Year Ended. Rows include Total income from operations, Net Profit/(Loss) for the period, Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax, Total comprehensive income for the period, Equity Share Capital, Earnings per share.

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED CIN: L74899DL1994PLC059252 Regd. Office: 110, Bahar Road, New Delhi - 110 001. EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2024 (Rs. in Lacs)

ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-104, 3rd Floor, DDA Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020. ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data) Sr No. Particulars Standalone (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data) Consolidated (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data)

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all by way of this Public Notice that my clients Rajesh Shanker Khatwani and others have applied for the substitution/mutation of leasehold rights in their names in respect of property No. 37/22, East Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008 to Land & Development Office (L&DO) if any person (general public) has any objection for the said substitution/mutation, then such person should notify the same to the L&DO forthwith alongwith valid documentary proof, through regd. post or by personally visiting L&DO at Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi and/or through an email at ldo@nic.in within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. Jagdish Chandra Triksa (Adv.), M-4, Civil Side, Tiz, Hazari Court, Delhi-110054.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all by way of this Public Notice that my clients Tajinder Kaur and others have applied for the substitution/mutation of leasehold rights in their names in respect of property No. 15/82, Single Storey, Ramesh Nagar, New Delhi-110015 to Land & Development Office (L&DO) if any person (general public) has any objection for the said substitution/mutation, then such person should notify the same to the L&DO forthwith alongwith valid documentary proof, through regd. post or by personally visiting L&DO at Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi and/or through an email at ldo@nic.in within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. Jagdish Chandra Triksa (Adv.), M-4, Civil Side, Tiz, Hazari Court, Delhi-110054.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that Shri Chirojit Bhatlacharya son of Shri Biswajit Bhatlacharya resident of A-9, Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 has agreed to sell, the entire Ground Floor including but not limited to entire exclusive drive way and parking with exclusive drive way entrance for the Ground Floor, open front and back area on Ground Floor, in/of the said property bearing No. A-9, measuring 409 square yards, situated at Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 free from all encumbrances, any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever in respect of the said property, is hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the documentary proof thereof, to the undersigned at B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110019 within fourteen days from the date of publication hereof, failing which the negotiations shall be completed, without any reference to such claims and the claims if any, shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Rishi Kumar Srivastava E-mail id: rnsrishi@yahoo.com Mobile No. +91-9871577722 Address: B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Rungta Irrigation Limited Regd. Office: 101, Pragati Tower 26, Rajendra Place, New Delhi 110008 Tel: 011-40453330, 31,32, E-mail: cs@rungiirrigation.in, Website: www.rungiirrigation.in CIN : L74899DL1986PLC023934

Table with 6 columns: Particulars, 31/12/2024 Unaudited, 30/09/2024 Unaudited, 31/12/2023 Unaudited, For the Nine Months Ended 31/12/2023 Unaudited, 31/03/2024 Audited. Rows include Total income from operations, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax, Total Comprehensive Income for the period, Equity Share Capital, Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve), Earnings Per Share.

RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LIMITED Regd. Office: Judges Barelilly Road, Rampur 244 901 (U.P.) CIN: L15136UP1988PLC010084 Email id: rkumar@rampurfert.com, Web.: www.rampurfert.com. Extract of unaudited financial results for the quarter ended on 31st Dec. 2024 (Rs. in Lacs)

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED CIN- U45201DL2005PLC13361 Registered Office : 306-308, Square One, C-2, District Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110017 Email ID - bharat.garg@emaar.ae, Website - www.in.emaar.com. UNAUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (Rs. in million)

Table with 6 columns: S. No., Particulars, Quarter ended, Quarter ended, Quarter ended, Nine months ended, Nine months ended, Year ended. Rows include Total income from operations, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax, Total Comprehensive Income for the period, Paid-up equity share capital, Earnings Per Share.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that Shri Chirojit Bhatlacharya son of Shri Biswajit Bhatlacharya resident of A-9, Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 has agreed to sell, the entire Third Floor, & Entire Terrace above/upon the Third Floor and thereabove up to the limit of sky (with right to construct, own and possess any number of floors on the said terrace and on subsequent terrace(s) as and when permitted by the authorities concerned), in/of the said property bearing No. A-9, measuring 409 square yards, situated at Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 free from all encumbrances, any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever in respect of the said property, is hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the documentary proof thereof, to the undersigned at B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110017 within fourteen days from the date of publication hereof, failing which the negotiations shall be completed, without any reference to such claims and the claims if any, shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Rishi Kumar Srivastava E-mail id: rnsrishi@yahoo.com Mobile No. +91-9871577722 Address: B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110017

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all that, I MANOJ KUMAR VIMAL S/O SH. RADHA MOHAN R/O FLAT NO. 67A, 1ST FLOOR, BLOCK-C-7, LAWRENCE ROAD, KESHAV PURAM, DELHI mutatee of the DDA LIC FLAT NO- 67A, 1ST FLOOR, BLOCK-C-7, LAWRENCE ROAD, KESHAV PURAM DELHI-35 has applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from leasehold to freehold. The original document i.e. Mutation Letter of the above-mentioned property has been lost, An FIR against this effect has been lodged in Police station. Any persons claiming any right, interest, having any objection of found in possession of original documents, may write contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9999905657 with 15 days, from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy Director (LG) or Director (H)-2, D-Block, 2nd floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110023.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that Shri Chirojit Bhatlacharya son of Shri Biswajit Bhatlacharya resident of A-9, Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 has agreed to sell, the entire Ground Floor including but not limited to entire exclusive drive way and parking with exclusive drive way entrance for the Ground Floor, open front and back area on Ground Floor, in/of the said property bearing No. A-9, measuring 409 square yards, situated at Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 free from all encumbrances, any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever in respect of the said property, is hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the documentary proof thereof, to the undersigned at B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110019 within fourteen days from the date of publication hereof, failing which the negotiations shall be completed, without any reference to such claims and the claims if any, shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Rishi Kumar Srivastava E-mail id: rnsrishi@yahoo.com Mobile No. +91-9871577722 Address: B-31, Soam Nagar, New Delhi-110017

STATE BANK OF INDIA PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT REGISTERED A.D. POST SHRI ABHISHEK KUJUR Flat No. 611, Rama Apartments, Plot No.2, Set 11, Dwarka, South West Delhi-110075 No.: HR/SS/1821, Date: 11.11.2024

SHRI ABHISHEK KUJUR Flat No. 611, Rama Apartments, Plot No.2, Set 11, Dwarka, South West Delhi-110075 No.: HR/SS/1821, Date: 11.11.2024 Dear Sir, VOLUNTARY VACATION OF SERVICE It is observed that you have been absenting from duty, despite your leave being refused/beyond the period of sanctioned leave, since 18.07.2023. In this connection, we refer to the Regd./Beyond A. D. notice H.C/BC/11/2024-25/20, dated 07.08.2024 (and paper publication on 09.08.2024), issued by the Assistant General Manager, Home Loan Centre, Bengaluru Central instructing you to report for duty and explain the reasons for your absence within 30 days of the notice. It is however, observed that you have so far not complied with the instructions contained therein. 2. Now that you have failed to report for duty in site of the above said notice, it is deemed that you have voluntarily vacated your service amounting to voluntary resignation from service of the Bank with effect from 09.09.2024. 3. You are hereby requested to pay three months emoluments within 15 days of the receipt of this notice, failing which the Bank will be constrained to set off the same against your terminal dues and any other amount payable to you without prejudice to recovering the full amount or part thereof by suit. Yours faithfully, General Manager. NW I, Appointing Authority

Rungta Irrigation Limited Regd. Office: 101, Pragati Tower 26, Rajendra Place, New Delhi 110008 Tel: 011-40453330, 31,32, E-mail: cs@rungiirrigation.in, Website: www.rungiirrigation.in CIN : L74899DL1986PLC023934

Table with 6 columns: Particulars, 31/12/2024 Unaudited, 30/09/2024 Unaudited, 31/12/2023 Unaudited, For the Nine Months Ended 31/12/2023 Unaudited, 31/03/2024 Audited. Rows include Total income from operations, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax, Total Comprehensive Income for the period, Equity Share Capital, Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve), Earnings Per Share.

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED CIN- U45201DL2005PLC13361 Registered Office : 306-308, Square One, C-2, District Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110017 Email ID - bharat.garg@emaar.ae, Website - www.in.emaar.com. UNAUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (Rs. in million)

Table with 6 columns: S. No., Particulars, Quarter ended, Quarter ended, Quarter ended, Nine months ended, Nine months ended, Year ended. Rows include Total income from operations, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax, Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax, Total Comprehensive Income for the period, Paid-up equity share capital, Earnings Per Share.

Income Tax Bill aims to achieve tax certainty: IT dept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The simplified Income Tax Bill, which is half the size of the 1961 Income Tax Act, seeks to achieve tax certainty by minimising the scope of litigation and fresh interpretation, the Income Tax department said on Thursday.



The new bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha, has a word count of 2.6 Lakh, lower than 5.12 Lakh in the IT Act. The number of sections is 536, as against 819 effective sections in the existing law. The number of chapters has also been halved to 23 from 47, according to the FAQ issued by the I-T department. The Income Tax Bill 2025, has 57 tables, compared to 18 in the existing Act and removed 1,200 provisos and 900 explanations. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while introducing the Bill in the Lok Sabha, had said that "substantial changes" have been made in the Bill. The number of words have been halved from 5.12 Lakh, and sections reduced from 819 to 536. Following introduction, the Bill was referred to the select committee of the Lok Sabha and mandated to submit its report by March 10. Provisions relating to exemptions, and TDS, TCS have been made crisper in the Bill by putting them in a tabular format, while the

chapter for not-for-profit organisations has been made comprehensive with use of plain language. As a result of this, the word count has come down by 34,547. "While undertaking simplification exercise, a conscious attempt has been made to minimise the scope of litigation and fresh interpretations," it said to a query on whether principles of Tax Certainty were followed in drafting of the new bill. Key words, phrases, especially where courts have given rulings, have been retained with minimal modifications. Provisions have been made clear to minimise scope of multiple interpretations and

tax certainty has been ensured with regard to various sections of international taxation. The FAQ further said that while "no major policy-related changes" or tax rates changes have been made in the IT Bill, "material" changes are being proposed in the existing law. The bill consolidated provisions pertaining to salary at one place for ease of understanding so that the taxpayer does not have to refer to separate chapters for filing return of income. Deductions, like gratuity, leave encashment, commutation of pension, compensation on VRS and retrenchment compensation, are now part of the salary chapter itself.

"The drafting style of the new bill is straightforward and clear, making the provisions easier to understand... This (Tables) minimises cross-references and conflict by aggregating all applicable provisions related to a single scenario in one place," the FAQ said. A significant aspect of the bill is the elimination of the concepts of "previous year" and "assessment year". As a taxpayer had to track two different periods, it presented difficulties in complying with the provisions of the Act, especially for a new taxpayer who had to keep track of "previous year", "assessment year" as well as the "financial

year", the FAQ said. It said provisions involving the same issues, which were present in different chapters in the current Act, have now been consolidated. In case of provisions relating to non-profit organisations (NPOs), it has been consolidated and structured into seven sub-parts. The FAQ further said the current Income Tax Act was enacted in 1961 and came into existence with effect from April 1, 1962. It has been amended nearly 65 times with more than 4,000 amendments. Concerns were expressed over the accumulation of amendments, intricate language, detailed provisions, redundancies and the heavy structure of the IT Act and hence the government decided to come out with a new law. Consultations were held with various stakeholders, including Australia and the UK where tax laws were rewritten in the past. A total of 20,976 online suggestions were received. Also, references were drawn from the 2009 Direct Taxes Code as also the 2019 report of the government constituted six-member committee to redraft the IT law. The FAQ said 150 officials of the IT department were involved in drafting of the Income Tax Bill, 2025, and more than 60,000 man hours were dedicated in its drafting.

India's white-collar hiring grows by 32 per cent: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI



Hiring for white-collar jobs witnessed a 32 per cent year-on-year surge in January, driven by industries such as semiconductors, energy, waste management and manufacturing in India, a report said on Thursday. The growth in hiring is attributed to surging consumer demand, strategic incentives outlined in the Union Budget 2025-26 and an increased focus on sustainability initiatives, according to foundit Insights Tracker. There was a 32 per cent year-on-year jump in hiring for January 2025, signalling renewed confidence in the market, it said. The report revealed that green jobs stood out in January, witnessing a 41 per cent increase over the last two years led by expanding clean energy initiatives. Sectors like semiconductors, energy, and waste management are leading this growth, fuelled by global net-zero emission targets, the report said. Bengaluru, Delhi and Pune are emerging as key hubs for these roles, which demand specialised skills in areas like energy auditing and sustainability strategy, it added. Demand for green jobs is

projected to rise another 11 per cent in 2025, driven by renewable energy, EVs, and green hydrogen initiatives. "India's job market continues to grow at a strong pace, with hiring surging across key industries. Sectors like travel, retail, and green jobs are seeing sustained momentum, reflecting business confidence and evolving industry priorities," foundit Chief Revenue and Growth Officer Pranay Kale said. Government policies, including key budget provisions, are accelerating this shift - especially in renewable energy, EVs, and sustainability-focused industries. "As hiring expands beyond metro cities, Tier II hubs are also emerging as key employment centres, reinforcing India's transition to a future-ready, greener

economy," Kale said. Further, the report added that the travel and tourism sector recorded a 17 per cent increase in hiring growth in January 2025, driven by strong consumer demand and favourable government initiatives. This trend is evident across aviation, luxury, and e-commerce segments, and new roles emerging in travel technology that leverage AI and data analytics, the report said. Similarly, the retail sector saw a 24 per cent year-on-year surge, driven by rising consumer spending and digital transformation, it added. Consequently, demand for skilled professionals in supply chain management, customer experience, and AI-driven retail analytics is rising, according to the report.

Rupee settles three paise higher at 86.92 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee settled almost flat with a gain of just 3 paise at 86.92 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as the support from soft American currency and easing crude oil prices overseas was negated by a lacklustre trend in domestic equities. According to forex traders, the unabated outflow of foreign funds weighed on the Indian currency and capped its recovery even though the greenback weakened after the US data showed higher-than-expected inflation, trimming hopes of a rate cut by the Federal Reserve. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened stronger at 86.82, touched a high of 86.77 during intraday trade. However, the unit pared its most gains and touched the day's low of 86.94 before ending the session at 86.92 (provisional) against the American currency, higher by just three paise from its previous close. On Wednesday, the domestic unit closed 16 paise lower at 86.95 against the dollar. In the preceding session on Tuesday, the rupee had



appreciated 66 paise, logging the maximum single-day gain since March 3, 2023, to close at 86.79 against the greenback. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee traded flat to positive on Thursday amid weak US dollar index and selling pressure from FIIs. He said the rupee is expected to trade with negative bias amid overall weakness in the domestic equities and underlying strength in the US dollar. "FII selling may also weigh on the rupee. However, any further intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from PPI data from the US," Choudhary said and

projected the \$-INR spot price in a range of ₹86.60 to ₹87.30. Meanwhile, the US dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.33 per cent lower at 107.47. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 1.17 per cent to \$ 74.30 per barrel in futures trade. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 32.11 points, or 0.04 per cent, to settle at 76,138.97, while the Nifty fell 13.85 points, or 0.06 per cent, to 23,031.40 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,969.30 crore on net basis on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

IOC signs long-term LNG import deal with UAE firm

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, has signed a \$7.9 Billion deal to import LNG from UAE on a long-term 14-year contract. IOC signed a long-term deal to receive 1.2 Million tonnes per year of LNG from the United Arab Emirates beginning 2026 for 14 years. "ADNOC Gas has signed a 14-year sales and purchase agreement with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC) for the export of up to 1.2 Million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India's largest integrated and diversified energy company which will be supplied from Das Island liquefaction facility," ADNOC Gas said in a statement. The deal was signed on the sidelines of India Energy Week here. "The agreement, valued in the range of \$7 Billion to \$9 billion over its 14-year term signifies a major step forward in the partnership with IOC and we look forward to supporting India's plans to make gas 15 per cent of its primary energy basket by 2030," it added. The deal with IOC is the second LNG supply deal that the UAE giant signed with an Indian firm at the IEW. It

signed a deal with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) to supply 2.4 Million tonnes of LNG over a period of 5 years, starting April 2025. The agreement is extendable by another 5 years with mutual consent. Separately, French energy giant TotalEnergies signed a deal to sell 4,00,000 tonnes a year of LNG to Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd (GPSC) for 10 years starting 2026. The LNG, sourced from TotalEnergies' global portfolio and delivered to terminals on India's west coast, will primarily serve GSPC's industrial customers. It will also supply Indian households for domestic use, businesses, and service stations for vehicles running on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), such as auto-rickshaws. TotalEnergies had in June last year signed a deal to sell 8,00,000 tonnes a year of LNG to state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for 10 years starting 2026. While GSPC has an LNG import facility at Mundra in Gujarat, IOC can import the LNG at Dahej in Gujarat or at its Ennore terminal in Tamil Nadu. ADNOC Gas plc and its subsidiaries signed a 14-year sales and purchase agreement



(SPA) with IOC which converts the last year's Heads of Agreement signed by them. First deliveries will begin in 2026. Fatema Al Nuaimi, ADNOC Gas CEO, said, "This agreement strengthens our long-standing partnership with IOC and is a testament to the dynamic and robust energy ties between the UAE and India. As a reliable and responsible supplier of lower-carbon gas, ADNOC Gas looks forward to supporting India's plans to make gas 15 per cent of its primary energy basket by 2030." The agreement builds on ADNOC Gas' strategy to expand its customer base, following a series of LNG agreements signed over the past two years. These deals range from 0.4 Million tonnes

per annum to 1.2 Million tonnes. They are for periods ranging up to 14 years and reinforce its position as a leading supplier of reliable, lower-carbon LNG to key growth markets in Asia, such as India. The LNG will be supplied from ADNOC Gas' Das Island liquefaction facility, which has a production capacity of up to 6 million tonnes per annum. As the world's third longest-operating LNG plant, Das Island has shipped over 3,500 LNG cargoes worldwide since starting operations. Other agreements signed at IEW include BPCL inking an optional term contract with Brazil's Petrobras for the import of Brazilian crude grades up to 6 Million barrels. This is another milestone

towards India's energy security and diversification of its sources. Also, India signed its first LNG export agreement when the IOC signed a sales agreement with Yogya Holdings Nepal for the export of around 1,000 tonnes of LNG to Nepal. It will be the first-ever sale of LNG to Nepal from India by dhramic trucks through Chyagan Terminal in Odisha. Contract for 5 years with an annual quantity of 240 tonnes per annum. BPCL has also partnered with Eco Wave Power to develop India's first wave energy pilot project, leveraging the nation's substantial wave energy potential as a sustainable and commercially viable renewable resource. The proposed system for BPCL will utilise Eco Wave Power's proven wave energy converter technology, demonstrating wave energy in Mumbai through a 100 kW pilot installation. BPCL also signed a MoU with the National Sugar Institute (NSI), Kanpur, UP. The National Sugar Institute (NSI), Kanpur, renowned for its expertise in sugar and allied industries, has successfully demonstrated the potential of sweet sorghum for bioethanol production at its in-house facility.



Gold rises ₹140 to reclaim ₹88,000 per 10 grams

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose ₹140 to ₹88,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid strong trends in the international markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹87,960 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity went up ₹140 to ₹87,700 per 10 grams from the previous close of ₹87,560 per 10 grams. "Gold recovered from a recent swing bottom and traded higher on Thursday, as haven demand remains intact in response to multiple disruptive tariff announcements by President Trump that are scheduled to be implemented shortly," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. Silver prices also jumped ₹800

to ₹98,000 per kg on Thursday. The white metal had settled at ₹97,200 per kg in the previous trading session. Investors remain worried that US President's trade tariffs might trigger a global trade war, which continues to act as a tailwind for safe-haven metals like gold, Gandhi said. In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for April delivery climbed ₹364 to trade at ₹85,845 per 10 grams. "Gold prices gained once again despite the US CPI (Consumer Price Index) data not rising significantly and the US Federal Reserve indicating no urgency in cutting rates," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said. The safe-haven appeal of gold continues to support its strength, keeping the broader bullish sentiment intact, Trivedi added.

NSDC plans to set up 50 new Future Skills Centres

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) on Thursday announced a significant expansion in its skilling footprint across India with plans to set up 50 new Future Skills Centres and 10 NSDC International Academies to advance skill development and training programs. Addressing the annual press conference, Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO, NSDC and MD, NSDC International, shared his roadmap to skill and upskill the Indian youth for domestic and global job markets. "The number of industry-aligned programs will increase beyond 300, covering 12 major emerging technologies. The goal is to train over 2 lakh candidates and establish over 2.70 Lakh square feet of training infrastructure, further strengthening employability and workforce readiness," he said. The industry aligned programs aim to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills by aligning education with emerging technologies and industry needs. So far, 33 global corporations have partnered, and 21 Future Skills Centres have been established in



Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Over 200 industry-aligned programs have been assessed and certified by corporations, covering 9 major emerging technologies. More than 27,000 candidates have been trained, with over 1.20 lakh square feet of training space developed. NSDC aims to make quality education accessible to students from tier 2 and 3 colleges by addressing challenges in emerging technologies through collaborations with Institutes of National Importance. So far, 11 premium institutions have partnered to launch 17 micro-credential programs, awarding more than 75,000 credits and training over 5,000 candidates. Looking forward, NSDC plans to collaborate with 15 premium institutions, introduce over 30 micro-credential programs, and

award around 1,80,000 credits, further enhancing access to quality education and skill development. Students will receive specialised training in emerging technologies across key industry verticals such as aerospace, automotive, mining, and infrastructure. The OEMs' tools and curriculum will be integrated into structured guided pathways, supporting different proficiency levels and leading to job opportunities across various domains. As part of the Job-as-Skills model, Tiwari said, "There are plans to onboard 1 million students, establish MoUs with leading OEMs, bring in training partners, select industry-specific tools, design career progression pathways, implement joint certification with NSDC and OEMs, and introduce new industry verticals in a phased manner."



Ensure fair treatment to customers: RBI Governor to NBFCs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Thursday asked NBFCs to ensure customers are treated fairly and put in place a mechanism for quick redressal of grievances. The governor met with managing directors and chief executive officers of select non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) across all layers, including government NBFCs, housing finance companies and micro-finance institutions. These NBFCs constitute nearly 50 per cent of the total assets of the NBFC sector. Malhotra, in his opening remarks, underscored the role played by NBFCs in credit intermediation, particularly in making credit available for small businesses

and niche segments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement. Highlighting the collaborative efforts required between the Reserve Bank and the NBFCs, the Governor stressed upon balancing growth aspirations with sound practices for ensuring inclusive development, customer protection and financial stability. "He also underscored the significance of ensuring fair treatment to customers and putting in place a prompt grievance redress mechanism," the RBI said. Urging the NBFCs to further their contribution towards financial inclusion, the Governor requested them to become part of Unified Lending Interface (ULI) being put in place by the Reserve Bank.

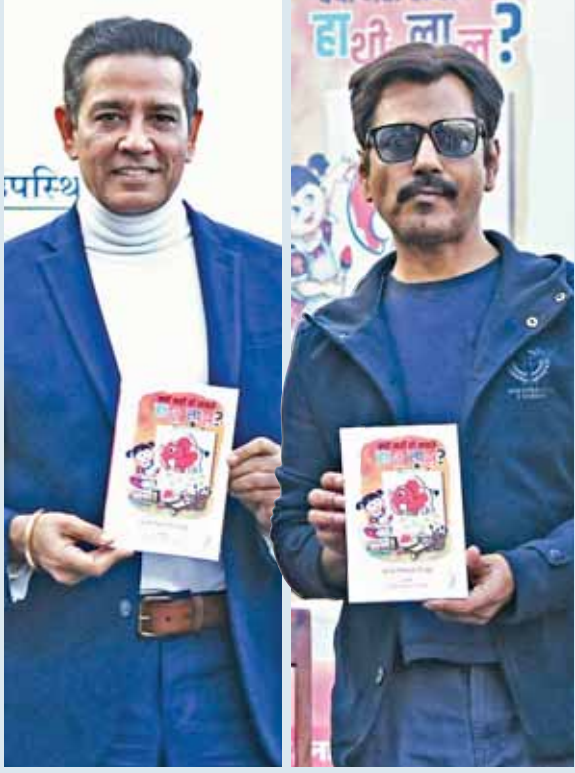
Paytm Money settle market norms violation case with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Paytm Money, an arm of fintech firm One97 Communications, on Thursday settled with markets regulator Sebi a case pertaining to alleged violation of norms after paying ₹45.50 Lakh in settlement amount. The case stemmed from alleged violations of Sebi's technical glitch framework outlined in its circular dated November 25, 2022. The order came after Paytm Money filed a settlement application in September last year, proposing to settle the instant proceedings initiated against it, without "admitting or denying the findings of facts and conclusions of law". "The instant adjudication proceedings initiated against the noticee vide SCN dated July 24, 2024, is disposed of in terms of the settlement regulations," SEBI's adjudicating officer Asha Shetty said in the order. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) initiated adjudication proceedings against Paytm Money Ltd for the alleged violation.

Exploring the Magic of Childhood

Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Anup Soni bring Vani Tripathi Tikoo's imagination to life, says **TEAM VIVA**



At the heart of every child's world lies a boundless imagination, a place where rules fade and dreams take flight. It's this magic that Vani Tripathi Tikoo's book *Kyon Nahi Ho Sakte Haathi Lal* brings to life. The launch event at the National School of Drama in New Delhi was a celebration of creativity and storytelling, filled with warmth and nostalgia.



Kyon Nahi Ho Sakte Haathi Lal captures the playful spirit of childhood, offering a reminder that some of the most meaningful lessons come from the stories we tell our children. The book is a tribute to the boundless imagination of childhood, celebrating art, creativity and the magic of storytelling. It encourages readers to embrace curiosity, cherish the joy in small moments and never lose sight of the wonder that makes childhood and every new idea, so special.

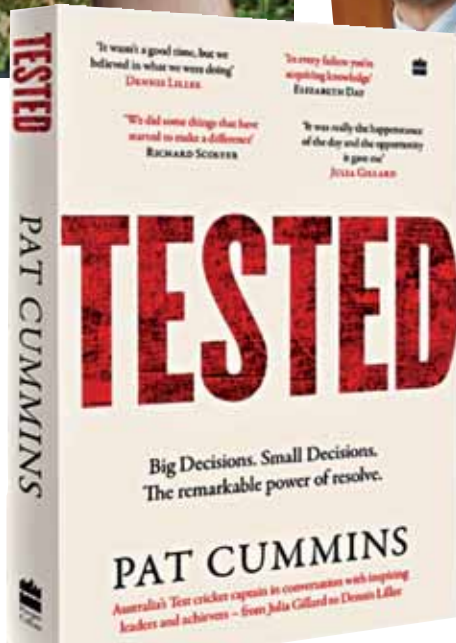


Australian cricket captain steps off the pitch into the world of storytelling with his book *Tested*, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

In life, every decision, big or small, plays a role in shaping our journey. It is in the moments of choice that our true character is revealed, and our ability to navigate challenges determines our growth. Australian Test captain Pat Cummins, known for his fearless leadership on the cricket field, now brings this philosophy to the pages of his book, *Tested*. Releasing tomorrow, *Tested* is an analysis into the trials of leadership, resilience, and the defining moments that shape individuals.

Pat Cummins, widely regarded as one of the finest fast bowlers and a leader par excellence, has faced his own share of trials, both on and off the field. From injuries that threatened his career to the immense responsibility of captaining one of the most scrutinised cricket teams in the world, he has learned firsthand the value of resolve. In this book, he turns the spotlight away from himself and onto eleven extraordinary individuals who have inspired him with their ability to rise above adversity.

Through *Tested*, Cummins explores the stories of a diverse set of personalities, ranging from Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard to a groundbreaking scientist, an indigenous leader to a cricketing legend, and more. These individuals also have one common thread, an unbreakable spirit that allows them to push through moments of doubt, seize opportunities, and create meaningful impact. Their journeys serve as powerful testaments to the idea that resilience is not just about bouncing back but about pushing forward with intent and purpose.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Tested
Author: Pat Cummins
Publisher: HarperCollins
Price: ₹499/-

Tested has been divided into 11 different conversations as chapters, like Beyond all of the noise and glory of leadership is the work, which can be a harbour when you need on which is a conversation with Julia Gillard. Every inspired person has stood on the shoulders of giants which is a conversation with Richard Scolyer and many more.

MOMENT OF CHALLENGES IN PAT'S LIFE

When Pat Cummins unexpectedly became Australia's 47th Test captain at age 28, it was the beginning of a personal leadership journey for him, a unique moment of challenge and pressure that would see him become a seasoned captain and, in his private life, become a father and husband but also lose his mother to cancer.

Pat Cummins, Beyond the Game

RELEASING TOMORROW



CHAPTERS IN CONVERSATION WITH



(Clockwise) Julia Gillard, Elizabeth Day, John Bertrand, Dennis Lillee, Ronnie Screwvala, Rob Sitch, Richard Scolyer and more. All the 11 invited guests or the people in conversation with Pat in the book have a story to tell about the life lived, decisions made be it big or small.

Cummins himself describes *Tested* as a deeply personal project, shaped by his own experiences of seeking guidance in moments of uncertainty.

Pat Cummins was offered the Australian captaincy shortly after his wife, Becky, gave birth to their first child, during a time when players lived under strict pandemic restrictions, resembling caged circus animals.

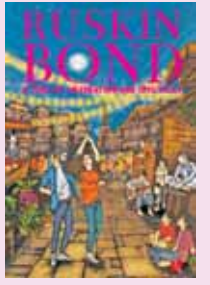
To this Pat wrote in the book, "I didn't feel prepared. I'd recently captained New South Wales in a handful of one-day matches, but before that I hadn't captained a side since I was fifteen. I hadn't even really thought that much about being the captain, even though I'd been a vice-captain for sometime. I was a bowler, after all; there hadn't been a bowler who'd captained the Test team for generations."

Talks like these have made the book interesting wanting to know more about his life both as a cricketer fan and an inspiration.

With a blend of inspiration, insight, and thought-provoking narratives, *Tested* is a master class in overcoming adversity. As it hits bookshelves tomorrow, it promises to be an essential read for anyone and everyone looking to understand the true essence of resilience and leadership.



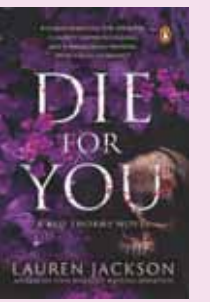
SOULFUL READS



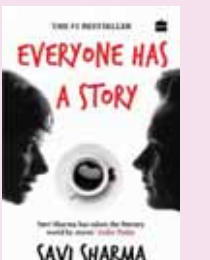
Book: A Year of Celebration and Spectacle
Author: Ruskin Bond
Publisher: Rupa
Price: ₹295



Book: Dating Dr. Dil
Author: Nisha Sharma
Publisher: HarperCollins India
Price: ₹250



Book: Die For You
Author: Lauren Jackson
Publisher: India Penguin
Price: ₹499



Book: Everyone Has A Story
Author: Savi Sharma
Publisher: HarperCollins India
Price: ₹499



Book: Izmirlı, My Last Love
Author: Firat Sunel, Feza Howell
Publisher: India Penguin
Price: ₹599

NEW LAUNCH

The Ramayana in Art



BY TEAM VIVA

Ramayana in World Art and Thought – An Anthology of Perspectives, edited by Padmeshri Shovana Narayan, features contributions from sixteen respected writers, scholars and thought leaders, including Sharon Lowen, Lady Kishwar Desai, Amb. (Retd.) Sangeeta

Bahadur, Dr. K.K. Mishra, Dr. Abira Bhattacharya, Rear Admiral (Retd.) Dr S. Kulshreshtha and Rana Safvi. Produced by Shubhi Publication, this coffee table book examines ethics, spirituality and morality within the Ramayana. It offers readers insightful perspectives on the epic's influence on art, culture and history across the world.

A Call to Protect the Earth

Our Potpourri Planet' by Ranjit Lal is both a wake-up call and a guide to understanding the environmental crisis. With a blend of personal anecdotes, facts and sharp observations, Lal highlights urgent solutions ranging from lifestyle changes to policy reforms. The book also confronts our changing world: rising temperatures, melting glaciers, vanishing forests and polluted cities. Blending personal anecdotes with sharp facts, Lal highlights environmental crises and actionable solutions, criticising profit-driven policies. Engaging and hopeful, this book urges societal change, reminding us that while challenges are immense, the power to shape our future remains in our hands.



A Story of Unseen Affection forever

"On the Banks of the Mayyazhi", A moving saga of Mahe's people under French rule, says **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

Way back in the 1960s, in the neighbourhood of Kanjirakkadu where we have our house, lived a Tamil Nadu-born woman named Pappamma. She was one of the early migrants to Perumbavoor who came there as a sanitary worker. Pappamma, tall and lean with a dark complexion, spoke only Tamil and covered herself in a sari sans blouse/jacket. The sanitary workers from Tamil Nadu, numbering around a dozen, were "herded" into a colony set up by the municipal authorities. They were given small tiled houses to stay in. While mornings were peaceful, the silence gave way to a kind of cacophony in the evenings when the workers returned home fully drunk.

Pappamma was an exception and kept away from the merrymakers. She developed an instant friendship with my mother and was always ready with a helping hand, whether it was drawing water from the well or washing utensils. In return for a couple of dosa and idli, my mother would get all the local news from Pappamma. Her friendship extended to me as well, and I still remember her bringing home coconut burfi from the local bakery. She was an embodiment of love and affection and would always scold my mother whenever she thrashed me for my childhood mischief.

When a person living at the far end of the alley bought an old Ambassador car, we children were thrilled because cars were a rare sight in our area. This was the first four-wheeler to join the neighbourhood and we would gather around it, watching the driver trying to kick-start the engine. One day, Pappamma told me, "Kumar, you should buy a car of your own so that I too can travel in it." I had no reply to her comment, but it was she who instilled in me a craving for an Ambassador car, a wish that remains unfulfilled even today.



Memories of Pappamma always haunt me, as she was like a member of our family, though the residents of the locality treated her and others in the colony as "untouchables." Pappamma passed away long ago, but her descendants continue living in the same colony. Interestingly, many of them now own cars, both used and brand new.

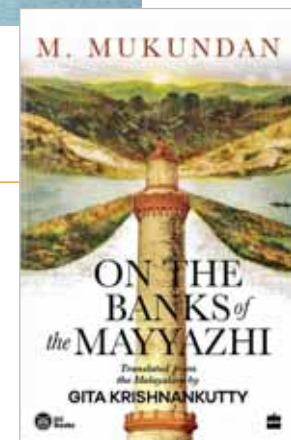
What brought Pappamma to my mind all of a sudden was the novel *On the Banks of the Mayyazhi* by M Mukundan, an avant-garde Malayalam writer. Mukundan was born in Mahe, a former French enclave in Kerala, now administered by the Union Territory of Puducherry. The novel, published in 1974, tells the story of the agitation launched by a section of people in this enclave for freedom from French rule and integration with India. However, there was an older genera-

tion in the French colony for whom Europeans remained the real masters. It was Kurambi Amma, grandmother of Dasan, the protagonist of the story, who reminded me of Pappamma.

Kurambi Amma, a staunch French loyalist, held the Sayivs (Malayalam term for Europeans) in high esteem. Leslie Sayiv, a half-French man, was an icon for Kurambi. Every evening, he would visit her for a pinch of snuff. One evening, Kurambi asked him to buy a car, one similar to that of the local French administrator. The interactions between Kurambi Amma and Leslie Sayiv, though described briefly, reveal much about the people who lived in the French colony in those days.

The story revolves around Kurambi's grandson Dasan and his love interest, Chandrika. Dasan, a revolutionary, was imprisoned by the French government for his Communist ideology. He later escaped to India and returned to Mahe after the French flag was lowered. Though the French authorities offered him the opportunity for higher education and a government job in Paris, Dasan rejected it, as he could not reconcile with the bourgeois system. This forms the core of the novel, but what makes it truly engaging is Mukundan's ability to create relatable characters. The story flows like the Mayyazhi River taking the readers along with it in its journey in search of the Arabian Sea.

On the Banks of the Mayyazhi placed Mukundan in the league of top writers. Gita Krishnankutty's translation of the novel is commendable. The usual hitches and awkwardness that plague translated works are absent, making this book a delight to read.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: On the Banks of the Mayyazhi
Author: M Mukundan
Publisher: HarperCollins
Price: ₹399/-

Shreyas was never supposed to be benched: Gambhir

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has rubbished speculation that Shreyas Iyer was being side-lined from the ODI set-up despite his brilliant form, saying that the consistent right-hander was always in the "scheme of things" and will be an important player in this month's Champions Trophy (CT).

Iyer displayed excellent form during the just-concluded 3-0 ODI series sweep against England, hitting a counter-attacking 36-ball 59 in the opener when India were 19/2 chasing 249 in Nagpur, and scoring 44 and 78 in the next two games.

After the opening match, he created quite a stir by stating that he got into the side only after Virat Kohli had to sit out of the game because of a sore knee. This led to speculation that he would be dropped for Kohli in the next two games.

"He was not supposed to be benched throughout the series. We wanted to give Yashasvi (Jaiswal) a go in the first game and see what he can bring on the table because he was in (a) really good form in Australia," Gambhir said after the third and final match here on

Wednesday.

Iyer was preferred over Jaiswal eventually and Gambhir described him as an "important player" in the side.

"I know that you cannot judge someone (Jaiswal) by one innings. But we always knew that Shreyas was going to be an important player for us. Sometimes when you've only got three games, you want to try and rotate your squad as well," the coach reasoned.

"(And) when you have got Champions Trophy around the corner, you want to try and maximise these three games and try and give everyone an opportunity. But Shreyas was always in the scheme of things (and it is) good that he played all the three games," Gambhir added.

The Champions Trophy gets underway on February 19 with India talking Bangladesh on February 20 in Dubai.

Harshit and Arshdeep will have to step up

Someone's missed opportunity is another person's golden chance, believes Gambhir, who expects the likes of Harshit Rana and Arshdeep Singh to step up and fill the void created by pace talisman Jasprit Bumrah's injury-forced absence from the Champions



Trophy. Bumrah, who played a decisive role in India's T20 World Cup win last year with 15 wickets including a vital spell in the final, has been ruled out of the eight-team event which begins on February 19 owing to a nagging back problem. "Someone missing out opportunity could be a great opportunity for someone else as well, that is how sport goes. Hopefully, these guys (Rana, Arshdeep and Mohammed Shami) can deliver and put their hand up and do the job for the team," he said. "It's a great opportunity for them

to try and deliver for the country, (it is) as simple as it can get. What we don't have, we do not have. What we have is what we have, and we are going to try and go with a very clear mind," he added.

Bumrah's replacement, Rana, has done reasonably well and was drafted into the Champions Trophy squad on Tuesday night.

"I think guys have shown some really good signs. Harshit has come along really well. Arsh (Arshdeep) was really good today (Wednesday) as well. Obviously, you would always miss a bowler like Jasprit Bumrah," Gambhir said.

"But then, it is always good to have someone like Mohammed Shami back with his experience and quality."

When asked if Bumrah's absence will give opposition teams any psychological advantage over India, Gambhir said, "We can't help it."

"If he's not available, he's not available. If he's injured, he's injured," Gambhir said.

"Whether it's me, (or) whether it's the captain, we can't do much about it. We know that he's an important factor, but as I just mentioned, people like Harshit, Arsh (and) Mohammed Shami, all

these guys will put their hand up." **Axar's elevation to No.5**

Gambhir said the promotion of all-rounder Axar Patel to No 5 in the first two ODIs was largely to ensure a left-handed batter in the mix.

"That's the way cricket is meant to be played. I know a lot of people talk about it but that's the way we've got to play the game and that's the way cricket should be played," he said.

"It's not about the batting order, it's about who can create what (kind of) impact. If you have the option of putting a quality left-hander in the middle, why won't you do that? Why would you want to have top five as right-handers?" he asked.

Gambhir said he the only criteria for deciding the order is the impact assessment of a player, which he believes, cannot be done purely through statistics.

"We don't look at averages and stats and all that stuff, we look at who can deliver more at that number and Axar has done fabulously well, (in) both the games he got the opportunity, (and) he delivered for us," he said.

"I know there will always be people talking about it but I think that's the way we want to go in the future as well," he added.



Families not to travel with Team India for ICC Champions Trophy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Families will not be accompanying the Indian cricket players heading to Dubai on February 15 for the ICC Champions Trophy (CT) as the BCCI's new travel policy comes into effect for the first time with this tournament.

The Indian team starts its campaign in Dubai against Bangladesh on February 20, followed by the marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan (February 23) and the final preliminary face-off with New Zealand on March 2. The Rohit Sharma-led squad will play its games in Dubai while the rest of the tournament unfolds from February 19 in Pakistan across three venues.

Given that the duration of the tour is just over three weeks even if the final on March 9 is taken into consideration, the BCCI will not allow families to accompany the players. As per the new policy, families can be with players for a maximum of two weeks during a tour which is of 45 days or more.

"If anything changes then it is different but as of now, the players are unlikely to be accompanied by their wives or partners for this tour. One of the senior players had enquired about it and he was told that the policy decision will be followed," a senior

BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "Since the tour is of less than one month, families won't be accompanying the players. But if exceptions are made, I think that individual will have to bear the full expenses as BCCI won't be covering any cost," he added.

The BCCI policy document states: "Players absent from India for more than 45 days during overseas tours can be joined by their partners and children (under 18) for one visit per series (format wise) of up to a two-week period. "Any deviation from this policy must be pre-approved by the coach, captain and GM Operations. Additional expenses outside the visitors' period will not be covered by the BCCI."

However, families will be there with the team during the five-Test tour of England in June-July-August as the five-Test. The window for their two-week stay during the trip will be worked out later.

The new rules were drafted after India's horror tour of Australia during which the team was outplayed 1-3, leading to speculation about lack of discipline and cohesion in the dressing room.

Rules already put into effect

The senior official said that most of the rules have already been enforced by the BCCI.

"If you look at it, already no player can ask for a private vehicle to come for practice. All state units have been notified. Similarly once the players assembled in Kolkata (for the T20I series against England) and Nagpur (for the ODI series against the same side), the team has travelled together," he confirmed.

The stars have also adhered to the new regulations of playing domestic cricket when they get time off from their international assignments. Accordingly, Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and Shivam Dube turned up for Mumbai.

Virat Kohli played his first game for Delhi in more than 12 years amid a lot of fanfare. So did Rishabh Pant while KL Rahul represented Karnataka. Ravindra Jadeja played for Saurashtra.

Personal staff to stay at different hotel

Restrictions have also been imposed on personal staff (managers, agents, chefs), who were accompanying the team and the coaching group earlier. Accordingly, the personal secretary of a member of the coaching staff, who was regularly seen staying at the team hotel, now stays at a different facility even though he has been seen at every venue during the England home series.

RCB names Rajat Patidar as captain for IPL 2025

PTI ■ BENGALURU

IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday named Rajat Patidar as its captain for the upcoming season starting March 21, replacing South African Faf du Plessis who was released from the squad last year.

Patidar was among RCB's retained players before the mega auction in November, 2024 and has the experience of leading Madhya Pradesh in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (T20) and the Vijay Hazare Trophy (ODI).

The 31-year-old, who signed up with the franchise in 2022, guided Madhya Pradesh to the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy final where his side lost to Mumbai by five wickets last year.

"Rajat has the simplicity, (he) cares about the people around him, we have closely seen how he has led Madhya Pradesh, we really liked it," RCB chief coach Andy Flower said at the franchise event to announce Patidar's elevation.



The right-hander was also the second highest run-getter in the premier domestic T20 tournament, behind Ajinkya Rahane, scoring 428 from 10 matches at an average of 61 and a strike-rate of 186.08. Patidar takes over from du Plessis, who was released after captaining the team from 2022 to 2024. The 40-year-old South African will play for Delhi Capitals this season. Prior to the announcement on Thursday, there was some

speculation about Virat Kohli returning as captain of the franchise. Kohli was the RCB captain from 2013 to 2021 and has a fine record though he could not land them the title. The 36-year-old led RCB in 143 matches, the second longest stint as captain after the legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni for Chennai Super Kings.

Under him, the team won 68 games, and logged 70 losses and four no-results.

In 2016, Kohli had led the franchise to the IPL final, and made 973 runs, to date the highest for a batter in a single IPL season.

In IPL 2024, Kohli was the top run-getter with 741 runs at a strike-rate of 154.

The franchise conceded that Kohli's name was also discussed for the leadership role.

members will be right behind you, Rajat," Kohli said in a video statement shared by the franchise.

"The way you have grown in this franchise and the way you have performed, you've made a place in the hearts of all RCB fans. This is very well deserved," he added.

Bahutule appointed Rajasthan Royals spin-bowling coach

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Former India cricketer Sairaj Bahutule was on Thursday appointed Rajasthan Royals' spin-bowling coach for the upcoming IPL season, adding to the long list of support staff led by head coach Rahul Dravid.

Bahutule, a former leg-spinner and left-hand batter, played two Tests and eight ODIs taking a total of five wickets but his exploits in first-class cricket put him in the league of domestic greats. Bahutule, 52, scored over 6,000 runs and took 630 wickets, besides 197 scalps in List A games. "The 52-year-old returns to the Royals having been a part of the setup from 2018-21. He represented India in two Tests and eight ODIs and has since transitioned into a successful coaching career, mentoring teams such as Mumbai, Bengal, Kerala and the Indian national men's team where he has been instrumental in developing emerging talents," said Rajasthan Royals in a statement.

Kane lifts Bayern to beat Celtic in Champions League playoffs

PTI ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich looks set to survive the new Champions League playoffs round. AC Milan joined Atalanta and Monaco losing their first-leg games Wednesday.

Bayern got high-class strikes from Michael Olise and Harry Kane either side of halftime in a 2-1 win at Scottish champion Celtic. The return game is Tuesday in Munich.

"The (Celtic) fans haven't seen many losses here, especially in Europe, so we appreciate the importance of the game and the victory," Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said.

Bayern had joined Real

Madrid and Manchester City as Champions League title winners in the past five years who surprisingly found themselves in the playoffs because they finished outside the top eight in the new 36-team single standings format. Madrid won 3-2 in Manchester on Tuesday.

Feyenoord's goal in a rain-soaked 1-0 win over Milan came in the third minute and relied in France goalkeeper Mike Maignan spilling Igor Paixão's shot into the net.

Feyenoord's Brazilian winger gave Milan new signing Kyle Walker a tough first game in the competition for the seven-time European champion. It also was a quick winning start for Feyenoord's interim

coach Pascal Bosschaert in his first game after the firing Monday of Brian Priske.

Benfica won 1-0 at Monaco with another goal from Vangelis Pavlidis, a delicate chip shot in the 48th. Monaco had Al Musrati sent off four minutes later.

Club Brugge scored with a disputed penalty kick in stoppage time to beat Atalanta 2-1. That was a meeting of teams that finished 24th and ninth, respectively, in the 36-team standings two weeks ago.

The top eight teams in those standings advanced direct to the round of 16 in March, leaving Nos. 9 to 24 to compete this month for eight more entries in playoffs over back-to-back midweeks.

Three Pakistan players fined for breaching ICC Code of Conduct

PTI ■ KARACHI

International Cricket Council (ICC) has slapped Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi, Saud Shakeel and Kamran Gulam with fines and a demerit point each for their belligerent behaviour during the tri-series match against South Africa here.

Shaheen was fined 25 per cent of his match fee for breaching Article 2.12 of the Code, which pertains to "inappropriate physical contact with a Player, Player Support Personnel, Umpire, Match Referee or any other person (including a spectator) during an International Match."

The incident occurred in the 28th over of South Africa's innings when Shaheen

deliberately obstructed batter Matthew Breetzke as he ran a single, resulting in physical contact and a heated exchange between the two players on Wednesday.

The ICC had imposed a similar 20 percent match fee fine and one demerit point on Indian star Virat Kohli for barging into Australia's Sam Konstas during the Border Gavaskar Trophy series.

Interestingly, while Kohli got a lot of flak for his action, Shaheen has hardly been criticised in Pakistan for his behaviour.

The tall fast bowler admitted after the match that he had been trying to rile up and disturb Breetzke for a while in the match but once it was over everything was forgotten and both shook hands.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER
BALASORE WILDLIFE DIVISION
At/Po: KURUDA, Dist.: BALASORE, ODISHA-756056
Phone No: 06782-256142 e-mail: dfo.balasurewl@odisha.gov.in

SHORT TENDER NOTICE
Tender No. 4 /2024-25 Dated: - 11.02.2025.
Divisional Forest Officer, Balasore Wildlife Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites sealed tenders from reputed intending Manufacturing Firms/ Dealers/ Suppliers having valid GSTIN and PAN Registration No. for procurement of One (01) UAV (DRONE) with battery combo pack (Battery kit, Speaker and RTK module). The tender papers with detailed terms and conditions will be available in the website www.balasure.odisha.gov.in and www.odishaforest.in in the Office of the DFO, Balasore Wildlife Division, Balasore on payment of Rs. 1,000/- (One thousand) only in cash or Account Payee Bank Draft in favour of Divisional Forest Officer, Balasore Wildlife Division, Balasore during office hours from 14.02.2025 to 25.02.2025. The Tender Papers can be submitted at the below mentioned address on or before 25.02.2025 latest by 05.00PM by Speed Post/ registered post/ by hand only. The tender will be opened in the office of the undersigned on 27.02.2025 at 11.30 AM.
Post/Courier: Divisional Forest Officer, Balasore Wildlife Division, At/Po-Kuruda, Balasore Pin-756056.
Email-id:dfo.balasurewl@odisha.gov.in OIPR-08036/11/0008/2425

STATE FOREST HEADQUARTERS, ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS & HoFF, ODISHA
ARANYA BHAWAN, CHANDRASEKHARPUR, BHUBANESWAR.
NIT No. 172 /10F (CAMP)/70/2024.,
Dated, Bhubaneswar, the 12th February 2025

The principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Odisha invites Technical & Financial Proposals in Sealed Cover from the National Reputed Party agencies for conducting Evaluation of Projects undertaken under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management & Planning Authority, CAMP, 2023-24 Details of the provisions in RFP are available at www.odishaforest.in & www.odishagov.in (All Tender Section). Interested agencies should submit their proposal along with other related documents as per the RFP addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, State Authority, CAMP, Odisha, O/o to the principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Odisha, Plot No. GD-2/12. Aranya Bhawan, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751023 within the stipulated date.

Yours Faithfully,
Chief Executive Officer,
State Authority, CAMP

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
KANTABANJI (R&B) DIVISION
Bid Identification No.08 / KBJ / 2024-2025

The Superintending Engineer, Kantabanji (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bid for Road & Building works detailed in the table below in Single Cover (01 No.Composite and 02 Nos. Non-Composite Tender) system ONLINE MODE from the Class of Contractors mentioned in Column-7 registered with the State Government and contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways for execution of Civil, EI & PH work. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid.

| | |
|--|---|
| 1) No. of work | -> 03 Nos. |
| 2) Nature of work | -> 02 Nos. Road work and 01 No. Building work |
| 3) Class of contractor | -> "D", "C" & "B" Class |
| 4) Approximate value of work | -> Between Rs.4.67 Lakh to Rs.31.51 Lakh |
| 5) Tender cost | -> Rs.2,000/- & Rs.6,000/- |
| 6) Date and time of availability of Bid documents in online | -> From Dt.17.02.2025 at 02.30 P.M. to Dt.24.02.2025 up to 05:00 P.M. |
| 7) Date of Opening | -> Dt.25.02.2025 at 11:30 A.M. |
| 8) Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the e-procurement portal "www.tendersodisha.gov.in" | |
| 9) The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in. All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE MODE only. | |

Superintending Engineer,
Kantabanji (R&B) Division

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Office of the Engineer-In-Chief, Water Resources, Secha Sadan, Bhubaneswar

A-1056 Email Address: cemch.slow.od@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice- Bid Identification No.-CEM/MDS-05/2024-25

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Name of the Work | : Mechanical Gate Works |
| 2. No. of Works | : 01 (One) |
| 3. Category of executors | : SSI Units registered under DIC/ NSIC/ MSME for Irrigation Shutters / Hydro mechanical gates. |
| 4. Bid Identification No. | : CEM/MDS - 05/2024-25 |
| 5. Tender Value | : Rs. 30,02,435.82 |
| 6. Period of Completion | : 02(Two) calendar months. |
| 7. Date & time of availability of bid documents in the Portal | : From dt.15.02.2025 (10.00 AM) to dt.28.02.2025 (5.30 PM) |
| 8. Last date/ time for receipt of bid in the Portal | : dt.28.02.2025 (up to 5.30 PM) |
| 9. Date and Place of opening of Technical Bid | : dt.01.03.2025 (12.00 Noon onwards in the OIO the undersigned) |
| 10. Date and Place of opening of Financial Bid | : To be intimated to the qualified Bidders after evaluation of Technical Bid. |
| 11. Name of the Officer inviting bid | : Chief Engineer, Mechanical, OIO the E.I.C, Water Resources, Odisha, Bhubaneswar |

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any further issue of Addenda/ Corrigenda/ Cancellation Notice shall be uploaded in the aforesaid website only.

Sd
Chief Engineer, Mechanical
OIO-Engineer-In-Chief,
Secha Sadan, Bhubaneswar

OIPR-32520/11/0024/2425