

Established 1865 sunday pioneer

BHUBANESWAR, SUNDAY FEBRUARY 16, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹5

magazine

www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA



SECOND DEPORTATION FLIGHT ARRIVES

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

A plane carrying 119 illegal immigrants from the US landed at the Amritsar airport on Saturday night, the second such batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its promised crackdown on illegal migration. Before the arrival and another scheduled deportee flight for Sunday created a lot of furore and controversy across the country with political parties crossing swords.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann questioned the move to land another plane at the Amritsar airport, as he accused the Centre of trying to defame Punjab as part of a conspiracy and sought to know under which criteria the Amritsar airport was chosen to land the second aircraft, BJP hit back accusing the AAP leader of playing politics over the matter.

Among the 119 deportees, 100 are from Punjab and Haryana alone. While 67 are from Punjab, 33 are from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, three from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Goa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and one each from Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. The second batch of illegal Indian immigrants includes four women and two minors, including a six-year-old girl. Most of the deportees are in the age group of 18 to 30, sources said. A third plane carrying 157 deportees is also expected to land on February 16. On February 5, a US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar airport.



Relatives wait outside the airport in Amritsar ahead of the second batch of the immigrants' arrival from the US PTI

Of them, 33 each were from Haryana and Gujarat, and 30 from Punjab. Mann visited the airport on Saturday and said his government has made arrangements to take the residents of Punjab from among the second batch of deportees to their hometowns. The deportees who hail from other states will head to Delhi from Amritsar in a flight on Sunday morning and then they will be taken to their respective places. Talking to reporters at the airport, Mann continued his attack on the Centre and said, "Do not make our holy city (Amritsar) a deport centre."

Hitting back at Mann, BJP leader Tarun Chugh said on Saturday, "Bhagwant Mann sahab, people of Punjab want to know how the innocent youths went out, why they had to go, who were those who spoiled their lives. Why they had to go adopting illegal routes, who sent them, and who were the fraudulent agents who spoiled their lives." "The youths were forced to sell their land, houses. Rather than

catching the culprits and acting against those who spoiled the lives of these youths, the 'AAP-da' party leader is doing politics over the issue," Chugh, who is also BJP's general secretary, said.

BJP's national spokesperson R P Singh also took a dig at Mann, and told him to stop politicising the issue. "Amritsar is the closest international airport for flights entering India from the US. That's why the plane carrying illegal immigrants is landing there. Stop politicising the issue and promoting conspiracy theories due to your lack of knowledge," Singh said in a social media post. Senior BJP leader and former Union minister Uma Bharti lashed out at the US government for the "cruel and extremely shameful manner" in which it deported the illegal Indian immigrants recently. In a post on social media platform, Uma Bharti said, "The manner in which the illegal Indian immigrants were sent back from America in handcuffs and shackles is extremely shameful and a blot on humanity."

"The American governments have shown this cruel and violent attitude towards Red Indians and people of African origin living there many times, she alleged. "When they (deportees) were being sent by a plane, keeping them in handcuffs and shackles shows the cruelty and inhumanity of the American administration. Entering a country illegally is a crime, every country has provisions for its punishment as per the law, but such cruelty is a great sin," the BJP leader said.

The North American Punjabi Association expressed serious concern over human trafficking, saying the government must take immediate action to prevent youths from taking illegal and dangerous routes to reach foreign shores. Satnam Singh Chahal, the Executive Director of the North American Punjabi Association (NAPA) alleged that despite repeated warnings and several tragic incidents, the government has failed to implement effective measures to curb illegal migration.

Destiny plays cruel at Maha Kumbh, again

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR/NEW DELHI

A devastating road accident in Prayagraj on Friday and a fire in the mela grounds on Saturday marred the festivities in Kumbh as the week came to a close. A fire broke out at the storeroom of a camp in the Maha Kumbh Mela area on Saturday evening, gutting seven tents and destroying some items, including blankets and foodgrains, officials said.

No person was injured, they said. Meanwhile late evening heavy rush led to chaos at New Delhi Railway Station on platform no 14 and 15 from where Prayagraj Express was scheduled to depart. Sources said that passengers forced themselves in all the coaches of train including air conditioned coaches. Several passengers fainted due to heavy rush and Mahakumbh bound passengers barging into coaches. Delhi police and Delhi Fire Service rushed to the spot and along with the RPF tried to control the chaos and prevented a major stampede at the national Capital station. Some of the passengers including female were rushed to hospital for first aid. Northern Railway officials said that



Smoke billows out after a fire broke out at the Maha Kumbh Mela, in Prayagraj PTI

situation was brought under control and rush was cleared by deploying two special trains for Prayagraj.

Continued on page 2

Accident claims 10 lives in Prayagraj

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
PRAYAGRAJ

A late Friday night accident claimed the lives of 10 pilgrims and left 19 others injured. The incident occurred on the Prayagraj-Mirzapur highway in Meja. According to police reports, a Bolero carrying pilgrims collided head-on with a bus. All 10 occupants of the Bolero died on the spot. The deceased were residents of Korba district in Chhattisgarh and were on their way to the Sangam for a holy dip.

The bus, carrying pilgrims from Rajgarh district in Madhya Pradesh, was returning from the Sangam and heading toward Varanasi when the accident took place. Nineteen passengers onboard sustained injuries and were rushed to the Community Health Center (CHC) in Ramnagar for treatment.

Upon receiving information, local authorities and police reached the site, took control of the situation, and sent the bodies for post-mortem examination.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took note of the road accident in Prayagraj and directed the officials to reach the spot and expedite the relief work.

The Chief Minister also directed proper treatment of the injured.

This is not the first instance that such accidents involving Maha Kumbh devotees occurred.

EXAM TIME



Students check their allocated seats at an examination center before appearing for the CBSE class 10 board exam 2025, in Gurugram PTI

New ration cards E-KYC deadline extended till March 31

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a major relief to the people in remote areas facing network connectivity challenges, the State Government has extended the deadline for updating Electronic Know Your Customer (e-KYC) by the ration card holders till March 31, 2025.

This was informed by Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Department Minister Krushna Chandra Patra in the State Assembly on Saturday.

Earlier, the government had informed that there would be no extension of the e-KYC process after the expiry of the previous deadline on February 15.

The new decision has been taken to address the techno-

logical barriers and the difficulties faced by people. Efforts are underway to enhance the connectivity infrastructure with network devices set to be deployed at 341 locations throughout Odisha.

Reports suggest 111 locations continue to grapple with slow network speeds, affecting residents' ability to update their e-KYC information. Furthermore, a pressing concern is the complete absence of network connectivity in 230 locations which are mostly PDS centres, posing substantial hurdles to digital processes.

The State's initiative to improve infrastructure is expected to ease e-KYC service access, especially for residents in these significantly impacted areas.

In Assembly for 2nd day Chaos over farmer issues, law and order concerns

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

For the second consecutive day, the Odisha Assembly was thrown into chaos as Opposition Congress and BJD members disrupted proceedings over concerns regarding the plight of farmers and the worsening law and order situation in the State.

As the Assembly met for the day to begin the Question Hour, BJD and Congress members stormed into the Well of the House, raising slogans against the government over issues related to paddy procurement, specifically katni and chhatni, and the deteriorating law and order.

Speaker Surama Padhy, however, ignored the protests and called upon Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida to go ahead for the Question Hour. This move only fuelled the Opposition's agitation with members rushing to the Speaker's podium and intensifying their protests, further disrupting the proceedings.

Despite the Speaker's repeated requests to the Opposition to return to their seats, the protests continued, leading to an eventual adjournment of the session until 12 pm.

Following the adjournment, BJD members went to the Raj Bhavan to submit a memorandum to Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, highlighting the difficulties faced by farmers due to unseasonal rains, farmer suicides and challenges in the paddy procurement process.

When the House reconvened at 12 pm, BJD member Jayanarayan Mishra raised a point of order, claiming that the Opposition had earlier brought an adjournment motion on the farmers' issues. He accused the Opposition of deliberately stalling proceedings.

The Speaker then adjourned the House until 4 pm.

Order was eventually restored after the Speaker ruled that the House would proceed with the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address.

In Cuttack Police crack elderly couple's murder

Arrest housemaid, hubby after 5 yrs
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police have cracked a five-year-old murder case involving the brutal killing of a senior citizen couple in Cuttack, Srinath and Bidulata Samal, on December 12, 2019.

The couple's former housemaid Basanti Samad and her husband Santosh alias Eman Samad were arrested and produced in court on Saturday.

The investigation faced several challenges, including Covid-19 restrictions. However, the victims' family persistently pursued the case, ensuring continued police efforts. After assuming charge, Commissioner of Police Dev Dutta Singh prioritised the case and reassigned it to ACP Manoj Satpathy, leading a special investigative team.

A breakthrough came when in-



vestigators found a suspicious 40-hour gap in Basanti's call records around the time of the murder. Further intelligence gathering revealed that Santosh had previously planned similar crimes. During interrogation, he confessed to killing the couple, citing personal grievances.

Santosh claimed that Srinath had misbehaved with Basanti and insulted him when he asked for financial help. Seeking revenge, the couple meticulously planned the murder. On December 11, 2019, they traveled from Sundargarh to Cuttack, with Basanti switching off her phone to avoid detection. On the night

of December 12, Santosh entered the victims' house and fatally attacked Srinath. When Bidulata tried to intervene, she was also killed.

After failing to find valuables, Santosh fled, leaving the murder weapon behind. His blood-stained clothes were discarded in the Taladanda canal before they returned to Sundargarh.

Based on call records, confessions and evidence, police arrested both accused. Santosh faces murder charges while Basanti has been booked for conspiracy. Their arrest finally brings closure to the long-unsolved case of the Madhupatna police station.

In BSSR Mo Bus crushes woman to death, injures 3

Locals vandalise vehicle
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A woman was killed and her husband critically injured after a Mo Bus hit their vehicle under an over-bridge in the Tamando police station area of Bhubaneswar on Friday night.

The Mo Bus plying on Route Number 33 was returning to the Kalinga Nagar depot when it hit at least two scooters near the DN Regalia Mall. An eyewitness alleged that the bus was speeding recklessly and ran over one of the vehicles while dragging another for several meters.

The Mo Bus first hit a scooter, carrying a couple,



causing it to lose balance and fall on the road. A woman pillion rider was caught under the wheels and was crushed to death. Meanwhile, the man riding the two-wheeler was flung away and admitted to a hospital in a critical condition. Locals also stated that the bus further hit another two-wheeler, whose passengers suffered grievous injuries.

"I heard a loud crash and turned to see that a speeding Mo Bus had crushed a woman to death and was then speeding away while also dragging a vehicle with it. Four people

were hit and one of them died on the spot," said an eyewitness.

Later, police arrived at the scene and arrested the Mo Bus driver, who was allegedly drunk. An investigation was on to ascertain the identities of the deceased and the injured persons. Till the last reports came in, no additional comments could be obtained from the authorities.

Following the incident, tensions erupted in the area, with locals vandalising the bus. Further, tensions also ran high as the accident came just over a week after a Mo Bus killed a minor girl in the Nandankanan area, marking an alarming spurt in accident involving CRUT-operated buses.

'BJD MLAs working under Pandian's influence'

Claims BJP leader Jayanarayan
NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator Jayanarayan Mishra on Saturday took a swipe at the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in the Odisha Legislative Assembly, alleging that its lawmakers operate under the influence of retired bureaucrat-turned-politician V Karthikeyan Pandian.

Pandian, a close confidant of BJD president Naveen Patnaik, has been widely blamed for the party's decline after 24 years in power. His alleged dominance in both the BJD's organisational structure and the government fueled widespread discontent, which the BJP successfully leveraged as a key election issue.



Mishra's remarks were based on conversations with BJD legislators in the Assembly lobby. According to him, many BJD members admitted that key decisions were taken only after receiving directives from Pandian. He expressed concern over what he called the undue influence of an external individual on legislative proceedings.

Mishra's comments came amid the ongoing uproar in the State Assembly. Mishra noted that while the government had initially agreed to discuss the Opposition's adjournment motion, the House had remained in disarray since Friday due to repeated disruptions.

Mocking the BJD lawmakers, Mishra alleged that they had been reduced to mere event managers for Pandian in the run-up to the elections.

"In the past, BJD leaders were seen handling venue arrangements for Pandian's public meetings. Now, there's a competition among them to be his closest aide. Several BJD MLAs have confided this to me," Mishra claimed.

He further accused the ruling party of deliberately

stalling Assembly proceedings. "When the Speaker allowed the adjournment motion on the farmers' issue, the BJD disrupted the session instead of engaging in a debate. It is clear they are acting on Pandian's instructions," he alleged.

Mishra went on to mock BJD leaders, saying, "The people of Odisha have seen them at work-some were busy serving food, while others arranged chairs and tents for Pandian's events."

In response, Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallick demanded that Mishra's remarks be expunged from the Assembly records. She accused him of fabricating stories and insisted that references to non-members should not be included in official proceedings.

21,000 Anganwadi Centres lack own buildings

31,000 have no electricity
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

More than 21,000 Anganwadi Centres in the State are currently operating without their own dedicated buildings.

This was disclosed by Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida in a written statement in the State Assembly on Saturday.

"Around 21,486 Anganwadi Centres are functioning without buildings of their own, which impacts their ability to provide consistent services to communities," Parida revealed. She further disclosed that over 31,000 centres are not equipped with electricity, posing significant challenges to their operation.



In addition to these issues, a larger concern is the absence of kitchens in many of these facilities. Currently, 47,737 Anganwadi Centres lack essential boundary walls, raising serious concerns about the safety and security of these vital pre-school education hubs.

They are also without proper cooking spaces, im-

pairing their ability to provide necessary nutrition and services to children and mothers.

These revelations by the Deputy CM underscore the pressing need for improved funding and resource allocation to enhance the infrastructure of Anganwadi Centres.

Anganwadi Centres are crucial components of India's

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, which aims to provide healthcare, nutrition and education to young children and mothers across the country. The infrastructure deficiencies call for an urgent need for government intervention and investment to enhance these essential services.

Cong will rise in Odisha, says Routray

Makes emotional comeback to party
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Senior leader Suresh Kumar Routray made a return to the Congress after the previous order of his suspension and expulsion was revoked by new Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das.

Routray arrived at the party office here accompanied by his eldest son Siddharth Routray and a group of supporters, marking his first visit since the revocation of his suspension.

The action against the senior leader had been taken following complaints that he was campaigning for his son Manmath Routray, who has been fielded by the BJD from



the Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha constituency.

However, under the new leadership of Bhakta Das, the suspension orders against Routray and other members have been annulled.

Bhakta Das' stand signals a new chapter within the Congress, suggesting a move towards unity and coopera-

tion.

Routray said, "I was kept out for nearly nine months from the Congress. I thank Rahul Gandhi, Bhakta Das and others who have taken this decision. I urge all the leaders, who have left the party, to return to the party fold."

Routray asserted that the

Congress would certainly perform well in the upcoming panchayat, municipal and other elections. The party has a long time to get united and give a strong fight to its rival parties.

"The Congress party will rise in Odisha, and I appeal to all to work in a united way," he added.

Anubhav's biography launched



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Superstar, youth icon and political leader Anubhav Mohanty was honoured with the unveiling of his biography here on Saturday.

The biography is authored by Jagrati Shukla and co-authored by the Late Astitwa with the Odia version penned by Manas Padhiary. It offers an in-depth look into Mohanty's journey from his dominance

in the Odia film industry to his impactful political career.

Chief speaker author, poet and lyricist Devdas Chhotray emphasised the depth of Mohanty's influence among masses.

Expressing his gratitude, Mohanty remarked, "This book is deeply personal to me. It is not just my journey but a reflection of my father's teachings, my struggles and my unwavering love for Odisha."

In Simlipal 6 poachers held using AI technology

Firearms also seized
PNS ■ BARIPADA

An enforcement team of the Simlipal Wildlife Sanctuary in Mayurbhanj district has arrested six poachers, who were utilising advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.

These individuals were spotted by AI cameras while apparently hunting a deer within the protected area.

The authorities, upon acquiring photographic evidence, immediately launched a series of operations across various villages in the Dukura range within Simlipal, which led to the arrest of the six

poachers.

The arrested were identified as Budhia Hembram, Rath Singh, Bula Singh, Mithun Hembram, Lakshman Soren, and Pradhan Soren. They are all residents of villages under the Khunta police station. During the operation, law enforcement officials seized three country-made firearms alongside other hunting articles.

The suspects have been produced before the Baripada Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court.

The development marks a success in the ongoing efforts to combat illegal poaching activities within Simlipal.

State inks pact with EESL for energy efficiency

SUDARSHAN CHHOTRAY ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a significant step towards advancing India's energy transition and sustainability goals, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under Government of India's Ministry of Power, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Odisha's Energy Department to collaborate on the exchange of ideas, technologies, and information for the implementation of large-scale energy efficiency measures.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo. This partnership marks a commitment to fostering energy efficiency and sustainability across various sectors, reinforcing Odisha's leadership in climate action and green development.

The collaboration will serve as a framework for deploying innovative and sustainable solutions, including energy efficiency projects in public buildings and municipal services, the promotion of



clean cooking solutions and electric mobility, and initiatives for capacity building, knowledge sharing, and joint research and development.

Speaking on the occasion, Singh Deo said that Odisha is committed to becoming a leader in energy efficiency and sustainability.

"This MoU with EESL will help us enhance energy secu-

rety, reduce costs, and improve public infrastructure across the State. By implementing large-scale energy efficiency projects, promoting clean mobility, and adopting innovative solutions, we are ensuring a greener, more resilient future for our citizens. This is a major step towards realising Odisha's vision for sustainable development and economic

growth," the Minister stated.

Energy Department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev stated that enhancing energy efficiency is a key priority for Odisha.

EESL CEO Vishal Kapoor articulated that the partnership will accelerate Odisha's leadership in energy efficiency and contribute significantly to India's Net Zero targets.

What's in Srimandir Ratna Bhandar?

Ornaments inventory data to be made public
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

What is inside the Puri Jagannath Temple's Ratna Bhandar, the treasure trove? Devotees across the globe will get to know about the details of the ornaments and other valuables in the Bhandar as the State Government will make all such details public.

This was informed by Law

Minister Prithviraj Harichandan in a written reply in the State Assembly on Saturday. Comprehensive details about the ornaments would be disclosed once the counting process is completed, he said, adding that the last inventory check had been conducted in 1978.

Harichandan said a methodical approach would be applied to the current task of documenting and counting, which would be taken up after essential renovation and re-

pair works of the Ratna Bhandar.

He said, "We are committed to completing the ongoing renovation work and following it up with a transparent disclosure to the public regarding the inventory."

Notably, the Ratna Bhandar had been opened after a gap of over 45 years on July 14, 2024.

The Ratna Bhandar holds immense historical and cultural significance. Dating back to the 12th Century, this sacred vault houses priceless

jewels, ornaments and artefacts dedicated to Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra.

The inner chamber, known as 'Bhitar Bhandar,' contains the most valuable items while the outer chamber, 'Bahar Bhandar,' stores ornaments used for daily rituals.

After the Ratna Bhandar was opened last year, all the valuables have been shifted to a temporary strong room located within the premises of the Srimandir.

In Mayurbhanj 2 girls barred from school for mobile phone use

Plaint lodged against Head Master
PNS ■ BARIPADA

The Head Master of a school in Mayurbhanj district allegedly barred two girl students from attending the school and also the hostel as a mark of punishment for using mobile phones.

The two students' guardians have filed a complaint against the Head Master Subala Chandra Das of Parbati Girls' High School at Badatalima village under Tiring block in the district.

The incident came to light on Saturday following the complaint filed against the Head Master.

The two Class-X students have been allegedly facing difficulties in their studies as they have not been able to attend classes for nearly three

months due to the punishment.

The guardians of the students expressed deep concern about the future of their children's education, especially with the upcoming board examinations. They worried that their daughters would be at a disadvantage due to the extended disruption in their education.

In response to the complaints, the Additional District Education Officer (ADEO) visited the school to investigate the matter. Additionally, it is alleged that the Head Master misbehaved with media personnel who attempted to collect information about the incident.

The District Education Officer (DEO) has assured that the matter would be thoroughly investigated and appropriate actions would be taken if any evidence of misconduct is found.

In State 8,159 child marriages held in 6 yrs

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Child marriages continue to persist in Odisha despite concerted efforts to eradicate the practice. The State has recorded a staggering 8,159 instances of child marriages over the last six years, according to government data.

In a written reply in the State Assembly on Saturday, Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida informed that Nabarangpur district emerges as the area with the highest number of cases, recording a total of 1,347 child marriages.

Ganjam district follows with 966 cases while Koraput district accounts for 636 instances of child marriages. The substantial numbers highlight the scale of the issue facing these regions.

Alongside combating child marriage, the State also grapples with the challenge of child labour. Over the same period, authorities have rescued 328 children working as labourers.

Both child marriage and child labour issues underscore the persistent socioeconomic hurdles in the State.

Panel discussion on Union Budget at DSBM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 2nd edition of the panel discussion on the Union Budget 2025-26 was hosted by DAV School of Business Management (DSBM) on February 14. The event was graced by eminent educationists.

Dr Sabat Kumar Digal, Dean of the Faculty of Business Studies, Management and Communication at Rama Devi Women's University, shared insights on the overall perspectives and sectoral importance of the budget. He emphasized the significance of women and youth and encouraged students to focus on becoming part of India's success story.

Prof Bidyadhar Padhi from Silicon University compared



the progress of leading countries in manufacturing sectors and discussed the rationale behind the Indian Government's support for start-ups. Dr Bamadeb Mishra, Department of Commerce, PN Autonomous College, highlighted the importance of infrastructure for India's economic growth and

explored the role of tourism sector for the growth of the Indian economy.

Saswati Mohanty, Department of Commerce from Kamala Nehru Women's College, discussed on importance of tax reforms and the concept of the "Aam Aadmi" budget.

Dr DN Mishra, Principal of DSBM, provided a compara-

tive analysis of the previous and current budgets, explaining how the changes in the current one are expected to strengthen the economic ecosystem.

The programme was moderated by Dr. Satyajit Dikshit, and the event was successfully coordinated by Sonali Pattnaik.

NABARD estimates Odisha credit potential Rs 2.52L cr for 2025-26

Banks should increase credit flow: Singh Deo
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, inaugurating the NABARD State Credit Seminar for 2025-26 here on Saturday, emphasised upon the need for increasing the bank credit for priority sectors in Odisha.

Singh Deo said the State Government is too actively supporting the priority sectors through various schemes and it is time for banks to increase the credit flow for private capital formation substantially in agriculture and allied sectors.



On the occasion, the State Focus Paper for Odisha was released, projecting an overall credit potential under priority sector at Rs 2,52,000 crore for the year 2025-26.

NABARD CGM Dr SKK Mishra said concerted effort is needed for increasing the credit flow to priority sectors with focus on agriculture and allied activities in particular. He stressed upon strengthen-

ing of PACS for building a strong ecosystem for business and income-generating activities.

Mishra further said the NABARD has been increasing its support for Odisha under rural infrastructure development, tribal development, watershed development and micro entrepreneurship development among SHG women and other developmental ac-

tivities, leading to growth in the rural livelihood.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said Odisha has been growing faster and better and banks have to improve the quality of lending. He advised all stakeholders that efforts have to be put to achieve the current year's target. He also said that start-ups need credit and banks have to come forward for this.

In Dhenkanal Man, daughter, grandson found dead in house

Yet to be known whether incident murder or suicide

PNS ■ DHENKANAL
Bodies of as many as three persons of a family were found hanging in a closed house at Chaulia Khamar village in Dhenkanal district on Saturday. The house was locked for three days.

The victims were identified as Shankarshan Das, his 40-year-old daughter Subarna and 16-year-old grandson

Santosh.

The discovery was made by Shankarshan's wife Puspanjali, who had been away at the time of the incident and found out the incident upon her return. The closure of the house for three days has heightened suspicions surrounding the deaths.

However, it was yet to be ascertained whether these were murder or suicide cases.

Upon being informed, the Sadar police reached the spot and started an investigation into the incident. The bodies were recovered and sent for

postmortem to find out the cause of death. Police are also questioning Puspanjali about the matter.

A pal of gloom descended in the area following the tragic incident. The villagers are in a state of shock. Police are appealing for anyone with information to come forward to aid the ongoing investigation.

As per sources, Shankarshan was a former railway employee. He was residing at his house in the village following his retirement. Subarna and Santosh were staying with him.

In Rourkela Youth attacked with swords, fired at

Rising gun culture triggers concern

PNS ■ ROURKELA

Once again Rourkela is on the news for the deteriorating law and order situation. This time a firing incident over a minor disagreement has sparked concern among the residents.

In the latest incident, a youth suffered gunshot wounds after being shot at by a group of anti-socials.

The injured, Samuel Sarkar was allegedly attacked by a group of five to six youths in

the Bondamunda area with sharp weapons and who fired two rounds at him. However, the youth has sustained no bullet injury.

"I was doing exercise when two groups came and started an argument among themselves I asked them to sort things between them outside. Later, five to six youths came and attacked me with swords and later fired at me," said Sarkar. The Bondamunda police have launched an investigation into the incident. A team has been constituted and is conducting raids across various suspected hideouts.

A forensic team conducted

a detailed examination of the crime scene, where they recovered empty shells from the spot.

Several youths have been detained for questioning in connection with the incident. Authorities are investigating the source of the firearm and exploring any potential relationship between the attackers and the victim.

Local residents alleged that a similar firing incident was reported some two months back in the Traffic Gate area and the culprits are yet to be apprehended. However, the rising gun crimes in the city have triggered concern.

In Jagatsinghpur Miscreants loot Rs 40K from patient's kin

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

In a bizarre incident, two unidentified miscreants looted Rs 40,000 and a gold chain from a patient's kin at gunpoint at College Chhak here on Thursday night.

Reports said that the patient was identified as Kalandi Charana Khuntia, a resident of Singipur village. His condition grew critical while being under treatment at the district headquarters hospital. So he was referred him to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. The patient's kin

arranged a private vehicle shifting him to SCB, Cuttack and they were proceeding to Cuttack in a car.

All a sudden two scooter-borne miscreants intercepted the car at College Chhak. They overpowered Swatik Ranjan Khunti, the patient's son and his companion and snatched away cash and a gold chain from Swastik at gunpoint and fled from the spot. Meanwhile, based on the complaint lodged by Swastik police have registered a case and launched a probe taking clues from the local CCTV footage, police said.

Schemes for labourers Chariot launched for awareness in JSpur



PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

With a view to create awareness among labourers in connection with their social security benefits and legal knowledge, a chariot was launched at a function held at the Collector's office ground on Thursday.

Collector J Sonal flagged off the chariot and spoke about the manifold labour benefit schemes especially meant for Nirman Sramika coming under

unorganised sectors, besides migrant workers. The chariot will travel to every block and municipality area of the district and the adjacent villages and make wide publicity about the schemes. District Labour Officer Smruti Rekha Nayak, Child Protection Officer Kanhu Charan Rout and Assistant Labour Officer Santosh Kumar Mohanty spoke on the occasion, while District Labour Officer Siva Narayan Sahoo coordinated the event.

JSpur youth gets 20 yrs in jail for raping minor

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

The Fast Track Court [FTC] Jagatsinghpur sentenced a youth to undergo 20 years in jail and pay a fine of Rs 20,000 on the charge of kidnapping and raping a 16-year-old girl.

The youth identified as Jiban Jyoti Sahoo alias Samira, a resident of the Balikuda area, on June 16, 2020, had kidnapped the victim girl from the village and kept her in his relative's house for a few days allegedly maintaining a sexual relationship. Later, the girl had been repeatedly raped and physically tortured by the accused youth while residing

in a rental house.

After passing six months, the victim girl had reached her native village and had narrated the incident to her parents. Based on the complaint lodged by the victim's mother, Balikuda police had arrested the youth and forwarded him to court. Later, a trial of the case was taken up in FTC, Jagatsinghpur.

FTC Judge Ajaya Kumar Mohanty delivered the verdict on Friday after relying upon 19 witnesses, and pieces of evidence. Moreover, the court directed the DLSA Jagatsinghpur to pay Rs 5 lakh compensation to the victim girl.

In Deogarh, Sambalpur Classroom, teacher crunch hits scores of schools

Students study on verandah; teachers take multiple classes in one room

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR

The students of Tilebani Primary School in Deogarh district are studying in the verandah for the lack of classrooms in the school. Also, due to the lack of a dining hall in the school, the students are found eating food under the trees or in the open.

Sources said there are only three rooms for around 169 students from class 1 to class 5 in the school, who are ad-

justed in the existing classrooms and also made to sit on the verandah.

In-charge headmistress of the school Tamasha Dehury, said, "There are rooms, but those are not handed over to us. It's been four years since the construction work was completed."

Cluster Resources Centre Coordinator, Tilebani, Ashok Kumar Sahu said, "After the complaint, a dining hall is being prepared for the school which is under process. The construction has just started. If that is constructed, the students can easily have their midday meal."

Collector of Deogarh, Kabindra Kumar Sahoo, said,

To popularise research OWOT Vigyan Rath flagged off at CSIR-IMMT

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT), Bhubaneswar, flagged off the Vigyan Rath, designed to popularize 'one week one theme' (OWOT) research activities among the people of India.

The Vigyan Rath was officially inaugurated by Secretary, DSIR, and Director General CSIR Dr N Kalaiselvi in presence of Director, CSIR-IMMT Dr Ramanuj Narayan and I Director (Operations), OMC Limited Sabyasachi Mohanty besides other dignitaries of CSIR and IMMT.

Speaking on this occasion Dr Kalaiselvi said, "The Kalyan Rath will travel through schools, colleges, and communities in Odisha, Jamshepur, Jharkhand, and neighbouring States. Over



three weeks, it will disseminate scientific knowledge and inspire citizens to contribute to India's growth. The Kalyan Rath aims to foster a culture of science and innovation, aligning with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047."

The Vigyan Rath has been designed as per the thematic area of Research and Development, Mining, Minerals, Metals and Materials (4M) theme. About 25 CSIR laboratories

across the country are working under the theme for research, innovation and technology development towards sustainable utilization of mineral and metal resources of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Director, CSIR-IMMT Dr Ramanuja Narayan said, "A team comprising scientists, technical staff, students along with Vigyan Rath will apprise the general public about the

importance and achievements of R and D in the 4M theme area. During the visit, CSIR-CGCRI Kolkata and CSIR-CMERI Durgapur will coordinate nearby areas of West Bengal and CSIR-CIMFR, Dhanbad and CSIR-NML, Jamshepur and adjoining areas of Jharkhand."

The DG CSIR also inaugurated the newly renovated and modernized health centre of CSIR-IMMT campus, which is named as AROGYAM.

Other research facilities like RP Das centre for Hydro Bio and Electrometallurgy, Additive and Speciality Chemicals Lab and Solar photo-reactor pilot plant were also inaugurated. Foundation stones were laid for the Platinum Group of Elements (PGE) Pilot plant and the solvent extraction pilot plant for rare earth element separation.

To boost quality of education Rs 104-cr infra dev plan for 90 private aided colleges

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government has approved a significant infrastructure development project for 90 private aided (grant-in-aid) colleges across the State, allocating Rs 104 crore for this initiative. The initiative aims to enhance the educational facilities and learning environments in these institutions, informed Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj.

The development works include constructing, repairing, and renovating hostels, libraries, laboratories, admin-

istrative halls and multi-purpose halls. The project may also cover enhancing digital infrastructure, which is crucial in modern educational settings. The funds will be sanctioned in a phased manner with 33% being released in the first phase.

Subsequent funds will be released after the submission of utilization certificates of the first phase work. The Minister said the project is part of a broader effort to improve the quality of higher education in Odisha by focusing on infrastructure development in government-

aided private colleges. This move is expected to benefit a large number of students enrolled in these institutions, providing them with better facilities and resources for their academic pursuits.

By investing in these 90 aided colleges, the government is taking a significant step towards equalising educational opportunities across different types of institutions in the State.

The government's initiative aligns with broader national efforts to improve higher education infrastructure in India. This infrastructure develop-

ment project could have far-reaching implications for Odisha's education sector. By improving facilities in aided colleges, the State is likely to see an increase in the quality and competitiveness of these institutions.

This could also lead to higher enrolment rates, improved retention of students and faculty, and potentially better placement outcomes for graduates. Moreover, such investments often act as catalysts for further development, potentially attracting additional funding from various sources in the future.

Non-disclosure of assets in alimony cases: HC displeased

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Orissa High Court has taken a firm stance against non-compliance with the Supreme Court's guidelines on asset disclosure in maintenance cases. In a recent ruling, Justice Gourishankar Satapathy expressed displeasure over a Family Court's failure to adhere to these guidelines.

The High Court emphasised that when principles outlined in a Supreme

Court decision are mandated to be followed, lower courts are obligated to comply. The High Court's stance came after the petitioner husband with monthly salary of Rs 42,000 was directed to pay Rs 41,000 per month.

The counsel appearing for the petitioner-husband conveyed to the court that neither of the parties has filed any affidavit disclosing their respective assets as mandatorily required by the ruling of the

apex court in the landmark case of Rajnesh vs Neha (2020).

"When the principle culled out in a decision is directed to be followed mandatorily, the Court concerned is under obligation to follow such guidelines, but in this case, the learned trial Court having not followed the provisions of the guidelines issued in Rajnesh (supra), the matter is required to be remitted back for fresh disposal in accordance with law by complying the guide-

lines of the Rajnesh (supra)," Justice Satapathy observed.

"It is however made clear that the learned trial Court while adjudicating the matter afresh may receive the disclosure affidavits from the parties and provide opportunity to lead evidence on the very aspect of the disclosure affidavits by taking into consideration the mandatory guidelines of the Apex Court in Rajnesh (supra)," the court clarified.

IN BRIEF

PPA Hospital holds cancer awareness programme

Paradip: In order to spread awareness on cancer and its preventive measure, an awareness programme "Common cancers of male and female and uses of vaccine as preventive measures" was held at the PPA Hospital in association with the HCG Panda Cancer Hospital, Cuttack. Dr BB Das, CMO, PPA, graced the occasion. Local women were sensitised about the causes of breast as well as cervical cancer, the social stigma, importance of self-examination and the need for early detection and treatment.



was held at the PPA Hospital in association with the HCG Panda Cancer Hospital, Cuttack. Dr BB Das, CMO, PPA, graced the occasion. Local women were sensitised about the causes of breast as well as cervical cancer, the social stigma, importance of self-examination and the need for early detection and treatment.

SVM College 62th foundation day held

Jagatsinghpur: The 62nd foundation day of SVM College, Jagatsinghpur was celebrated on Wednesday. College management president ADM, Jagatsinghpur Sambit Kumar Rout chaired the meeting. Jagatsinghpur MLA and college alumnus



Amarendra Das attended as chief guest and recollected memories as a former student. He assured to fulfill several demands, mainly establishment of a girls' hostel, construction of additional classrooms and provision of sports apparatus. Among others, Collector J Sonal, SP BS Udgata, Municipality Chairperson Archana Singh and Biswajit Nayak spoke. Some former college principals and staffs were felicitated on the occasion.

Leader VVRN Rao paid glowing tributes at B'pur

Brahmapur: VVRN Rao, a guiding light for numerous organisations, including Jaycees, Rotary, Vasavi Club, Andhra Vhasa Vibaradhan Samajam, Ganjam Chamber of Commerce, Vikasam and many more, was paid last tributes by cross sections of people in Brahmapur. A key architect of the "Form For Ganjam" movement, Rao played a pivotal role in advocating for an IIM in Brahmapur, utilising the Ganjam Chamber of Commerce platform. After undergoing open-heart surgery at Apollo Hospital, Visakhapatnam, on Monday, Rao passed away on Thursday midnight.



Missing Baleswar girl found lying on AP road

Baleswar: A missing 22-year-old girl of the Soro area in Baleswar district was found lying in a critical condition on a road in Andhra Pradesh. The girl, a native of village Adia, had been missing for four days and her parents had lodged a missing complaint with the Soro police. Some commuters found her on the road and informed police. A team of the Soro police after reaching the spot admitted the girl to a local hospital and detained a youth of Bhadrak area in this connection. Further investigation was ongoing.

Candle march for Pulwama martyrs in Brahmapur

Brahmapur: A candle march was organised for the Pulwama attack martyrs near Gandhi Statute, Bramhapur and also a condolence meeting was held and tributes were paid to the de-



parted souls who sacrificed their lives in the Pulwama bomb blast. In this programme, Prabhakar Sahu, M Venketaramana, Bhismacharya Choudhary, Suresh Ch Tripathy, Md Aslam, Sabita Sahukar, Vasude Sahukar, M Ram Babu, Adinarayana, A Suresh, Somanath Sahu and others were present.

In Brahmapur 2 chain snatchers held; looted items recovered

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Town police here cracked two gold chain snatching cases by arresting two persons after analysing CCTV footage and technical data on Friday.

The two arrested were identified Das Rabi (28) of Gandapalli in Aska in Ganjam district and Suman Pradhan (36) of Dasamania, Patra Sahi in Jajpur. The duo had snatched two chains from P Nagalazmi (40) of Golapalli Street near Chukalama

Temple under BN Pur police station and K Laxmi (43) of Gandhi Nagar, 3rd Line Extension under Brahmapur Town PS and sped away from the spot by their motorcycle.

Police recovered one gold chain intact and another that had been melted. The molten gold was retrieved and returned to the victims. A total of three chains weighing 55 grams and 6.450 grams of molten gold were recovered and handed over to four victims. The victims expressed satisfaction with the police's swift action.

In Subarnapur DHH Woman dies due to 'wrong' injection

PNS ■ SONEPUR

A case of death due to an alleged wrong medication has been reported from the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in Subarnapur on Friday.

The incident occurred after the woman's condition allegedly worsened following the administration of an injection. The deceased was identified as Anupama Patel, a resident of Jannhapank area in Boudh district.

Following the death, her family members accused the

hospital staffs, particularly the doctor, of making a medication error and the attending nurses of negligence.

According to sources, tensions flared at night when the family raised the allegations. To maintain law and order, two platoons of police forces were deployed at the hospital. However, the hospital authorities refuted the allegations and said the injections are supplied by the State Government and other patients have been administered the same injections. But they are all recovering.



"The bill has been passed for the finishing of the building. It is a case of misappropriation of funds, and an investigation has been launched to find who is accountable for this. In addition to that, the building will be ready within three months, and students can easily avail

themselves of the space." This is just a single case; in the rural areas of Deogarh, parents of the students do protest in front of schools and lock the school main gate as the schools do not have adequate number of teachers and the existing ones are on

deputation or are on training for weeks.

Similar scenes are found in many schools of Sambalpur. Due to the lack of teachers in the school, the teachers are in charge of two to three classes. Hence, students of two to three classes are made to sit in one class, as it will be easy for the teachers to manage multiple classes at a time.

For example, in the school of Station Para, a slum under Sambalpur Municipal Corporation, the students are made to sit in one class. Multiple class students sit in one class for the convenience of teachers. There are four teachers for the primary and upper primary classes in the school.

In another school of Tileimal under the Jamankira block in the Sambalpur district, similar incidents have been found. Two teachers are handling classes from class one to five. Due to the lack of classrooms and teachers, students are made to sit in one place. Classes are also taken in the verandah.

When contacted, District Education Officer, Sambalpur, Laxman Bhoi said, "The appointment of teachers will be made by the government at all Odisha level; so, it is not in our hand. However, to handle the ongoing problems, the teachers are asked to manage two classes if there are less than 30 students in each class."

CBSE exams for Classes 10, 12 begin

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) exams for Classes 10 and 12 began on Saturday, with more than 42 Lakh students set to take the tests at over 7,800 centres across the country and abroad. According to board officials, a total of 24.12 Lakh Class-10 students will take the test in 84 subjects, while more than 17.88 Lakh students will appear in the Class-12 exams across 120 subjects. The exams are scheduled to be conducted at 7,842 centres in India and 26 abroad. On the first day of the exams, the Class 10 students appeared for the English (Communicative) and English (Language and Literature) papers, while the Class-12 students appeared in the Entrepreneurship exam. "The CBSE board exams for Classes 10 and 12 have started. Today, the Class-10 English and Class-12 Entrepreneurship exams were



held. The Class-10 exam took place at 7,780 centres, with over 23.86 Lakh students appearing, while the Class-12 exam was conducted at 995 centres with around 23,000 students," CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said.

"The exams were organised smoothly. I hope all the students reached their exam centres with enthusiasm and were able to take the tests in a positive environment," he added. Bhardwaj said the CBSE has ensured that all necessary guidelines and

security measures are in place to maintain the integrity of the examination process. "Schools and exam centres have been briefed on strict protocols to facilitate a fair and seamless examination experience. The CBSE had organised a live webcast on

Friday in the presence of school principals from Delhi-NCR, outlining the essential exam guidelines for the schools and stakeholders," he added. The Class-10 exams are scheduled to end on March 18, while the Class-12 exams will conclude on April 4. The CBSE started its annual counselling service ahead of the board exams to alleviate examination-related stress and support the students as they prepare for their theory exams. "A team of 66 trained professionals, principals, counsellors, special educators from CBSE-affiliated schools and psychologists will offer voluntary support to the students. The services are available from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm from Monday to Saturday," Bhardwaj said. "Fifty-one counsellors are based in India while 15 counsellors will connect from Nepal, Japan, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates to guide the students," he added.

Congress questions India's need for F35 fighter jets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala on Saturday raised several questions on whether the country required expensive fighter jets like F35 aircraft from the US and if security experts and armed forces were consulted in the national interest. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit, India and the US unveiled an ambitious plan to sign a new 10-year defence partnership and pursue co-production of key weapons and platforms with President Donald Trump announcing that Washington would increase sales of military hardware to New Delhi by millions of dollars including possible supply of F-35 stealth fighter jets. In multiple posts on X, Surjewala claimed there are many flaws in the F 35 aircraft and many accidents have happened, with some calling



them "junk" and others "useless". "There is a lot of discussion about Prime Minister Modi buying F 35 fighter aircraft from America, but did the Modi government consider these aspects in the interest of the country," he asked. The cost of flying an F 35 fighter aircraft is \$35,000 per hour, i.e. ₹28,00,000 per hour, he said, adding F 35 is the most expensive fighter aircraft in the world and the cost of one aircraft is approximately USD 110 million, or ₹968 Crore. "Does the Modi government think that the cost of Rs 28 lakh per hour is right for India and was the opinion of the Indian Air Force and defence experts taken in this regard," Surjewala asked. "Prime Minister Modi is buying F 35 fighter aircraft from America, but did the Modi government consider these aspects in national interest before taking a unilateral decision to buy F 35 aircraft at the behest of President Trump. Does the Indian Air Force want to buy F 35 fighter aircraft in accordance with the country's defence interests? Was the Air Force's opinion taken?" the Congress leader asked in another post in Hindi.

Kerala nurses council to bar ragging accused from continuing their studies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Thiruvananthapuram/New Delhi

Amid widespread outrage over the brutal ragging incident at the Government Nursing College, the Kerala Nurses and Midwives Council (KNMC) on Saturday decided to bar all five accused students from continuing their studies. A council meeting convened here observed that the accused did not deserve to complete their studies or enter the service profession. The council further noted that those entering the nursing profession should be humane and compassionate—whereas the accused displayed cruelty toward their juniors—behaviour that is unacceptable in any circumstance. A council member described the Kottayam ragging incident as an "extremely cruel act" and said it cannot be justified under any circumstances. "We will never justify the incident. What we want to emphasise is



that allowing such individuals into the nursing profession would be a disaster," said Usha Devi, a council member. She said the Council would soon inform the concerned authorities of its decision. With this decision, the accused students can no longer continue their studies in Kerala, she added. The Council's ruling came a day after the state Health Minister indicated that strict action would be taken against those involved in the brutal incident. On Friday, the department suspended Principal Sulekha A T and Assistant

Professor/Assistant Warden-in-Charge of the student hostel, Ajeesh P Mani, pending an inquiry for allegedly failing to prevent ragging and effectively intervene in the matter. The hostel's housekeeper-cum-security staff was also ordered to be removed immediately, according to a statement issued by the Health Minister's office late Friday night. The action was taken following an inquiry conducted by the Director of Medical Education, as per the instructions of Health Minister Veena George, the statement added.

Delhi HC seeks CBIC's stand on betel nuts for customs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has sought the stand of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on a plea for resolving the issue of alleged mis-classification of betel nuts for the purpose of customs duty. The petitioner, a customs house agent, claimed the ambiguity on whether betel nuts would attract 100 per cent or 50 per cent basic customs duty has allegedly resulted in large-scale mis-classification, enabling duty evasion and causing significant financial harm to the government. The court was informed by the petitioner's advocate that complaints have also been filed with the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and other higher government authorities for action to be taken against the officers who are allegedly engaging in large scale duty evasion on the basis of this ambiguity in spite the



clarification provided by the Supreme Court. A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Dharmesh Sharma noted that despite advance copies of petition being served to the authorities, their counsel have not been given any instructions. The court granted time to the counsel for the respondents to take instructions in the matter and listed it for further hearing on February 27.

The court said if no decision has already been taken on the complaints, it should be taken on an "early date". Advocate Kamini Lau, representing petitioner Bajrang Lal Sharma, said the issue has created enormous difficulties for customs house agents like the petitioner as no decision has been taken despite repeated complaints against the senior officials. The plea said the petitioner, along with several customs

house agents, are facing repeated harassment from a group of customs officers, even as the National Customs Targeting Centre (NCTC) received multiple complaints regarding the alleged mis-declaration and mis-classification of imported betel nuts under various names such as "boiled supari, API supari, chikni supari, and flavoured supari", being wrongly classified. It claimed this mis-

classification allowed importers to evade the 100 per cent basic customs duty (BCD) by paying only 50 per cent, and also bypass the Minimum Import Price conditions set by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade. The plea said the petitioner submitted a complaint to the CVC in March 2022, seeking urgent intervention against senior custom officer for his alleged involvement in duty evasion in collusion with others as the ongoing clearance of goods through mis-classification was causing significant revenue loss. However, the respondent departments failed to take any effective action, thereby allowing the duty evasion scam to continue unchecked, it claimed. The petition has arrayed the Centre through Ministry of Finance, CBIC, CVC and the Directorate General of Vigilance, Customs and Central Excise as respondents.

CIABC urges government to curb dumping of imported spirits

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) on Saturday urged the government to impose stringent measures to curb dumping of imported spirits and ensure greater market access for domestic products. The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) said the Indian liquor manufacturers are not against reduction in import duty, though they have sought the import duty cuts in a phased manner. India on February 13 slashed import duty on bourbon whiskey to 100 per cent. It is mainly imported from the US. The confederation "has urged the government to address the concerns of the Indian companies and ensure a level-playing field in FTA (free



trade agreement) negotiations and set in stringent effective measures to check and curb dumping of imported spirits and seeking better international access for Indian alcoholic products which face several non-tariff restrictions at present," it said in a statement. It has also requested the states to withdraw excise duty concessions given to imported liquor in view of reduction in customs duty.

The government needs to safeguard the interests of Indian liquor manufacturers while deciding on issues related to customs duty cuts and other concessions under FTAs, CIABC Director General Anant S Iyer said. "Though we have already recommended to the government to cut basic customs duty on spirits over a period of 10 years, we also want the government to ensure better international

market access especially the Western countries and safeguard interests of Indian companies against any dumping of products through transfer price mechanism at lower prices specifically for India," Iyer said. He added non-tariff barriers imposed by other countries prevent a vast majority of Indian products being sold in the Western markets. "We also want these markets to recognise Indian whiskeys at par with other global products," he said, adding the industry needs to be protected as there is always the fear of cheap imports in spirits and wines eroding the domestic industry. The alcoholic beverage industry contributes over Rs 3 lakh crore to the exchequer of states apart from adding central government's revenue in terms of customs duty and GST on a host of inputs.

India needs strong production base, not empty words: Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said while India has the talent, it needs a strong production base, and not empty words, to build industrial prowess in new technology to give its youth jobs. In a post on X, Gandhi highlighted how China has started producing drones which are revolutionising warfare across the world, saying India needs to develop a strategy to become competitive in this area. "Drones have revolutionised warfare, combining batteries, motors and optics to manoeuvre and communicate on the battlefield in unprecedented ways. But drones are not just one technology -- they are bottom-up innovations produced by a strong industrial system. "Unfortunately, PM Modi has



failed to grasp this. While he delivers 'teleprompter' speeches on AI, our competitors are mastering new technologies. India needs a strong production base, not empty words," he said in the post, taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "India has immense talent, scale and drive. We must have a clear vision and build real industrial prowess to give our youth jobs and lead India into the future," Gandhi added.

The Congress leader also tagged a nine-minute video on drone technology with the post, saying India has the talent and engineering skills to develop such technology for the future. He also referred to his speech in the Lok Sabha while speaking on the Motion of Thanks to the president's address, where he talked about new technology. In the video, Gandhi is heard saying that drones have

completely transformed the way wars are fought. "But drones are not just a technology -- they are a grassroots and small-scale innovation being produced by a robust industrial system. "Drones have diminished the importance of tanks, artillery and even aircraft carriers, bringing air power to the platoon level and reshaping intelligence and precision on the battlefield. But this revolution is not just limited to warfare -- it is also about industry, AI and next-generation technology," he said. "Unfortunately, PM Modi has failed to understand this. While he is busy giving speeches on AI by simply reading from a 'teleprompter', our competitors are mastering new technologies. India needs a strong production base, not empty speeches," Gandhi said.

Textbooks not challenge for intelligence, be smarter than smartphone: Sadhguru

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Textbooks are not a challenge for intelligence and stress means the brain is not being oiled enough, spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev said, as he shared mantras for playful learning and avoiding stress ahead of exams with students as part of the prime minister's latest 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' episode aired on Saturday. Sadhguru told students that they have to be smarter than their smartphones. He also shared tips on how to avoid overthinking during a special session of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' -- an annual event in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with students appearing for board

examinations. In a shift from the traditional town hall format, Modi preferred a more informal setting this time and took students to Delhi's iconic Sunder Nursery for his annual interaction. Eminent personalities such as boxer MC Mary Kom and Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone have also shared their experiences and knowledge on key aspects of life and learning in different episodes of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha'. Next in the series are Bollywood actors Vikrant Massey and Bhumi Pednekar sharing tips on cultivating positivity, managing negative thoughts, and tackling exam stress with confidence. "For #ExamWarriors, among the biggest allies during

exam time is positivity. Tomorrow's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' episode delves into this topic and we have @VikrantMassey and @bhumipednekar share their insights," PM Modi wrote on X. Teaching students how to practise meditation, Sadhguru said intelligence is not about usefulness. "Intelligence creates a profundeness of experience of life. If you feel stressed, it means the brain is not being oiled well," he said. "Your textbook is not a challenge for your intelligence, no matter who you are. No matter if you have not done well in school till now, I'm telling you for your intelligence that textbooks are not a challenge.



"You're unnecessarily making it difficult for yourself by approaching it in a certain way. Why can't you learn playfully? If you make it playful, your textbook will not be a challenge," Sadhguru added. The Isha Foundation chief

told students that they have to be smarter than their smartphones, while urging them to not treat exams as a "challenge to their intelligence." "If you look at the grass or that motorcycle, you should think what is the physics,

math and chemistry of it. Education gives you fundamentals and eventually an access to life. To find this access, one aspect is active dynamic intelligence," he said. Responding to a student's query on addiction to social media and phone, he said that a person should decide how to use a smartphone, not the other way round. He also said that there is no such thing as overthinking, as one must think beyond to be able to do something worthwhile. "You may call it stress or anxiety, but the problem is that you don't know how to keep your mind aligned. What is not well aligned will cause friction, further causing stress," Sadhguru said. Emphasising the power of

meditation, the spiritual leader said studies have shown that when the 'Shambhavi Mahamudra' is practised, a large part of the brain lights up. "This is what needs to happen, that everything is lit up. The more you activate your intelligence, the more access you have to everything that you see. If your body is well-exercised, you can function better. Then why is that not true with your mental faculties?" he asked. Sadhguru also warned against comparing the intelligence of people. "Am I as intelligent as this person or that person? There is no such thing. It's a farce that's been spread in the world. Everybody can sparkle and do things that others cannot imagine. Only

thing is, because there is no striving, that sparkle doesn't happen," he told students. Nutrition and health experts Shonali Sabherwal, Rujuta Diwekar and Revant Himatsingka; YouTuber Gaurav Chaudhary popularly known as 'TechGuruji' and Radhika Gupta, MD and CEO, Edelweiss Mutual Fund are among the other guests who have been part of the programme so far. The first edition of the interactive programme with school and college students was held at Delhi's Talkatora Stadium in 2018. Its seventh edition was held in a town hall format at the Bharat Mandapam last year, involving participants from around the country and abroad.

Digital lost and found centers reunite 20,000 at Mahakumbh

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Mahakumbh 2025 has set a historic milestone with its grandeur and an unprecedented gathering of over 50 crore devotees. To ensure the safety and smooth management of this massive event, the Yogi government has introduced several groundbreaking initiatives. One of the most impactful measures has been the establishment of digital lost and found centers, designed to quickly reunite lost devotees with their families. This initiative has already helped reconnect over 20,000 missing individuals with their loved ones, proving to be a crucial support system for the event. Notably, the government has successfully reunited 20,144 people who had been separated from their families in this year's Mahakumbh. A large number of those reunited were women. The police also played a key role by helping devotees from various states and even from Nepal



Rush of devotees to take a holy dip at the Sangam during the Mahakumbh Mela in Prayagraj PTI

reconnect with their loved ones. Notably, during the Amrit Snan on Mauni Amavasya (January 28, 29, and 30), the digital lost and found centers managed the crowd efficiently and reunited all 8,725 lost devotees with their families. Similarly, during the

Makar Sankranti Amrit snan (January 13, 14, and 15), 598 devotees were brought back to their families, and during Basant Panchami Amrit Snan (February 2, 3, and 4), the centers helped 813 more devotees in reuniting with their families.

Apart from these major bathing festivals, the digital centers have successfully helped over 10,000 more people reunite with their families on regular days and other auspicious occasions. On December 7, 2024, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inau-

gured the digital lost and found centers, ensuring a hassle-free experience for devotees attending the Mahakumbh. He directed the police administration and fair authorities to ensure that no devotee faces any inconvenience. In line with this directive, 10 digital lost and found centers were set up at key locations, including Sangam, Jhansi, Arail, Phaphamau, and sectors 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 21, 23, and 24, as well as near Prayagraj Junction Railway Station. These centers are equipped with advanced AI-based facial recognition technology, machine learning, and multilingual support, enabling the quick reunification of lost individuals with their families. The Uttar Pradesh Police, administrative officials, and various volunteer organizations played a crucial role in the functioning of these centers. UNICEF and several other non-governmental organizations also contributed actively to this initiative.

Akhilesh urges UP government to extend Maha Kumbh duration

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has urged the Uttar Pradesh government to extend the duration of the ongoing Maha Kumbh, citing the overwhelming influx of devotees still hoping to participate. Yadav claimed that in previous years, the Maha Kumbh and Kumbh Mela spanned 75 days, whereas the current schedule is significantly shorter. "Even now, many people wish to visit the Maha Kumbh but are unable to do so. In such a situation, the government should extend its duration," Yadav said. Visuals circulating on social media depict overcrowded trains, congested roads, and massive crowds making their way to the pilgrimage site. Earlier this week, roads leading to the Maha Kumbh Mela witnessed severe traffic congestion stretching for kilometers, while the Prayagraj Sangam railway station was temporarily shut down due to the overwhelming rush of pilgrims. Yadav also accused the state



SP President Akhilesh Yadav during a press conference in Lucknow PTI

government of concealing the true number of deaths caused by a stampede at the Maha Kumbh last month. However, government officials have not yet responded to his allegations. The Maha Kumbh, considered the world's largest spiritual gathering, commenced on January 13 and is scheduled to conclude on February 26, coinciding with Maha Shivaratri. According to state government data, over 50.14 crore devotees have taken a holy dip at the

Sangam as of Saturday evening. Akhilesh Yadav also took aim at the BJP-led central government, alleging that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill tabled in Parliament was an attempt to divert public attention from pressing issues and mask the government's economic failures. "The government has introduced this legislation to engage people in unnecessary debates and distract them from real issues," he alleged.

J and K government fires three for terror links

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory administration on Saturday terminated the services of three government employees including a jailed policeman for their alleged involvement in terror-related activities. So far services of 79 government employees have been terminated by the Lieutenant Governor (LG) in the Union Territory for their terror links in the past few years. The sacked employees have been identified as police constable Firdous Ahmad Bhat, government school teacher Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, and orderly in the forest department Nisar Ahmad Khan who was earlier arrested in connection with the killing of a National Conference minister in 2000. Reacting strongly to the fresh termination orders of government employees Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the law says everyone is innocent until anything is proven. "They should be given a chance to speak in the court and

if they cannot prove their innocence, only then appropriate action should be taken." The officials said the Lieutenant Governor invoked Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution to terminate the services of the three employees after an investigation by law enforcement and intelligence agencies established their terror links. According to official sources, the dismissed policeman, who was arrested in May last year, was initially appointed as a Special Police Officer (SPO) in 2005 and subsequently promoted to constable in 2011. Currently lodged in Kot Bhalwal Jail, Bhat was posted at a sensitive position in the Electronic Surveillance Unit in the J-K Police but started working for terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). However, he got exposed when two terrorists - Waseem Shah and Adnan Beigh - were arrested in Anantnag with a pistol and a hand grenade as they were planning to attack non-local civilians and tourists, the officials said. During the interrogation, Bhat

revealed his sinister design and led to the recovery of a sizable quantity of arms including pistols, ammunition and explosives from his residential quarter in Police Housing Colony in Srinagar and a newly constructed house in Mattan, Anantnag. According to the official sources, Firdous Ahmad Bhat used his police constable cover, to transport arms, ammunition, and explosives for terrorists and investigation also revealed that he was also working for Hizbul Mujahideen's Commander Khurshed Dar and LeT terrorist Hamza Bhai and Abu Zarrar besides Jutt. "He not only provided classified information about security forces movement, collection, storage and delivery of arms ammunition but also guided terror attacks," the officials said. They said he was also found involved in an attack on a police party in 2020 which led to the killing of sub-inspector Ashraf Bhat, an attack on a group of tourists in Pahalagam on May 18 last year that left two persons

injured. Ashraf Bhat, a resident of Reasi who was appointed as 'Rehbar-e-Taleem' Teacher in 2008 and later regularised in June 2013, was affiliated with LeT. "For many years his activities were undetected but eventually came to light in 2022 and he was arrested and currently lodged in district jail, Reasi," the officials said. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that Bhat's handler was the most wanted LeT terrorist Mohd Qasim, who is based in Pakistan. "LeT found him to be very useful because as a teacher Bhat was best placed to radicalise youth and carry out terror activities. He helped LeT to raise finances for terror activities and coordinated transport of arms, ammunition and explosives," they said. Khan, who joined the forest department in 1996 as a helper and currently posted as an orderly at the forest range office, Verinag (Anantnag), was found working for Hizbul Mujahideen, the officials said.

Travel advisory against Assam hinders foreign investment: Himanta

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that travel advisory against the northeastern region by several countries is a major challenge in attracting investments, even as the state gears up for a mega business summit here later this month. Sarma said he has requested the countries to view Assam in isolation and not club all the North Eastern states together. He said talks are already underway with Japan, Australia and other nations to persuade them to withdraw the adverse advisory as the local government is pushing for viewing Assam "in isolation" from the other states of the region. Addressing a press conference in the run-up to Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit, Sarma said, "Most embassies have marked Assam in



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma File Photo

'grey' and have a statutory warning for its citizens against visiting Assam, as the state is clubbed together as 'North East'. Removing these advisories is topmost priority for us." He said countries like Japan and Australia are being persuaded to change this advisory, with a team from the Asian country

already here to look into the matter while an Australian delegation is scheduled to reach shortly. There is no adverse situation in Assam, and all stakeholders, including government, media and public, have to be together to drive home this point, he asserted. "As Chief Minister of Assam, I

cannot influence other states. What I am doing is asking them (foreign nations), to view Assam in isolation," he added. "To attract foreign investment, the travel advisory has to be withdrawn. And at the same time, we also have to show them our strengths, like skilling options for our human resources, peace and stability - politically, economically and in law and order," he said. Non-availability of vast tracts of land needed for setting up big industries is also a problem for the state, which the government is working on to address, the CM added. "In spite of these limitations, we are in the process of ensuring foreign investment this time. And if we can address these issues, more investment will come. The people have a major role in taking forward the spade work being done by the government through the upcoming Summit," he maintained.

Telangana Congress slams claim on Reddy Government's collapse



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress on Saturday condemned former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao's statement that the Revanth Reddy government will collapse in six months in the State. Party spokesman Bandi

Sudhakar Goud in a statement said Dayakar Rao's statement that the Congress government formed with a full majority of MLAs in accordance with democracy will lose is an indication of his thirst for power. "Isn't it true that the then TRS, which was like a mother who supported and raised them, betrayed TDP and merged the TDP MLAs into the LP, their caste relatives? Since Dayakar Rao is a master of fraud conspiracies and tempting MLAs, we are suspicious of his movements and have filed a written complaint with the Telangana State DGP demanding a thorough investigation into this matter," Goud said.

BJP backs new faces for Municipal elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has expressed confidence in new faces while selecting candidates for upcoming Municipal Elections. Talking about the former councillors of the BJP, only five have secured tickets. Out of a total of 36 wards, new candidates will contest in 31 wards. Earlier in the day, the BJP announced the names of ward councillor candidates for the MCG elections. Rajrani Malhotra will fight on the party's mayor ticket which was announced on Friday night. According to the list, among the former councillors, Brahm Yadav from Ward 9, Kuldeep Yadav from Ward 11, Aarti Yadav from Ward 24, Anoop Singh from Ward 25 and Dharambir from Ward 28 have BJP tickets.

At the same time, many old faces contested the 2017 elections as independents and this time BJP has given them tickets. Madhu Batra, wife of former senior deputy mayor Yashpal Batra from Ward 30, won the 2017 corporation election as an independent candidate. Dilip Kumar Sahni has got a ticket from Ward 31. In the 2017 elections, his wife Rajni contested as an independent candidate and defeated Geeta Rani of BJP by 2,984 votes. Sheetal Bagdi from Ward 33 and Rekha Saini, wife of former councillor Dinesh Saini from Ward 36, have been given tickets by the BJP. Dinesh Saini contested the 2017 corporation election as an independent candidate from Ward 8 and won by 98 votes. Sheetal Bagdi also contested as an independent and won. In the 2017, MC elections, 14 candidates won on BJP tickets. But this time the tickets of

many have been refused. Shankutala Yadav contested the election from Ward 2 on a BJP ticket and won by 2010 votes. But this time the party did not give her a ticket. Similarly, Ravinder Yadav from Ward 3 secured his victory by 1249 votes on a BJP ticket, but this time he lagged in the race for the ticket. Former Mayor Vimal Yadav's wife, Rimple Yadav, got a ticket from Ward 5, and she won by 906 votes. This time she did not get a BJP ticket. Ashwini Sharma from Ward 23 and Sunita from Ward 33 were victorious on BJP tickets, but this time they could not get the ticket. In the 2017 elections, BJP won 14 out of a total of 35 seats. Congress did not contest the election on its symbol, due to which several independent candidates won. Many of them later joined the BJP. After this, the BJP got a total of 27 members in the corporation house.

SC's Justice Oka pulls up Maharashtra government for poor infrastructure

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Supreme Court (SC) Justice Abhay Oka on Saturday criticised the Maharashtra government for lack of basic infrastructure for the judiciary, while asserting the situation in neighbouring Karnataka was different. Justice Oka was a judge in Bombay High Court before he was appointed as Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court, from where he was elevated to the apex court. Speaking at the Ashok Desai Memorial Lecture on the topic 'What ails our criminal justice system - some thoughts', Justice Oka said, "We struggle to get infrastructure from Maharashtra government. We lack basic infrastructure. It is very difficult to get infrastructure from Maharashtra government." He said judges of the civil court complex in Pune do not even have separate chambers. He, however, was quick to add that there has been change in the last five years. "It is very very different in Karnataka. There whatever the judiciary asks the Government gives. The scenario in Maharashtra is very different," Justice Oka said while pointing out that Kalaburagi bench of Karnataka HC looks like a five-star hotel. The ailments that plague the criminal justice system are too many and collectively the system has not fulfilled the expectations of the common man, Justice Oka opined. Speaking on capital punishment, the SC judge said he was personally against the concept and called for a debate on it with all stakeholders. "We really need to introspect if our system needs capital punishment. It is a debate whether the State can take someone's life. We need to see if capital punishment is a deterrent," Justice Oka said. The senior SC judge also emphasised that bail was the



Supreme Court Justice Abhay Oka File Photo

rule and jail the exception. Referring to Section 41 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), he said it was not necessary or mandatory for the police to arrest each and every accused even in cases where the offence is punishable with a jail term of more than seven years. "Presence of accused for investigation can be secured by issuing summons. But the ground level reality is very different. There is lot of pressure exerted on police machinery by citizens, NGOs, political leaders and media. Political leaders make statements that they will ensure the accused is arrested and put behind bars," the apex court judge said. "This is the sad reflection of the retributive tendency which still exists in our society. People still believe that once a person is arrested he is guilty," he said while criticising the ongoing trend of trial on social media. "Every citizen has right to criticise judgements. But it has to be constructive criticism. But this media trial or trial on social media platforms is not correct. People lack basic elementary knowledge of our criminal justice system. They do not know the difference between bail and acquittal. As judges we

cannot go by perceptions - what people say, what social media says. We have to go by evidence," he asserted. Justice Oka said two or three decades back, courts used to grant bail without going into the merits of the case but the same cannot be done now. With restrictions imposed on bail in new legislations like Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), courts are forced to, prima facie, go into the facts of the case even while deciding bail pleas, Justice Oka pointed out. "Courts burdened with these cases are not able to hear regular bail matters. If you see very old cases, the HC used to just say bail granted. And no one used to say anything. But nowadays, the high courts and the Supreme Court have to do very tightrope walking," he said. "We need to go into details. Sometimes we say why so much details, sometimes we say why such short cryptic orders. Judges face criticism for not giving bail to people in some cases," Justice Oka remarked.

How many travel agents booked for human trafficking, Bajwa asks CM Mann

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa on Saturday alleged that the Bhagwant Mann government in the state has 'failed' in curbing human trafficking. His remarks came on a day when a second plane carrying 119 Indian deportees from the US will land at Amritsar airport. Bajwa, Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, asked CM Mann how many travel agents were booked for human trafficking in the last three years. He said the Punjab Prevention of Human Smuggling Act 2012 regulates the profession of travel agents to check and curb illegal activities. "Can CM Bhagwant Mann, who also holds the Home portfolio, let the Punjabis know how many travel agents have been booked under the same law in the last three years," Bajwa asked. "Mann said that illegal immigra-



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann during a press conference in Amritsar PTI

tion is not only a problem in Punjab but a national problem. True, but, is his government not responsible if any illegality happens in the state? He seems to have been running away from his responsibilities," the Congress leader said in a statement. It was AAP's one of the main

election planks to stop the brain drain by motivating youngsters to explore careers in the home state, he added. Bajwa said it has been 10 days since the first flight carrying 104 deportees including 30 Punjabis arrived in Amritsar. But the Mann government "failed" miserably to provide a

helping hand and announce any rehabilitation programme for deportees hailing from Punjab, he alleged. Mann has not announced any compensation for them, he further said. The AAP government has not assured them that the government would help them get their

money refunded by the illegal travel agents, said Bajwa. "Mann says he is going to receive the 119 deportees arriving today in Amritsar. In the absence of a rehabilitation programme and compensation, this act of Mann is nothing more than a publicity stunt," he said. A plane carrying 119 illegal immigrants from the US will land at the Amritsar airport on Saturday, the second such batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its crackdown on illegal migration. The flight is expected to land at the airport around 10 pm on Saturday, official sources said. Among the 119 deportees, 67 are from Punjab alone. Of the rest 52 deportees, 33 are from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, three from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Goa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and one each from Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Zelenskyy, Scholz toughen stands

Hamas frees 3 hostages, Israel releases hundreds of prisoners

PTI ■ MUNICH

TRUMP'S UNSETTLING POLICIES

Two top European leaders stiffened their spines on Saturday over unsettling new policies from Washington under President Donald Trump, as Ukraine's president urged creation of an "armed forces of Europe" and the leader of Germany denounced meddling in its election after US Vice President JD Vance met

with a German far-right leader. Strident speeches from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Day 2 of the Munich Security Conference testified to the impact of a blizzard of Trump decisions that have resonated at home and in Europe,

notably his hopes to end the Russia-Ukraine war and nurture perceived allies on the continent. Ramping up his desire for a more muscular and mighty Europe, Zelenskyy said Ukraine's three-year fight against an invading Russian army has proved that a founda-

tion exists for the creation of a European army that has long been discussed among some continental leaders. "I really believe that time has come," he said. "The armed forces of Europe must be created." It's unclear whether the idea will catch on with European leaders. Zelenskyy has sought greater military and economic support from the European Union for years and repeatedly warned

that other parts of Europe could be vulnerable to Russia's expansionist ambitions too. While the bloc — along with the United States — has been one of Kyiv's strongest backers, pockets of political disagreement in EU over its approach to Moscow and economic realities, including national debt levels that have crimped defence spending, have gotten in the way of greater support. Earlier, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he was "pleased" at what he called a shared commitment with the United States to the "preserving the sovereign independence of Ukraine," and agreed with Trump that the Russia-Ukraine war must end.

But also Scholz took aim at the new political tack from Washington, affirming his strong stance against the far-right and said his country won't accept people who "intervene in our democracy" — alluding to remarks by US Vice President JD Vance who scolded European leaders over their approach to democracy. Ahead of February 23 elections in Germany, polls show the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party — whose co-leader met with Vance on Friday — currently in second, ahead of Scholz's own Social Democrats.

PTI ■ KHAN YOUNIS (GAZA STRIP)

Hamas-led militants released three male Israeli hostages on Saturday and Israeli forces freed hundreds of prisoners in return, in the latest indication that a fragile ceasefire that had teetered in recent days is holding. Militants in the southern Gaza Strip paraded the three hostages — Iair Horn, 46, a dual citizen of Israel and Argentina; American-Israeli Sagui Dekel Chen, 36; and Russian-Israeli Alexander (Sasha) Troufanov, 29 — before a crowd before releasing them. They were transported to Israel to be reunited with their families and to receive medical evaluation in a hospital. All had been abducted from Kibbutz Nir Oz, a community that was hard-hit in the October 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war. They appeared pale and worn, but seemed in better physical condition than the three men released last Saturday, who emerged emaciated from 16 months of captivity. A tense dispute had jeopardised the nearly four-week-old truce in recent days and threatened to renew the fighting.

US President Donald Trump's controversial proposal to remove more than 2 million Palestinians from Gaza and settle them elsewhere in the region has cast even more doubt on the future of the ceasefire. But Hamas said on Thursday it would move ahead with the release of more hostages after talks with Egyptian and Qatari officials. The group said the mediators had pledged to "remove all hurdles" to ensure Israel would allow more tents, medical supplies and other essentials into Gaza. As with previous exchanges, the hostage release was heavily choreographed, with the captives made to walk onto a stage and speak into microphones before the crowd. Dozens of masked, armed Hamas fighters lined up near the stage festooned with Palestinian flags and banners of militant factions. In Tel Aviv's Hostages Square, a huge cheer went up as the hostages were transferred to the Red Cross. "Iair, Sagui and Sasha are on their way home!" an announcer said. In return for the hostages' release, Israel began releasing 369 Palestinian prisoners and detainees. A bus carrying the first

released prisoners arrived in the occupied West Bank town of Beitunia and were greeted by a cheering crowd of relatives and supporters. Some appeared gaunt, and the Palestinian Red Crescent emergency service said four were immediately taken for medical treatment. Most of those released were transported to Gaza, where a large crowd greeted them in Khan Younis, the same town where the hostages had been released hours earlier. It is the sixth swap since the ceasefire took effect on January 19. Before Saturday, 21 hostages and over 730 Palestinian prisoners were freed during the first phase of the truce. Horn was abducted along with his brother, Eitan Horn, who had been staying with him at the time. Eitan, 37, remains in captivity and is not on the list of hostages expected to be released in the ceasefire's first stage. "Now, we can breathe a little. Our Iair is home after surviving hell in Gaza," his family said in a statement. "Now, we need to bring Eitan back so our family can truly breathe." Dekel Chen had been working outside when militants stormed the kibbutz. His pregnant wife, Avital Dekel Chen, hid in a safe room with their two daughters. She gave birth to their third daughter two months later. Speaking to Israeli media Saturday, she said she was overwhelmed with happiness to see Sagui back in Israel, where he will meet his youngest daughter, Shachar, for the first time. Troufanov, whose father was killed during the October 7 attack, was taken hostage along with his grandmother, mother and girlfriend. The three women were released during a brief ceasefire in November 2023. Troufanov was informed of his father's death after his release, shortly before being reunited with his family, who said they were "overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude" as he crossed into Israeli territory.

ASHNOOR TEXTILE MILLS LIMITED

Registered Office : Behrampur Road, Khandas Village, Gurugram, Haryana- 122001, India, Tel: +91 (0124) - 4809756
CIN: L17226HR1984PLC033384 | E mail: atml_delhi@yahoo.com | Website : www.ashnoortext.com

Statement of Standalone Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine Months ended 31 December 2024

Sl. No.	Particulars	3 months ended		Nine Months Ended		Standalone Previous Year Ended	
		31-12-2024	30-09-2024	31-12-2024	31-12-2023		31-03-2024
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)		(Audited)
1	Total Income (Net)	4,315.14	4,778.65	14,395.70	9,752.14	13,605.26	
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	420.88	866.56	1,900.82	739.21	970.65	
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	420.88	866.56	1,899.07	723.03	972.00	
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	297.81	681.10	1,444.21	498.19	743.56	
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	297.81	681.10	1,444.21	498.19	743.56	
6	Paid Up Equity Share Capital	1,593.23	1,593.23	1,593.23	1,274.58	1,274.58	
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year	-	-	-	-	5,131.57	
8	Securities Premium Account	558.65	558.65	558.65	240.00	240.00	
9	Net Worth	8,487.66	8,148.55	8,487.66	4,485.27	6,406.15	
10	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.16	0.17	
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preferences Shares	-	-	-	-	-	
12	Debt Equity Ratio	0.80	0.81	0.80	1.33	1.18	
13	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (before and after extraordinary items)						
1. Basic:	1.87	4.27	9.06	3.91	5.83		
2. Diluted:	1.87	4.27	9.06	3.91	5.83		
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	
15	Debt Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.41	3.40	2.39	1.38	1.36	
17	Interest Service coverage Ratio	4.42	9.64	6.69	2.68	2.84	

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Bombay Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the websites of the Bombay Stock Exchange i.e. www.bseindia.in and on web site of the Company i.e. www.ashnoortext.com

By Order of the Board of Directors
For Ashnoor Textile Mills Limited
Sd/-
Suneel Gupta
Managing Director
DIN - 00052084

ATS INFRABUILD PRIVATE LIMITED

REGD. OFF. : 711/92, Deepali, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019
CIN: U45400DL2007PTC168922; Ph. No. 0120-7111500
Email: compliances@atsgreens.com
ANNEXURE I

[Regulation 52 (8), read with Regulation 52 (4), of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015]

S. No.	Particulars	(Amounts in INR Lacs except per share data and ratios)		
		For the Quarter ended		For the Year ended
		31.12.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2024
1	Total Income from Operations	462.18	2,706.38	13,407.51
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	40.26	(55.15)	(420.21)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	40.26	(55.15)	(420.21)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	40.45	(55.60)	(771.48)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	40.45	(55.60)	(775.08)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1.00	1.00	1.00
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	(4,188.41)	(3,924.53)	(4,200.57)
8	Net worth	(4,874.11)	(3,923.53)	(4,199.57)
9	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	20,787.05	16,425.32	16,425.32
10	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-	-
11	Debt Equity Ratio *	(0.58)	(0.62)	(0.58)
12	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
1. Basic: (in Rs)	404.53	(555.98)	(7,714.76)	
2. Diluted: (in Rs)	404.53	(555.98)	(7,714.76)	
13	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
14	Debt Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
15	Debt Service Coverage Ratio *	0.02	(0.02)	(0.17)
16	Interest Service Coverage Ratio *	-	(0.15)	(5.42)
17	Current Ratio	0.77	0.82	0.80
18	Long Term Debt to Working Capital Ratio	-	-	-
19	Bad Debt to Accounts Receivable Ratio	-	-	-
20	Current Liability Ratio	0.99	0.99	0.99
21	Total Debt to Total Asset Ratio	0.08	0.06	0.07
22	Debtor Turnover Ratio	4.60	53.53	178.29
23	Inventory Turnover Ratio	0.02	0.08	0.41
24	Operating Margin	-13.07%	-3.23%	-4.19%
25	Net Profit Margin	-8.75%	-2.05%	-5.75%

Note:
a) The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly/annual financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) and the listed entity.
b) For the items referred in sub-clauses (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Regulation 52 (4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange(s).
c) # - Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules / AS Rules, whichever is applicable.
d) * - The pertinent items need to be disclosed if the said disclosure is required as per Regulation 52 (4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.
e) Previous periods figures have been reclassified wherever considered necessary

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors of
ATS Infrabuild Private Limited

Kashinath Jha Director
Santosh Kumar Director
Place: Noida
Date: 14.02.2025
DIN: 09834435
DIN: 09835334

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Ajit Kumar is the owner of Freehold residential property bearing Plot No. 1, area measuring 25 Sq. Yds. + 25 Sq. Yds., total 50 Sq. Yds., L-Type, out of Kharsa No. 105/142, situated in the area of Village Palam, Delhi State, Delhi, Colony known as Raja Park, In Block-C, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, by virtue of Notarized Will dated 02.09.2017, executed by Mr. Ramesh Kumar, same to be financed by SMFG India Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Company Limited), General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest/lien in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.
Rahul Raj Patil, Advocate
SC Associates (Law Firm)
F1 B, Lotus Pool Plaza, Vaidya Khand, Indraprastha, Ghaziabad - 17
E-mail: sgassociates@gmail.com, Ph: 901172754, 913444939

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Ms. Km. Rita Bhatti d/o Krishna Dutt Pankaj is purchase the Being a property, along with roof right, admeasuring around 30 Sq. Yds., out of Kharsa No. 315/1, situated in a colony known as Satya Vihar, Village Kamalpur Majra Burari, Burari, Delhi-110064 from Mr. Lakshay Yadav s/o Lakhhan Singh, and same mortgage the said property with Shubham Housing Development Finance Co. Ltd. and Mr. Lakshay Yadav s/o Lakhhan Singh, unavailability of Surviving member certificate of Mrs. Bhagwati W/o Mr. Jai Pal, if anybody has any charge/interest/lien in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days of the present.
Deepika Mishra (ADVOCATE)
Office Add:-G-1002, Vaishali Cloud 9,
Ghaziabad, UP-201010, Mob No.-9855911103

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is informed that Mr. Pawan Kumar Singh S/o Upendra Singh is the Owner of Industrial Plot No. C-262, Sector-10, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar Uttar Pradesh-201301. That Mr. Pawan Kumar Singh S/o Upendra Singh has lost some original documents of this said property i.e. 1. Original Allotment Letter 2. Original Possession Letter 3. Original Functional Letter 4. Original Completion Certificate. If anyone finds these Original Documents or having any objection. Please inform me on my given Mob No. 9911004142 within 7 days.
Yogesh Kumar (Advocate)

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल
केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैके. शाखा)
निविदा सूचना
क्र. 221/के.कर्म./2025
भोपाल, दिनांक 14.02.2025
नगर निगम भोपाल केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला के द्वारा 05 नग नवीन स्कड स्टोर (रोबोट मशीन) क्रय करने हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।
क्र. निविदा क्र. सामान का विवरण अनुमानित लागत धरोहर राशि निविदा फॉर्म का मूल्य प्रदाय अवधि
1. 2024_UAD Purchase of Skid Steer Loader for Bhopal 13625000/- 68125/- 12500/- 30 दिवस
377266_2 Municipal Corporation (Second Call)
BID SUBMISSION END DATE- 15.03.2025 TIME- 05:30 PM
BID OPENING DATE- 17.03.2025 TIME- 01:00 PM
निविदा से संबंधित अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी वेबसाइट mptenders.gov.in पर देखी एवं केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैकेनिकल) से कार्यालयीन समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है।
अपर आयुक्त
परिवहन शाखा, नगर निगम भोपाल
निक्र. 1297/024/025

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (FIU), UTTARAKHAND JAL SANSTHAN,
INDRAPRASTH COLONY, LANE NO. 3, NATHANPUR, DEHRADUN-248001,
Email-ID cwbfu@gmail.com

Letter No.1018/E-Tender Notice/E-Tender Notice/24-25
Dated 15/02/2025
E-Tender Notice
On behalf of the Chief General Manager, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun sealed tenders in **Single Bid System**, on item rate contract (inclusive of all materials), are invited for the **Leak detection activities in up to 04 peri-urban water supply schemes** from technically and financially capable bidders up to prescribed time & date and on the portal as mentioned in terms and conditions given below.

Bid No.	Name of Work	Bid Security (Earnest Money) (Lakh)	Cost of bid document (Rs.)	Period of completion of works
1	The Works consist of Leak detection activities in up to 04 peri-urban water supply schemes situated in Dehradun District under Uttarakhand Water Supply Program for Peri-Urban Areas (UWSP)	2.00	4000.00 + 18% GST	12 Months

Note- The Bidder must be registered with the Central Government/Any State Government or Central/State Govt. Undertaking Department as a Class C or above in suitable category are allowed to take part in this tender.
The tender time schedule (Key Dates) is as follows:-

1	Date of Online Publication	17.02.2025 at 11.00 a.m.
2	Document download: Start Date	17.02.2025 at 11.00 a.m.
3	Document download: End Date	07.03.2025 at 17.00 p.m.
4	Pre-Bid Meeting	25.02.2025 at 11.00 a.m.
5	Bid Submission: Start Date	28.02.2025 at 09.00 a.m.
6	Bid Submission: End Date	07.03.2025 at 17.00 p.m.
7	Date of Offline submission of documents.	07.03.2025 up to 17.00 p.m.
8	Date of Bid Opening	10.03.2025 at 11.00 a.m.

The Other Terms & Conditions regarding E-Tender can be seen/receive on the E-tender website of Uttarakhand i.e www.uktenders.gov.in
"जल संघय-जीवन संघय"
Executive Engineer (FIU)

ASSOCIATED FINMAN LIMITED
Regd. Office: 59/17, Ground Floor, Bahubali Apartments, New Rohtak Road, New Delhi-110005
CIN: L65910DL1984PLC018871
Email Id: associatedfinman1984@gmail.com; Tel No.: +91 1132963621; Website: www.associatedfin.net
Statement of Unaudited Standalone Financial Results for the Quarter ended 31st December 2024
(Rs. In hundreds)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Current/ Quarter Year ending	Year ended figures	Corresponding 3 months ended in the previous year
		31/12/2024	31/12/2024	31/12/2023
1.	Total Income from Operations	-	15000.00	-
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-297.21	1120.16	-2798.09
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-297.21	1120.16	-2798.09
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-247.21	820.16	-2798.09
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	-247.21	820.16	-2798.09
6.	Equity Share Capital (Face Value Rs. 10/- each)	90532.80	90532.80	90532.80
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year	-	-	-
8.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
1. Basic:	0.03	0.09	0.31	
2. Diluted:				

Notes:
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/annual financial results filed with the stock exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly & year to date financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website (www.mse.in) and the company's website (www.paritajpapermills.com)
2. The above results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on Tuesday, 14th February 2025.

ASSOCIATED FINMAN LIMITED
For and on behalf of
Associated Finman Limited
Sd/-
Manish Arora
Whole-time director
DIN: 00373026
Date: 14.02.2025
Place: Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for General Information that I am MOHD AKRAM R/O C-301, ABUL FAZAL ENCLAVE PART-I, SHAHNEER BAGH, JAMIA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110025 disowned his son MD SARTAJ and his wife MRS. ANJUM from all his movable & immovable properties with immediate effect & severed all relations anybody dealing with them in any manner whatsoever will be doing so at his/her own cost/risk & responsibilities.

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that Rajiv Kumar Sharma S/o Rajendra Kumar Sharma is the owner of A Residential House Plot No. 481 (Old No. 77) area 240 Sq. Yd. i.e. 200/64 Sq. Mtr (Super Area & 196.39 Sq. Mtr (Covered Area) situated at Kamal Vihar Bagh, HSI, Manoli, Gurgaon, Haryana. by virtue of Will dated 01/05/2008. After the death of Rajendra Kumar Sharma & Leavawill is the only surviving legal heir and son Rajiv Kumar Sharma has become the owner of the said property, who is going to execute sale deed in respect of aforesaid property in favour of Mrs. Divyanshu Sharma. The above said property is to be financed by mortgage by my client i.e. Axis Finance Limited. If any person has any objection or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.
Rajiv Tiwari (Advocate)
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi-110001
Mob: +91-9266768808

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is informed that One Original Gift Deed dated 21.12.2024 registered in the Office of Sub Registrar Hapur II at book No. 1 Zld 8446 on page 93/106 at serial number 14949 is related with a House Nagar Parka No. HPJW-22/16 part of Plot No. 30, area 68.86 Sq. meter Situated at Mohalla Navli Kanti Hapur. The present owner of the land Mr. Vikas Sharma S/o Vijay Kumar Sharma R/o 13 Rexti Kunj Hapur Dist. Hapur is applied for a financial facility form PNB HOUSING FINANCE LTD. Thereafter said Mr. Vikas Sharma will mortgage the said land in favour of the bank. If any person/institution have any objection regarding the said Gift deed or proposed mortgage, can place his/its objection through the below mentioned mobile number within seven days from the date of this publication. Beyond this period no objection will be admitted.
MANISH VERMA (Advocate) Ch. DS 20, Dist & Session Court, Hapur-245101 Mob.- 9258311480.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all that my client Vinay Kumar Sharma S/o Late Sh. Pardeep Sharma has disrupted and severed his all relations with his mother Smt. Sushma Sharma and his younger brother Sh. Dheeraj Sharma for all intents and purposes as they were not according to temperament of my client and residing separately without any information whatsoever of their residence to my client. That mother and younger brother of my client have been hiding their whereabouts since last 5 years of which my client had no knowledge of the same and further Smt. Sushma Sharma had disowned my client from all immovable properties. My client hereby declares that he or his property of whatsoever nature shall not be liable for any sort of encumbrance including any charge, lien etc, if any created by them and my client shall not be responsible for any acts of his mother and younger brother in any manner whatsoever.
Nitin Yadav (Advocate) Ch. No 547 Lawyers Ch. Blocks Dwarka Courts New Delhi-110075

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of MRS. INDERPREET KAUR, who is the owner of Entire First Floor without roof rights, admeasuring 105 Sq. Yds. part of property bearing No. 92-87, Built on Southern part portion of Plot No. D-3, out of Kharsa No. 446, Situated in the area of Village Thar, Colony known as Fateh Nagar, New Delhi-110018 through Foreclosure Deed dated 31.08.2021 which was executed by 1) Mr. S. Jag Mohan Singh, 2) Mr. S. Kowalji Singh, 3) Mrs. Baljeet Singh, 4) Mr. Arun Pal Singh And 5) Mr. Jagdeep Singh in favour of Mrs. Inderpreet Kaur in respect of subject property duly registered as Document No. 1797, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 6609, on Pages 117 to 121, on dated 31.08.2021. She clearly, avers and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd., That Sale Deed dated 01.10.2013 executed by Mr. Machinder Singh in favour of Mr. Lokesh Gosain & Mr. Virender Kumar in respect of subject property, duly registered as Doc. No. 19578, Book No. 1, Volume No. 2249, on pages No. 63-63 dated 01.10.2013, in SRO-H Basai Darapur, New Delhi/Delhi, is/are Lost/Misplaced/Not available. For the same has been lodged at court. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person having any type of claim (right/lien/interest) creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.
Lucern Legal LLP
Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40046316

Rohit, Kohli lead Team India for Champions Trophy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Dressed natively in a white T-shirt and black tracks, Rohit Sharma got down from his car, and walked towards his teammates at the departure lounge amid loud calls of 'Rohit bhai' and 'Rohit sir' by fans waiting near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport entrance. Most of the squad members arrived in the team bus including head coach Gautam Gambhir, vice-captain Shubman Gill and star batter Virat Kohli and the stars obliged some fans by signing autographs or waving at a few of them. Soon, the team boarded an afternoon flight to Dubai for the upcoming Champions Trophy amid heightened optimism of netting another



global trophy after winning the T20 World Cup last June. A Jasprit Bumrah-less India will open their campaign against Bangladesh on February 20 in Dubai before the much-anticipated

blockbuster against traditional rivals Pakistan February 23, and then the Men in Blue will take on New Zealand on March 2 to round off their league engagements. The confidence - of the fans

and the team - has been boosted by India's recent 3-0 ODI series whitewash at home over England. Another birdie came on the 12th before the 21-year-old's only dropped shot of the day on the 15th but the 2021 Race to Costa del Sol champion finished with a flourish with birdies on 17 and 18 to be in pole position. England's Annabel Fuller and Korea's Somi Lee sit in second place on the leaderboard on 10-under-par. Switzerland's Chiara Tamburlini and Austria's Emma's Spitz are in a share of fourth place on nine-under-par after 36 holes. Seven players are in a tie for sixth place with Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn, Denmark's Nanna Koerstz Madsen, Germany's Esther Henseleit, China's Muni He, Korea's Minsun Kim, Australia's Steph Kyriacou and Germany's Olivia Cowan all on eight-under-par.

Rohit and Kohli will pull off another triumph like they did in the West Indies last year. One last opportunity for greatness? Few months ago, Hardik Pandya had walked out with the T20 World Cup trophy hoisted on his shoulders to join a sea of passionate fans on the streets near the Wankhede Stadium for an open bus parade. If those scenes are to be repeated next month, then India will need some runs from Rohit and Kohli, who have copped heavy criticism after repeated failures in Test cricket. But they replied in kind, as Rohit made a characteristically fluent hundred - a 90-ball 119 in Cuttack ODI against England - and Kohli his 73rd fifty in Ahmedabad.

Wrestlers appeal for Albania Ranking Series approval

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asian champion Sunil Kumar, U-23 Asian Championship gold winner Minakshi and several other Indian wrestlers gathered at Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's residence on Saturday, seeking his intervention to secure approval for their participation in the upcoming Ranking Series in Albania. The ministry has withheld approval for the wrestlers to participate in the second Ranking Series of the year scheduled to take place in Tirana, Albania, from February 26 to March 2. "We are unable to participate in the tournament and hence we came to the minister's residence to request him to let us participate in the tournament," Kumar said. "It will help us in the Asian Championship in Amman in March (as points will decide) the draws and first-round

bouts," he added. However, the minister was travelling and unavailable. The gathered bunch of 8-10 wrestlers waited till about 2pm outside his residence before dispersing. "Earlier, we were not allowed to participate in World Ranking Championship in Croatia, and now we are not allowed to go to Albania. We came here to request, we don't know the reason," Minakshi said. "We are 30 wrestlers, there is no response. We came here and got to know that the minister is not here." The ministry has cited the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) failure to submit the necessary recommendations on time as the reason for withholding the approval. WFI had sent the proposal to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) on January 30, almost a month before the start of the tournament, a WFI source had told PTI on Friday. Due to the ongoing tussle

between the ministry and the suspended WFI, the wrestlers had also missed the first Ranking Series in Zagreb, Croatia. Although the WFI was suspended by the ministry in December 2023, it remains recognised by the international wrestling body (UWW). The event will be followed by the Senior Asian Championships in Amman, Jordan, from March 25-30, the third Ranking Series in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from May 29-June 1, and the fourth Ranking Series in Budapest, Hungary, from July 17-20. Competing in Ranking Series is very important for Indian wrestlers. By doing well there, they earn points and that helps them get seedings at World Championship. Last year, the government had cleared the Indian wrestling team's participation at for World Championships after all the 12 selected athletes assembled outside the residence of the sports minister.

Gujarat Giants to make amends in WPL clash

PTI ■ VADODARA

Gujarat Giants will hope their bowlers complement the batters and fielding shows overall improvement after a crushing defeat in the Women's Premier League (WPL) season opener, when they take on the UP Warriorz here on Sunday. Gujarat Giants produced a unified batting show to set a commanding 202-run target against the defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru but their bowling frailties were exposed in the first game of the season itself when as many as six options also could not contain the opposition batters. Richa Ghosh was dropped on the first ball she faced and the India wicketkeeper-batter made GG pay a hefty price for the mistake, striking 64 off only 26 balls (7x4s, 4x6s) to quickly turn the tables. GG's Tanuja Kanwar had also spilled Ellyse Perry's catch when she was batting on two. The Australian great too made the most of the reprieve as she hit a 34-ball 57 to anchor RCB's record chase. Gujarat Giants had earlier produced a fine batting show with fifties from former skipper Beth Mooney (56) and incumbent leader Ashleigh Gardner (79 not out) propelling them to 201 for five on a fresh surface here at the Kotambi Stadium. The opening game of the third season here on Friday was not just the highest match aggregate in WPL but also witnessed highest run chase, implying that batters will continue to make merry and the bowlers will have to keep evolving new plans. With only one day to turn their focus on the second match, the Giants will be challenged to regroup and find ways to execute better with the ball and the field. On the other hand, UP Warriorz would take the field under a new captain, India's Deepti Sharma, after their regular skipper Alyssa Healy opted out of the competition due to a string of injuries. Deepti has been a vital cog in the Indian teams across formats but the 27-year-old veteran hasn't held any leadership role with the national side in nearly a decade. On their part, spin bowling could be described as UP Warriorz' biggest strength this season after the team which finished fourth in the five-team league last year added Australia's Alana King to their roster which already boasts of England's Sophie Ecclestone. King had a successful run in the women's Ashes taking nine wickets in the only Tests as well as 17 more wickets in the limited-overs series. Along with King and Ecclestone, the Warriorz have India's Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Deepti, Gouher Sultana as well as others in Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu and Grace Harris. Their overall firepower pits Warriorz as the favourites for this clash given they have the formidable trio of Tahliha McGrath, Harris and Athapaththu to pick from in the batting.

Aditi lone Indian to make cut in PIF Saudi Ladies International



PTI ■ RIYADH

Aditi Ashok was the lone Indian to make the cut after she carded an even-par 72 in the penultimate round of the PIF Saudi Ladies International held at Riyadh Golf Club. She shot an even par 72 to be 3-under for 36 holes. At T-33, she was among the top 60 and ties who qualified for the final

round. Among the other Indians Pranavi Urs (70-73) was 1-under but missed the cut which fell at 2-under 142, Diksha Dagar (75-69) also exited as did Tvesa Malik (73-73). Thailand's Jeeno Thitikul fired a round of 8-under 64 to move to the top of the leaderboard at 13-under-par. She holds a three-shot lead heading into

the final day. The world number four rolled in back-to-back birdies on the first two holes before adding another on the fifth, Thitikul then rolled in three birdies on the trot on holes seven to nine. Another birdie came on the 12th before the 21-year-old's only dropped shot of the day on the 15th but the 2021 Race to Costa del Sol champion finished with a flourish with birdies on 17 and 18 to be in pole position. England's Annabel Fuller and Korea's Somi Lee sit in second place on the leaderboard on 10-under-par. Switzerland's Chiara Tamburlini and Austria's Emma's Spitz are in a share of fourth place on nine-under-par after 36 holes. Seven players are in a tie for sixth place with Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn, Denmark's Nanna Koerstz Madsen, Germany's Esther Henseleit, China's Muni He, Korea's Minsun Kim, Australia's Steph Kyriacou and Germany's Olivia Cowan all on eight-under-par.

Jannik Sinner gets three-month ban

PTI ■ LONDON

Top-ranked tennis player Jannik Sinner has accepted a three-month ban in settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) over his two positive doping tests, the organisation said Saturday. WADA, which was seeking to ban Sinner for the sport for at least one year, had challenged a decision last year by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) to suspend Sinner for what the ITIA judged was accidental contamination by a banned anabolic steroid last March. Sinner's explanation - that trace amounts of Clostebol in his doping sample was due to a massage from a trainer who used the substance after cutting his own finger - had been accepted. The 23-year-old Italian, who won the Australian Open in January, will be eligible to compete in the next Grand Slam. The French Open begins May 25. "This case had been hanging

over me now for nearly a year and the process still had a long time to run with a decision maybe only at the end of the year," Sinner said in a statement. "I have always accepted that I am responsible for my team and realise WADA's strict rules are an important protection for the sport I love. On that basis I have accepted WADA's offer to resolve these proceedings on the basis of a three-month sanction." WADA had originally appealed the ITIA's ruling to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland. It has formally withdrawn the appeal. "WADA accepts the athlete's explanation for the cause of the violation as outlined in the first instance decision. WADA accepts that Mr Sinner did not intend to cheat, and that his exposure to Clostebol did not provide any performance-enhancing benefit and took place without his knowledge as the result of negligence of members of his entourage," it

said in Saturday's announcement. "However," the WADA statement continued, "under the code and by virtue of CAS precedent, an athlete bears responsibility for the entourage's negligence. Based on the unique set of facts of this case, a three-month suspension is deemed to be an appropriate outcome. As previously stated, WADA did not seek a disqualification of any results, save that which was previously imposed by the tribunal of first instance." WADA added that the International Tennis Federation and ITIA, "both co-respondents to WADA's CAS appeal, neither of which appealed the first-instance decision, both accepted the case resolution agreement." On Friday, Sinner posted a video on Instagram of himself training in Doha at the Qatar Open, which starts next week. The suspension is from February 9 to May 4. Sinner could return at his home tournament, the Italian Open in Rome, which starts May 7.

Italian Tennis and Padel Federation president Angelo Binaghi noted that while the case was "a shameful injustice," the ban will mark "the end of a nightmare" for Sinner. Binaghi adds that the settlement "demonstrates Jannik's innocence" and that "all of Italy" will welcome him back at the Italian Open. The ITIA said it acknowledged the settlement but in its statement Saturday reiterated that "we were satisfied that the player had established the source of the prohibited substance and that the breach was unintentional. Today's outcome supports this finding." Sinner's London-based lawyer, Jamie Singer commented: "I am delighted that Jannik can finally put this harrowing experience behind him. WADA has confirmed the facts determined by the Independent Tribunal. It is clear that Jannik had no intent, no knowledge, and gained no competitive advantage."

East Bengal to revive campaign against Mohammedan SC

PTI ■ KOLKATA

East Bengal will be eager to break their winless streak and move up in the points table when they face struggling city rivals Mohammedan SC in their Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Sunday. With just 18 points from 19 games, East Bengal's campaign has been plagued by inconsistency. They have won only once in their last five matches and have failed to score in four of those outings. While their playoff hopes are all but over, they still have 15 points to play for and will look to finish the season strongly. In their debut ISL season, Mohammedan Sporting have endured an even tougher run. Sitting at the bottom with 11 points, they have scored just nine goals while conceding 34. A three-match losing streak has added to their struggles, and their defence remains a major concern. They played out a goalless draw in the first leg fixture. Given their current form, a breakthrough in attack will be crucial for both sides. East Bengal's defensive discipline has been a highlight, with the team leading the league in catching opponents



offside (51 times). Jordanian centre-back Hijazi Maher has been a standout performer, contributing both defensively and in attack with two goals. On the other hand, Mohammedan SC's defensive frailties have cost them dearly, as they have conceded multiple goals in their last four matches. Their attack has also faltered, converting just six of 29 big chances -- the worst efficiency in the league. East Bengal coach Oscar Bruzon was optimistic, saying his team has worked hard to regain their form. "This was a long week. It was a week where we worked towards bringing our performances back to the level that we have

displayed earlier against good and quality teams," he said. With time running out for them, Mohammedan SC's assistant coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo urged the players to give their all. "We know the importance of this game. We are going to play with all our heart and make sure that the game is difficult for East Bengal FC," he said. Among key players, East Bengal's Dimitrios Diamantakos will aim to add to his tally, while Mohammedan SC's Alexis Gomez has been a rare bright spark, frequently winning possession in attacking areas. East Bengal's PV Vishnu, the team's top scorer, will also look to make an impact.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BARGARH
Email: rd_bgh@yahoo.co.in
Gmail: rwd.bgh@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice No. ONLINE-BGH- 19 OF 2024-25

1	Name of the Work	Building & Road works during 2024-25 in the district of Bargarh.			
2	EMD	@ 1% of the estimated cost put to tender			
3	Other details	As per DTCN			
	Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding	Last Date & Time of Seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender
	1	2	From To	5	6
	Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bargarh	ONLINE-BGH-19 OF 2024-25	18.02.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to 24.02.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.	24.02.2025 upto 4.00 PM	25.02.2025 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Executive Engineer
R.W. Division, Bargarh
OIPR-250211/0003/2425

Phone No.06821-241026 (O)/241079(R) Fax No.06821-241026/240056 e-mail: esrws_sns@nic.in / esrwsns2009@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR-761126
Govt of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. S.E. RWS&S_ 18 /2024-25

- The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhanjanagar, Ganjam on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover system according to the norm of "e" Procurement system in online mode for different PWS Schemes in Ganjam District from the eligible contractors as per DTCN.
- Nature of Work: Internal furnishing of Divisional Water Testing Laboratory at RWS&S Division Bhanjanagar etc.
- No. of Tender : 01 Nos.
- Tender Paper Cost : Rs 19.09 Lakh
- Tender Cost : 6000.00
- Class of Contractor : D & C
- Date and Time of Availability of bid document in the portal : Dt. 17.02.2025 at 11.00AM to 26.02.2025 up to 5.00 PM
- Date of Opening of Bid : Dt. 28.02.2025 at 11.00 AM
- Period of completion : 30 (Thirty) days
- The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in> OIPR-250211/0003/2425

RWS&S Division Bhanjanagar

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
ACHARYA HARIHAR POST GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF CANCER, CUTTACK
Tender Notice No. 653 /dated the 15.02.2025
S-20/2023-24

Sealed tenders are invited in two-bid system by the Director, Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer, Cuttack-753007 for outsourcing of vehicles on contract basis for the period of two years. The bid document and all details can be downloaded only from the website of AHPGIC, www.ahpgic.in.

SL.NO.	CATEGORY OF VEHICLE	MAXIMUM HIRE CHARGES PER MONTH (EXCL. TAXES)	MILEAGE (KM / LITER)	NO. OF VEHICLE REQUIRED
01	ZEST / TIGOR / AURA / SWIFT / EZIRE / XCENT / ETIOS (PETROL) or similar Model & segment	Rs.26,000.00	17 kms.	03 nos.

The tender schedule dates are as mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date & Time
1	Last date & time of tender submission	20.03.2025 by 5:00 PM
2	Date & time of opening of technical bids	21.03.2025 at 12:30 PM
3	Date of Pre-bid	28.02.2025 at 12.30 PM
3	Date of opening of price bids	To be informed to the qualified bidders

In case any modifications/corrections are made to the original tender document the same shall be updated in the website of AHPGIC only. In case of any bid amendment and/or clarification, it is the sole responsibility of the prospective bidder to download the same from the website of AHPGIC, Cuttack.
In case the last date of submission of bids /date of Pre-bid meeting /date of opening of technical bids falls on a holiday, then the next working day shall be the default for the same.
Director
AHPGIC, Cuttack
OIPR-10171/0110/18/2425

Gukesh loses to Firouzja

PTI ■ HAMBURG

World champion D Gukesh finished last after losing to Iranian-French grandmaster Alireza Firouzja in the second game of their seventh-place playoff match at the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam here. Gukesh thus concluded his forgettable campaign in the tournament at Weissenhaus resort without a single win. After a lost battle that ended in a draw on the first day, the ball was in Gukesh's court to do well as the white pieces, but clearly, the world champion had run out of steam to lose in 30 moves. The test of time started in the

middle game when Gukesh made a mistake and had to part with his queen for two pieces. While Firouzja made good use of his material advantage. Meanwhile, local favourite Vincent Keymer won the first edition despite being touted as a rookie at the start. The German winning the first leg over many of his fancied rivals is good news for the event's sponsors who started it keeping in mind the chess connoisseurs. It is no secret that FIDE, the world's apex chess body, does not like Chess 960, also known as Fischer Random Chess, or the Freestyle Chess. But it is here to stay.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, RPRC, BHUBANESWAR
(e-mail id: rprcbsr@gmail.com)
Tel-(0674)-2557925

NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. RPRC/22/2024-25

T-04/ 2025 Notice No- 287 RPRC Date: 15.02.2025

- Name of the project in brief : Construction of Visitors Parking lots
- Estimated cost : Rs. 45,02,489.00 (excluding GST)
- Period of competition : 2 (Two) Calendar months
- Class of Contractor : "B" only
- Availability of bid document : 18.12.16.02.25/ 10.00 A.M. to 03.03.25/ 10.00 A.M. in website www.rprcbsr.in / e-portal <https://rprc.ewizard.in>. 03.03.2025/ 11.00 AM
- Opening of (Technical Bid) :

New Bidders to register on the portal <https://rprc.ewizard.in> and send a mail to eprocchelpdesk.101@gmail.com with details. For queries on registration & online tender submission contact to: Mr. Shivendra Kumar, Mobile- 9355030603 and Jitesh Kumar, Mobile- 9355030604, e-mail: eprocchelpdesk.101@gmail.com
OIPR-6800411/0023/2425

CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
RPRC, BHUBANESWAR

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C), DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES, ODISHA, CUTTACK
E-MAIL: cefedcuttack@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. 356 / Dt. 12.02.2025 //

- No. of works : 06 (SIX) Number of Civil works.
- Type of works : Civil works.
- Approximate Estimated Cost : Rs. 65.62 Lakhs to Rs. 81.53 Lakhs
- Class of Contractor : 'B'
- Period of Completion : 06 (SIX) Calendar months.
- Date of Sale & Receipt : Dt. 18.02.2025 to 2.00 PM of Dt. 04.03.2025. (Working days only).
- Date of Opening : Dt. 06.03.2025 at 11:00 AM.
- Name of Office inviting Bid : Executive Engineer (C), Directorate of Fisheries, Odisha, Cuttack.

Further details can be seen in the bidding documents & can be down loaded from the Government of Odisha website (<http://www.odisha.gov.in>). Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.
Executive Engineer (C)
Directorate of Fisheries,
Odish, Cuttack
OIPR-0603011/0023/2425



Curtain Raiser

The Icons of Whisky Awards 2025 began by bringing together industry leaders and connoisseurs, writes ABHI SINGHAL



The Icons of Whisky Awards 2025 kicked off in style with a curtain raiser event at The Claridges, New Delhi. The event was hosted by Spiritual Luxury in association with Whisky Magazine and presented in partnership with Suntory Toki Whisky, the evening had fun moments of craftsmanship, innovation and industry excellence.

Since its inception in 2008, the Icons of Whisky Awards have remained India's premier international beverage accolades, curated by Spiritual Luxury Living for the past 15 years. The curtain raiser brought together industry stalwarts including distillers, brand ambassadors, connoisseurs and whisky enthusiasts, creating a vibrant space for discussions on evolving trends and innovations shaping the whisky landscape in India and beyond.

A mixology masterclass took centre stage, where expert mixologists showcased innovative whisky based cocktails, while an interactive activation allowed guests to personalise their own tote bags, adding a bespoke touch to the experience. Adding to the evening's charm was the "One Night in Toki o" experience, an immersive tribute to Japanese culture, blending tradition with modern innovation. Guests also indulged in an exquisite Japanese culinary spread including sushi, asparagus tempura and lamb chops, perfectly complementing the whisky experience.

The grandeur continues on April 12 in Gurugram, where the Icons of Whisky Awards 2025 will honour the finest talents in the Indian beverage industry.



Tulips Catching the Light

From Dutch fields to Delhi's gardens, tulips bring colour and unity, says SAKSHI PRIYA

There is something almost human about a tulip. It does not simply bloom, it arrives. Standing tall with effortless grace, its petals unfurl as if stretching after a long slumber, ready to greet the world with quiet confidence. Unlike the delicate rose or the wild daisy, a tulip possesses an unshakable certainty, heralding the end of winter and the promise of warmth ahead. In New Delhi, at the residence of the Netherlands Ambassador H.E. Marisa Gerards, sixty thousand tulips sway gently in the cool February breeze, their vibrant colours painting a breathtaking spectacle. This was not just a garden in full bloom, it was a moment of poetry, a meeting of nature, diplomacy and history.



value soaring beyond gold. Though the frenzy eventually collapsed, the Dutch devotion to tulips never waned.

Over time, tulip cultivation became one of the Netherlands' most celebrated industries. Today, three thousand varieties bloom across the country, each a product of meticulous breeding and generations of expertise. Among them, the rare broken tulip, with its flame-like streaks, remains a marvel, a reminder that even nature carries an artist's touch.

This deep admiration for tulips has travelled far beyond Dutch borders. Inspired by the world-famous Keukenhof Gardens in the Netherlands, Srinagar established its own tulip festival in 2007, transforming its landscapes into a floral wonderland each spring. Bollywood, too, has long been captivated by tulip fields, using them as dreamy backdrops for stories of love and longing.

The white tulips carried a quiet purity, like freshly fallen snow, while the deep purple ones held a regal mystery, as if plucked from a painter's canvas. The golden yellow tulips stood like little drops of sunshine, bright and warm. But the ones streaked with red were the most enchanting of all, their fiery shades blending into a soft glow, just like a sunset on a clear evening. Then there were the pink tulips, soft yet striking, their petals catching the light in a way that made them almost glow.

Standing there, amidst a garden bursting with life, it was impossible not to be moved. Tulips are storytellers, timekeepers and silent poets. And just like the bond between India and the Netherlands, they remind us that beauty, when nurtured with care, has the power to bloom across continents and cultures, year after year.



TULIPS BLOOM IN DELHI

A rare sight in Delhi, sixty thousand tulips bloom in vibrant shades, painting a stunning spectacle. These flowers carry history, art and a bond between nations, once sparking 'Tulip Mania' in the Netherlands. Today, they bring a touch of Dutch heritage and the magic of spring to India.



British Remake of Culpa Mía

My Fault: London brings passion and style but struggles to match its Spanish adaptation, writes ABHI SINGHAL

My Fault: London is a 2025 British romantic drama streaming on Amazon Prime Video. The movie is directed by Dani Girdwood and Charlotte Fassler, this film is an English-language adaptation of the 2023 Spanish hit and people's loved Culpa Mía, based on Mercedes Ron's Wattpad-originated Culpables trilogy. The narrative centres on a provocative romance between step-siblings, set against the backdrop of London.

The story follows Noah played by Asha Banks, a spirited young woman uprooted from her Miami life to join her mother and new stepfather in London. There, she encounters her enigmatic stepbrother, Nick played by Matthew Broome. Their initial interactions are marked by tension and mutual disdain, but as they move deeper into each other's worlds, a forbidden attraction ignites.

Banks and Broome deliver performances that capture the intense chemistry and complexity but fail to get at par with the Spanish adaptation. Their portrayal brings depth to the tumultuous journey from animosity to passionate connection, trying hard to engage the audience in their forbidden romance.



While the film excels in its portrayal of steamy romance and dramatic flair, it doesn't venture far from familiar tropes found in young adult fiction. The plot incorporates elements like underground racing, secretive family dynamics, and the allure of the "bad boy," which, while entertaining, may feel predictable to seasoned viewers.

My Fault: London offers a visually appealing experience which

overshadows character development and plot intricacies. The film's commitment to delivering a high-energy, passionate story is evident, yet it sometimes comes at the expense of exploring more nuanced themes or providing substantial back-story for its protagonists.

The film serves just to the young adult romance genre. Its strengths lie in the palpable chemistry between the leads and the vibrant London setting, which together create an engaging, if somewhat predictable, viewing experience. Fans of dramatic, forbidden love stories will find satisfaction in this film, though it may not offer significant surprises or deviations from genre expectations.

SUGGESTED BINGES



Marco
IMDB Rating - 7.3/10
OTT - SonyLIV
Cast - Unni Mukundan, Yukti Thareja, Kabir Dhan Singh



Cobra Kai Season 6 Part 3
OTT - Netflix
Cast - Ralph Macchio, Daniel LaRusso, William Zabka, Johnny Lawrence



Dhoom Dhaam
IMDB Rating - 6.6/10
OTT - Netflix
Cast - Yami Gautam, Pratik Gandhi



My Fault: London
IMDB Rating - 6.2/10
OTT - Amazon Prime Video
Cast - Asha Banks, Eve Macklin, Matthew Broome



The Gorge
IMDB Rating - 6.8/10
OTT - Apple TV+
Cast - Miles Teller, Anya Taylor-Joy, Sigourney Weaver, Sope Dirisu

Style That Works

BY TEAM VIVA

Men's workwear is evolving, combining comfort with sophistication. Harfun, a brand at the forefront, is redefining professional attire by ensuring style meets functionality. Modern workwear is no longer just about appearance, it enhances confidence and comfort, allowing professionals to perform at their best.

A key innovation is the 2035 Work Suit, designed for flexibility and ease of movement while maintaining a sharp corporate look. Moving beyond restrictive office wear, this new wave of clothing caters to professionals in fast-paced environments, offering garments that adapt to different work settings. Whether sitting through long meetings or commuting, professionals need clothing that supports their routine.

Fashion events dedicated to workwear innovations are gaining popularity, showcasing advanced fabrics and sleek designs. Corporate fashion walks blur the line between office wear and stylish, comfortable clothing, emphasising attire that empowers professionals while reflecting individuality. The growing demand for practical yet fashionable workwear highlights the need for a wardrobe that balances professionalism with personal style. A recent event featured notable figures like former cricketer Piyush Chawla and comedian Anshu Mor, alongside industry influencers. Conversations revolved around the necessity of workwear that effortlessly transitions from boardrooms to social gatherings.

With designers focusing on innovation, adaptability and elegance, the future of workwear is transforming professional dressing. Function and fashion are no longer separate, they are the new standard.

the pioneer agenda

"Spring: a lovely reminder of how beautiful change can truly be"
- UNKNOWN



A SKY FULL OF WINGS

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Discover a world untouched by noise, where only the wings of birds break the silence, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



There's something deeply soothing about the presence of birds. No matter where you are, the soft flutter of wings or the distant call of a bird can instantly transport you to a place of peace. Birds seem to fill the air with a quiet kind of company that makes you feel connected to the world around you. Unlike most popular nature spots, this wetland remains hidden from the typical tourist routes, untouched and unhurried, just waiting for someone to notice its magic.

I found this solace in the *Dhanauri Wetlands*, near *Thasrana* in *Uttar Pradesh*, a place that feels like a hidden sanctuary untouched by the noise of modern life. Unlike crowded nature reserves, it does not call out for attention. Instead, it waits patiently, its beauty unfolding only for those willing to step into its stillness. It was in this mist-laden landscape that I discovered the true magic of being among birds, where silence speaks, and nature embraces you without asking for anything in return.

A WORLD WRAPPED IN FOG

Arriving early in the morning, I was greeted by a thick blanket of winter fog, softening every outline, blurring the edges of trees, water and distant shapes. It was the kind of silence that didn't feel empty but full - full of life stirring beneath the mist, of whispered movements in the reeds and of birds calling out unseen. The cold air carried distant sounds of wings flapping, making the entire landscape feel like something out of a dream.

At first, I thought the fog would ruin my chance of getting any decent photographs. Everything seemed swallowed up by the mist, with just the faintest shapes of trees and water appearing like ghosts in the haze. But as I stood there, waiting for the fog to clear, I realised that there was a certain calm in it. The mist didn't obscure the beauty of the place, it enhanced it. It gave everything a sense of mystery, as if nature itself was being revealed slowly, almost deliberately.

A FRAGILE HAVEN WORTH PROTECTING

Yet, as untouched as it seems, the *Dhanauri Wetlands* are not invincible. Like many natural spaces, they face growing threats from habitat destruction, pollution and human encroachment. It's easy to assume that places like this will always exist, remaining undisturbed and waiting for the next visitor to discover them. However, the truth is, without conscious effort to protect them, they may not. For those who have ever found comfort in nature, who have stood still just to listen to the world breathe, places like *Dhanauri* are not simply landscapes. They are living sanctuaries, home to thousands of species, each playing its part in the delicate balance of life.

A PLACE THAT DEMANDS NOTHING BUT PRESENCE

One of the most striking things about *Dhanauri Wetlands* is not just its visual beauty but its quietness. In a world constantly buzzing with movement and noise, finding a place that does not demand attention, but instead rewards those who choose to be present, is rare. There were no distractions here, no honking cars, no flashing screens, just the simple, unbroken sounds of water lapping against the shore, wings flapping overhead and birds calling out to one another.

It is a place that does not overwhelm but instead invites you to slow down. Whether you're there to watch the birds, capture the beauty through your camera or just enjoy a moment of peace, it offers more than a pretty sight, it gives you a sense of connection to something much bigger than yourself.

A SANCTUARY ON THE BRINK

The *Dhanauri Wetlands* are at risk, once a sanctuary for birds like the *Sarus Crane* and *Painted Stork*, now threatened by encroachment and neglect. With land repurposed for construction, the ecosystem is shrinking and disrupting its delicate balance. Water pollution and disappearing green buffers worsen the crisis. Without urgent protection, this vital habitat, which supports biodiversity, flood control and climate regulation, may soon be lost, leaving behind only memories of its once-thriving wildlife.



Recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International and extensively studied by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), *Dhanauri* plays a pivotal role in global bird conservation. Each year, between November and March, the wetland transforms into a sanctuary for over 50,000 migratory waterfowl, reinforcing its importance as a breeding and nesting ground



A MOMENT WITH NATURE

At *Dhanauri Wetlands*, you'll find yourself surrounded by the beauty of nature. Expect to spot the striking *Baikal Teal*, the towering *Sarus Crane* and the graceful *White-throated Kingfisher*. The *Black Drongo* and *Citrine Wagtail* add charm to the scenery, while the *Painted Storks* and *Ibis* soar across the sky, truly making you feel one with the wilderness. The *Bull-headed Shrike* perches quietly, surveying the land, while flocks of birds move in perfect harmony, painting the wetlands with life.

The *Sarus Crane*, the world's tallest flying bird, glides through wetlands with elegance, its vivid red head and long legs creating a breathtaking sight in nature's tranquillity

WHEN THE SKY COMES TO LIFE

Around 11 AM, the sun began to work its magic. The first rays of sunlight began to filter through, slowly dissolving the fog. The *Dhanauri Wetlands* were finally revealed in all their splendour. The lake shimmered under the golden light, mirroring the movements of birds in the sky.

In every direction, life unfolded in the most mesmerising ways. *Baikal teals*, their green and chestnut plumage gleaming, glided effortlessly across the water. *Sarus cranes*, the tallest flying birds in the world, waded gracefully through the shallows, their striking red crowns standing out against the backdrop of endless blue. *White-throated kingfishers*, streaks of electric blue, darted across the surface, their sharp beaks poised for the perfect catch. *Black drongos*, perched high on bare branches, observed their surroundings with quiet confidence.

Then, in the midst of it all, I spotted something that truly captivated me, a *Painted stork* (*Mycteria leucocephala*), standing still in the water, its pink and white plumage vibrant against the reeds. Nearby, an *Ibis* sat motionless, sharing the space with an egret that hovered just above. They did not interact, nor did they compete. They simply coexisted, bound by the same stillness that surrounded them. It was a reminder that nature does not rush, nor does it seek control, simply is.

217

BIRD SPECIES, INCLUDING 150+ SARUS CRANES

At a time when rapid urbanisation threatens natural ecosystems, *Dhanauri Wetlands* stands as a critical stronghold for avian biodiversity. Home to over 150 *Sarus cranes*, the state bird of *Uttar Pradesh* and sheltering 217 bird species, including 23 endangered and vulnerable ones, this wetland is an ecological necessity.

20,000+

waterfowl, but the push for conservation has yet to gain the urgency it deserves. With habitat loss accelerating, the fate of *Dhanauri* is about the larger battle to protect our natural heritage before it is too late.

A JOURNEY WORTH TAKING

If you decide to visit, go early in the morning, before the mist lifts completely. Walk quietly along the lake's edge, listen to the calls of unseen birds and let yourself be immersed in the stillness. Watch as the fog dissolves into golden light, revealing a world teeming with life. *Dhanauri Wetlands* is an experience, a reminder that, in the presence of birds, you are never truly alone.



Pan-Indian Plates

Step into RAAG, where each bite you take, will let you experience original flavours, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

FACT SHEET
RAAG by Miss Nora
Address : 1st Floor,
R Cube Monad Mall,
Rajouri Garden,
New Delhi
Price for Two:
₹1600 approx

In the heart of *Rajouri Garden*, RAAG orchestrates a dining experience that harmonises India's diverse food heritage with artistry and ambiance. Stepping inside RAAG feels like entering an aesthetic royal world where flavours, soft music, and traditional design comes together as a perfect dining. The menu, inspired by time-honoured recipes and slow-cooked traditions, takes diners on a gastronomic journey across the country. From the rich, aromatic *Ek Taar ki Nihari* to the indulgent *Kaladi Bharwan Guची*, every dish tells a story steeped in history.

With a diverse menu of *Chaats, Shorba, Grill and Tandoor, Platters, Main Course, Degh*, and so much more, the restaurant has so much to offer with a literally delicious taste.

If you start from chaats, the beloved street-style delight, *Moradabadi Dal Ki Chaat* is a symphony of textures and flavours. Made with protein-packed tallow-moong dal lentils, this dish is a warm, velvety bowl of comfort, elevated by an array of vibrant toppings. The date-jaggery chutney adds a delicate sweetness, balancing the savoury richness, while the khas-ta kachori provides the perfect crunch.

Moving to the vegetarian tasting platter, the appetizers served were just wow in taste where every ingredient's flavour has been differentiated from the other giving a perfect taste. The appetizers in the platter include the *Chenna Dahi Kabab* blending creamy Greek yogurt and ricotta, pan-grilled to golden perfection, *Paneer Tikka* with a smoky finish and stuffed mushroom, *Bharwan Khumb Tikka* showcases teja mirch marinade, cheddar-paneer stuffing. The platter is a must have recommendation.

Beyond the plate, RAAG fascinates with its immersive atmosphere with the striking *Sabyasachi*-designed wallpaper, the gentle strains of the sitar, and a cocktail menu infused with regional spices elevate the eating experience. Signature drinks, like the *Nawabi Sour*, complement the carefully curated flavours, ensuring that every sip and bite resonates with authenticity. At RAAG, dining is a celebration of India's culinary soul with taste that will make you lick your fingers in satisfaction.



AMRITSARI SERVINGS

From the Amritsari Kulcha Bar you can have a *Classic Aloo Pyaaz Kulcha*, taste that directly teleports you to the land of Amritsar with layered Indian flat bread with stuffing of your choice, served with dal makhni, homemade compote and white butter.

SHAKES AND SMOOTHIES

You can go for an *Oreo Caramel Shake* and *Choco Peanut Butter Shake*. Shakes at RAAG break the notion that a milkshake must always be thick, offering a perfect blend of milk and chocolate flavours.



Indulgent Flavours

BY TEAM AGENDA

Food has a magical way of bringing people together. The dessert dishes like *Berry Bliss Cheesecake*, evoke a feeling of satisfaction to your taste buds. Every dish tells a story and satisfies cravings in ways words often fail to capture.

Imagine this, you're sitting at the dining table, the air filled with the warm, inviting aroma of vanilla feels like a hug in every bite. A silky smooth cheesecake layered with a luscious berry glaze, this *Berry Bliss Cheesecake* is a perfect fusion of rich creaminess and tangy berry flavours. Here are the ingredients for a *Berry Bliss Cheesecake*:



INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6-8)

For the Crust:

- 1½ cups crushed digestive biscuits or graham crackers; • ¼ cup unsalted butter (melted); • 2 tbsp sugar

For the Cheesecake Filling:

- 2 cups cream cheese (softened); • 1 cup heavy cream; • ¾ cup powdered sugar; • 1 tsp vanilla extract;

- 2 tbsp cornflour; • ¼ cup milk
- For the Berry Glaze:** • 1 cup mixed berries (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries); • ¼ cup sugar; • 1 tbsp lemon juice; • 1 tsp cornflour dissolved in 1 tbsp water
- For Garnish:** • Fresh berries; • Mint leaves

Method

- Step 1:** • Prepare the Crust
• Mix crushed biscuits, melted butter, and sugar.
• Press into a greased cake tin and refrigerate for 30 minutes to set.
- Step 2:** • Make the Cheesecake Filling
• Whisk cornflour into milk until smooth.
• Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, and vanilla extract until creamy.
• Add heavy cream and beat until smooth.
• Gently fold in the cornflour mixture.
• Pour over the prepared crust and refrigerate for 6 hours or overnight until firm.
- Step 3:** Make the Berry Glaze
• Heat berries, sugar, and lemon juice in a saucepan until soft.
• Add the cornflour mixture and simmer until thickened.
• Strain for a smoother texture (optional) and let it cool.
- Step 4:** Assemble and Serve
• Pour the berry glaze over the chilled cheesecake.
• Garnish with fresh berries and mint leaves.
• Slice and serve cold.



CHEF'S TIPS

- Use full-fat cream cheese for the best texture.
- Allow the cheesecake to set completely for clean slices.
- Straining the berry glaze enhances the smoothness.

This *Berry Bliss Cheesecake* is a showstopper, creamy, fruity and indulgent, making it the ultimate dessert for any celebration!

Young and Rising Stars of Dining

The new generation of restaurateurs are transforming India's dining scene with passion

The restaurant industry has long been a playground for seasoned professionals, but a new wave of young entrepreneurs is rewriting the rules. These are not just ambitious dreamers banking on Instagrammable décor and buzzy themes, they are deeply invested in the food itself. Menu planning, ingredient sourcing, and tastings are their daily bread, and their knowledge surpasses even some chefs I have met.

Take, for instance, Tusheeta Khanna and Anant Bali, the young duo behind *Encanto*, a newly opened Mexican restaurant in Gurgaon. Their passion for authenticity is evident, not just in the food, which is impressive, but in their understanding of every dish, its origins, and the nuances of each ingredient. Too often, I have seen chefs operate with a superficial grasp of their own menu, but these two could school many in the trade.

Then there is Vanshika Wadhwa, carrying forward her family's legacy in the food business. Daughter of renowned restaurateur Vineet Wadhwa of *Fio*, she has launched *Kamei*, an Asian

restaurant that has already won over some of the most discerning food critics. Though I have yet to visit her outlets, the praise from trusted voices makes me confident she is onto something remarkable.

And let us talk about Bhagyesh Tekriwal and Utkarsh Khandelia, the brains behind *Sorbo*, a Mediterranean restaurant that speaks volumes of their dedication. While not as young as the others, their work reflects the

same meticulous approach, one where the food is the hero, not just the ambiance.

Moving beyond the NCR, Jaipur has its own rising star in Sagar Naggal, the force behind *Swinton House*. Built within an old haveli once owned by a British architect, the restaurant curates a menu inspired by his favourite dishes from around the world. The charm of the setting, combined with a well-thought-out culinary selection, makes it a standout in the Pink City's ever-growing food scene.

Further north, in Mohali, Arpit Singh is making waves with *Prey*, an avant-garde concept built over a dam.

With open-air dining lit by kerosene lamps, the space exudes a dreamy, romantic charm, setting the stage for an unforgettable dining experience. His vision proves that ambience and cuisine can come together to create something truly special.

Just today, I met Muskan Katyal, the niece of Porus



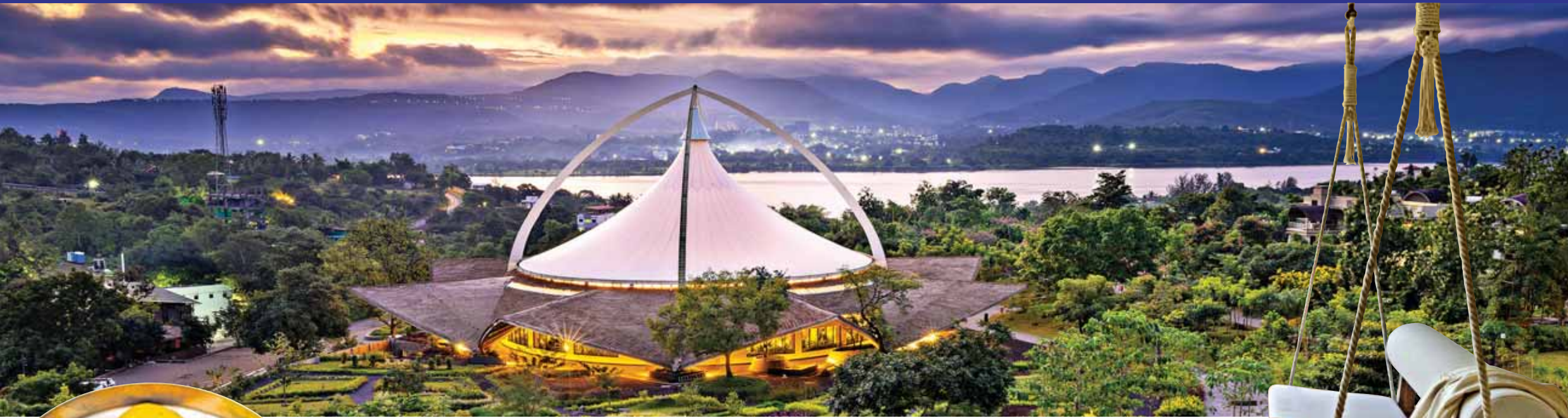
Arora, the name behind *Sticky Rice, Enoki*, and more. She is the same age as Tusheeta and Anant and is already making waves with *Mala Project*, a Gurgaon-based restaurant dedicated to the fiery flavours of Chinese Mala cuisine. Her involvement in the project along with Porus and Tanvi Arora is not just token ownership, she is hands-on, ensuring the authenticity of every bite.

If these young restaurateurs are any indication, the future of dining in India is in excellent hands. Their enthusiasm, knowledge, and commitment to quality are setting new standards. This is not just a generational shift, it is a culinary revolution, and I, for one, am eager to see what they cook up next.

—Pawan Soni



"KILOMETRES ARE SHORTER THAN MILES. SAVE GAS, AND TAKE YOUR NEXT TRIP IN KILOMETRES"
— GEORGE CARLIN



RECONNECT WITH YOURSELF

A wellness retreat embracing nature and modern science

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Sahyadri mountains, *Swastik* offers an immersive experience that rejuvenates the mind, body, and soul. Here's a glimpse into this transformative journey that redefines wellness travel.

Wellness today is no longer just a luxury for the affluent or a niche interest for certain travellers. It has become a mainstream pursuit, embraced by individuals from all walks of life. This shift is reflected in the rapidly growing wellness tourism sector, which, according to the

Global Wellness Institute, is expected to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2025. Amidst this burgeoning trend, I recently discovered a retreat that perfectly encapsulates the evolution of wellness travel, *Swastik*, a Luxury Wellbeing Sanctuary.

Swastik's Elemental Harmony

Dhyan Vihar (Space, Akash): A conical meditation hall promoting self-awareness and stillness.

Anand Vihar (Fire, Agni): A transformative space featuring dining, consultation, and performance areas.

Ayu Vihar (Air, Vayu): A rejuvenation hub offering therapies to balance body and mind.

Sukh Vihar (Earth, Bhumi): Luxurious residential spaces for immersive wellness experiences.

Ganga Vihar (Water, Jal): A space dedicated to cleansing and rejuvenation, embodying fluid energy and transformation.



A Journey into the Unknown

As a newcomer to wellness retreats, I wasn't sure what to expect. My understanding of wellness was limited to exercise and meditation, which I had found rather mundane. However, in search of a reset, I embarked on a three-day journey that would challenge my preconceptions in the most delightful way.

Upon our arrival in Pune, we were greeted by a gracious driver who took us on a scenic 1.5-hour drive to the retreat. Having expected bland, restrictive meals, I indulged in a Vada Pav before arriving at *Swastik*. But from the moment we stepped onto the property, the experience exceeded all expectations. The resort's design, crafted by TAOSTUDIO, is deeply inspired by the five core elements, Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Space, which form the foundation of its architectural brilliance. The property is structured around five key dimensions of life, Health, Wealth, Love, Bliss and Spirituality, ensuring that nature is woven into every aspect of the experience.



Unique Rituals and Therapies

That evening, we experienced *Swastik's* signature sleep ritual. Two therapists arrived at our Guha to perform a soothing bedtime routine, applying calming oils, offering a relaxing foot massage, and tucking us in with mindful silence. Whether it was

the exhaustion, the tranquility, or the therapy itself, I drifted into deep, restful sleep almost instantly.

Architectural & Philosophical Vision

Swastik's philosophy is embodied in its logo, a blooming flower representing the four core values of Health, Wealth, Love, and Bliss, all rooted in Spirituality, the central force of its existence. The retreat nurtures the potential of every individual, encouraging personal growth and self-discovery. *Swastik* transformed my perception of wellness. It showed me that wellness is not about rigid discipline but about creating a lifestyle that balances indulgence with mindfulness.

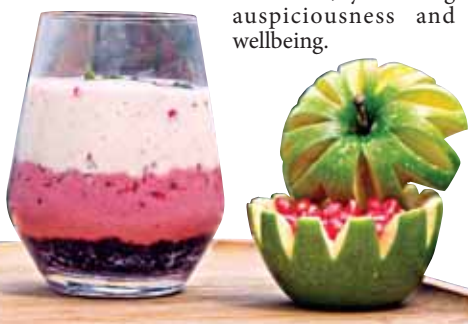
— By Rohit Kaul

A TRANSFORMATIVE WELLNESS EXPERIENCE

Our wellness journey began with an assessment by an in-house Ayurvedic doctor, who analysed our doshas (body energies) and recommended therapies to restore balance. The evening's dinner was a revelation. Contrary to my expectations of bland health food, *Swastik's* culinary offerings were a sensory delight. Each meal was a five-course experience, crafted from locally sourced, seasonal ingredients, many of which were grown on-site. Chef Arvind Joshi's thoughtfully curated menu transformed my understanding of healthy eating. It was nourishing, flavourful, and fulfilling without feeling restrictive.

A Retreat in Nature's Embrace

Nestled in the peaceful Peacock Valley, *Swastik* overlooks the backwaters of Khadakwasla Lake and the majestic Sinhagad, with the Sahyadri mountain range as its backdrop. Designed to honour nature's rhythms, from sunrise to moonrise, *Swastik* seamlessly integrates spirituality and wellness. The name itself, derived from Sanskrit, combines well, being associated with, symbolising auspiciousness and wellbeing.



Chettinad: Unleashing the Ghosts of Imagination

Though known for its stunning architecture, rich cultural heritage, and unforgettable cuisine, Chettinad hides a deeper mystery, the kind that stirs the imagination

ground spices from a Chettinad kitchen.

And so, here I am, in *Chettinad*, on a journey to unravel its mysteries. It is not merely a destination, it is an experience, an ongoing unravelling that draws you in deeper with every step.

When speaking of South India, it is impossible to ignore the region's vibrant culture and magnificent architecture. The interplay of bright colours, lush greenery, and the salty air gives this part of India its unique character, attracting visitors from all corners of the globe. One such captivating destination is *Chettinad*, the homeland of the Nattukottai Chettiars (also known as Nagarathars), a prosperous banking and business community. The name "Chettinad" refers to a region comprising 56 villages in the Sivagang district and 20 in the Pudukkottai district. Historically, this area was part of the Ramnad kingdom of Pandya Nadu.

Despite lacking typical tourist attractions like beaches or lofty hill stations, *Chettinad* captivates visitors with its majestic mansions, architectural masterpieces that stand in stark contrast to the arid landscape. These grand homes, some more

than 300 years old, whisper stories of the generations who once lived under their roofs. The *Chettiar* community, originally merchants and traders dealing in salt, gems, textiles and jewellery, controlled much of India's banking economy in the 19th century. Their legacy is written in the stunning mansions that still stand today, some meticulously preserved as heritage properties, while others gradually succumb to the ravages of time.

The Athangudi Palace is one such treasure, showcasing the finest elements of *Chettiar* architecture. For a modest fee of INR 50, visitors can explore its open courtyards, elegant verandahs, and the seamless blend of European and Indian architectural styles. Built in the early 20th century, the palace boasts imported wood, marble, tiles, and mirrors from around the world. Its interiors, maintained with painstaking care, offer a rare glimpse into the grandeur of the Chettiars' past.

For those with a spiritual inclination, *Chettinad* is home to some remarkable temples. A visit here would be incomplete without exploring the Ariyakkudi Thiruvangadamudaiyan Temple, dedicated to Lord



THOUGH THESE VILLAGES MAY BE VACANT NOW, THEY STILL STAND RESILIENT, HOLDING ONTO THE MEMORIES OF A BYGONE ERA

Srinivasa. Built in the 17th century by Sevugan *Chettiar*, a devout Saivite, this temple was constructed after the divine Lord Venkateswara appeared to *Chettiar* in a dream, instructing him to build a temple in his village. The temple's Dravidian architecture is awe-inspiring, reflecting the community's deep devotion.

Chettinad also holds its share of ancient fortifications. The Thirumayam Fort, built in 1687 by Raja Raghunatha Thevar of Ramanathapuram, sits atop a hillock. It encompasses temples, caves, a jail, and even a mysterious pond. As my guide, Kavita, excitedly narrated the fort's history, I was particularly drawn to a natural water pond at the summit, whose water level remains unchanged year-round, a phenomenon that adds to the fort's allure. From the highest point, I was rewarded with a stunning 360-degree view of the region, a moment of pure enchantment.

More than the grand mansions, exquisite temples and rich culinary heritage, what truly touched my heart was the warmth of the people. Their genuine smiles and welcoming nature made my journey even more memorable.

— By Divya Bhatia



There is something enchantingly captivating about a place frozen in time. As you wander through the quiet streets of *Chettinad*, its serenity is only disturbed by the soft whispers of the wind and the distant echoes of a long-forgotten past. The grand yet lifeless palaces, beautifully crafted and untouched by time, seem to hold within their walls the secrets of centuries. Even now, these imposing structures stand firm, guarding corridors that once hummed with life.

Chettinad is a paradox, a land where opulence was once abundant, yet the echoes of that prosperity now linger in a quiet, almost meditative stillness. Unlike the bustling tourist hubs that thrive on their vibrant energy, *Chettinad* flourishes in this exotic calm, where each cracked tile and fading mural speaks of an era long past, brimming with migration, prosperity, and change. Walking through its abandoned villages, you don't just observe history; you feel its pulse in the air, hanging like the intoxicating scent of freshly





YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

Your dedication and alignment of body, mind, and spirit, combined with effective management of responsibilities, will yield positive outcomes. Your drive to excel and collaborate with others contributes to achieving shared objectives. You are engaged in a profession that satisfies both your emotional and financial needs. Your passion and courage shine through in all aspects of life. This is a perfect moment to delve deeper into your intuitive abilities. Activities that enhance both focus and tranquility, such as yoga, chi gong, or meditation, will prove beneficial. For some, the possibility of a new romantic connection may emerge. As the week concludes, you might find yourself embracing a more affectionate and imaginative outlook.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Amber
Lucky day Monday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

You possess the strength to forge ahead in life, effectively turning your visions into tangible results. Engaging in collaborative efforts with another can prove exceptionally rewarding, leading to significant achievements. Take charge of your journey, demonstrating courage, vitality, and a purposeful resolve to achieve your goals. It's crucial to strategize and clarify your direction to avoid uncertainties. Embrace the leadership within you, steering your path confidently. Let your inherent strength surface and take pride in the accomplishments that follow. You are poised for a period of comprehensive fulfillment. Whether it's your health, finances, or relationships, you're on the brink of achieving a deep sense of satisfaction and joy that encompasses all areas of your life.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Ruby
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

In today's competitive environment, where material achievement is paramount, you may encounter competition, dishonesty, and betrayal. You could face setbacks or be unfairly outmaneuvered by a clever adversary. As everyone pursues financial success and opulence, the prevailing ambition focuses solely on monetary gains, often leading individuals to forge relationships based solely on personal advantage. This pursuit might lead you to compromise your principles and overextend yourself. Midweek brings a shift as you display compassion and attentiveness to your family's needs, gaining valuable insights into financial and emotional matters, paving the way towards personal growth and understanding. By the week's end, you might find yourself seeking simplicity and tranquility, preferring rest over continuous engagement.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

You often opt for the path of least resistance, finding joy in simplicity and innocence. Embrace the fresh opportunities that beckon, promising adventure and growth. Trust in your instincts, even if they lead you down seemingly irrational paths. Your aspirations often touch on desires for a better life, filled with prosperity and serenity. However, it's essential to ground your dreams in reality. While it's wonderful to imagine a more fulfilling existence, practical steps are necessary to make those dreams tangible. Now is a crucial moment for decision-making. Carefully weigh your options, considering all the benefits and drawbacks before proceeding. Focus on making positive choices—the decisions you prioritize now will shape your future. By aligning your thoughts with actionable goals, you'll manifest the changes you seek.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Aqua
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, you may find yourself feeling let down in matters of the heart or overwhelmed by achievements that don't meet your expectations. These feelings could lead you to step back and impose boundaries to prevent emotional fatigue. Escaping ongoing relationship challenges and leaving behind previous troubles to start afresh might seem appealing. As you navigate through these frustrations, remember that unmet expectations, especially regarding your efforts, require a focus on current resources and possibilities. Striving for productivity and financial gain remains a priority. While it may seem challenging now, support is on its way, providing the guidance needed to achieve your goals. Keep steady; assistance is just around the corner.

Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Saturday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week finds you buzzing with activity. Many will find themselves embarking on journeys that promise joy and bonding with close ones, or perhaps even relocating. Good tidings, such as a heartwarming proposal, may arrive, infusing your days with excitement. Mid-week, however, could bring its share of challenges as you find yourself wrestling with uncertainty, making it tough to settle on significant choices. This period will test your resolve. Staying aligned with your long-term aspirations is crucial now. Financially, you're in a position to manage your resources effectively, a testament to your diligence. You've earned your accomplishments, and it's time they were acknowledged. Your efforts over the years have not just accumulated wealth but also invaluable wisdom and personal fulfillment. Embrace your achievements and make the most of your moments.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Cream
Lucky day Monday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

It's evident that you possess a profound inner strength, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit to transcend challenges. You adeptly maintain a balance of compassion, warmth, and courage, which elevates you above superficial desires. This foundation allows you to pursue your goals with vigor and determination. Your journey is marked by personal growth and the pursuit of self-mastery, indicating a phase of significant self-discovery. However, your enthusiasm may sometimes manifest as impatience or rash decisions. Upcoming changes could include relocating or embarking on a new path that may require you to leverage your abilities in innovative ways. Towards the week's end, you might find yourself deeply moved by emotions, which, if not managed, could lead to complications.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Copper
Lucky day Thursday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week calls for decisive, practical action, reflecting your natural ambition and determination to achieve success. Abundance flows naturally to you, enhancing your professional standing and financial prospects, especially in property-related matters. A clear and powerful insight will help you identify and prioritize long-term goals, allowing your unique personality to shine through in all you do. The arrival of a new family member brings joy and celebration. Despite the demanding nature of this week, leaving you fatigued yet deeply fulfilled, your compassionate nature comes to the fore. You'll find satisfaction in caring for others and addressing their needs with empathy and a soothing presence. Your resilience and inner wisdom will be your guiding forces, ensuring you navigate this week with grace and effectiveness.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Wednesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, you may find yourself grappling with a sense of urgency and a dominating attitude. Your desire to take charge and oversee every detail is strong, driven by your ability to grasp the broader scope of situations. Your decisive nature and unyielding adherence to truth and fairness establish you as a natural leader, garnering respect and adherence from those around you. These traits ensure your actions contribute positively to the greater good, enhancing your reputation. However, as the week progresses, pay attention to your financial management; your spending habits may require some moderation. Additionally, strive to maintain equilibrium between your professional ambitions and personal life. Balancing these aspects is crucial for sustained success and harmony.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Charcoal
Lucky day Thursday



CANCER June 21-July 22

You possess the strength to forge ahead with resolve. The coming times are ripe for turning your dreams into realities, as collaborations with others are likely to be highly beneficial. With command over your life's direction, your inherent bravery, vigor, and purpose are ready to propel you toward achievement. Strategic planning is essential—know your goals and the path you wish to take. Ambiguity has no role in your journey. Embrace your capacity to lead your life with authority. Let your inner strength manifest and you might find yourself amazed at your own capabilities. A sense of contentment pervades all aspects of your existence, from personal health and financial stability to relationships and overall well-being, bringing deep satisfaction and joy.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Emerald
Lucky day Tuesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, you'll find yourself brimming with new ideas and opportunities that could breathe new life into your personal and professional realms. Embrace openness and allow yourself to adapt to new situations with ease. Strive to infuse your daily activities with aesthetic and harmony, drawing inspiration from the natural world around you. However, be mindful of the darker undercurrents of fear and anxiety that might cloud your thoughts, leading to unhealthy obsessions or even physical ailments. It's crucial not to let these negative feelings thwart your progress towards your ambitions. As the week progresses, you might feel a mix of restlessness and vibrant energy, but by the week's end, a sense of duty and a peaceful resolve will guide you towards productivity in your endeavors.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week, you might feel a strong drive to take the initiative and control every aspect of your surroundings. Your natural inclination towards leadership is powered by a comprehensive understanding of situations, which solidifies your role as a respected figure. Your dedication to fairness and truth further cements your leadership position, ensuring your actions resonate positively within your environment. As the days unfold, keep an eye on how you manage your resources; it might be wise to temper your expenditures. Also, consider finding a balance between your career aspirations and your personal commitments. Successfully managing both domains is essential for achieving lasting success and maintaining overall harmony in your life.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Tuesday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

Sacred Confluences: Reflections on Kumbh and Spirituality

On this quiet evening, as I sat with my friend while the sun painted the sky in gentle hues, memories of my recent visit to Kumbh Mela flooded back, sparking a deep conversation about spirituality and human nature. The cooling evening air seemed to sharpen our thoughts as we recalled the extraordinary scenes witnessed at Prayagraj.

The vivid images remained crystal clear in my mind – the swirling smoke from countless sacred fires, the endless sea of humanity moving like waves toward the Triveni Sangam, and the fascinating sight of sadhus wielding smartphones alongside their traditional implements. Each memory carried its own weight of meaning, prompting us to contemplate the unique blend of ancient and modern that defines today's spiritual gatherings.

As the evening shadows lengthened, I found myself describing the remarkable atmosphere at Kumbh – how the air seemed charged with collective faith and anticipation. The memory of millions of devotees waiting patiently, some for years, to take their sacred dip at the confluence sparked an interesting discussion about human psychology and spiritual seeking. What particularly struck us both was the contemporary evolution of this ancient gathering. I shared stories of seeing sadhus actively engaged with social media, posting their spiritual journeys online, their orange robes bright against the glow of mobile screens. This observation led us to ponder



how technology has transformed even the most traditional spiritual practices, creating a new kind of sacred space that exists both in the physical and digital realms.

Our conversation naturally flowed to broader questions about mental well-being in modern times. We discussed how the mind, like the converging rivers at Sangam, seeks its own confluences – between tradition and modernity, between spiritual seeking and everyday life, between individual practice and communal experience.

The evening's discussion reminded me of the various factors affecting mental health that I had observed during my visit. While

obvious threats like substance abuse were visible, we found ourselves more intrigued by the subtle, everyday habits that can gradually erode mental well-being. The irony of seeing people seeking spiritual awakening while simultaneously being tethered to their devices sparked a thoughtful dialogue about digital detachment and mindful engagement.

We explored how seemingly innocent modern habits can impact our cognitive health – from insufficient sleep to excessive solitude, from sedentary lifestyles to mindless overconsumption. The contrast with the disciplined lives of traditional sadhus pro-

vided an interesting perspective on balance and well-being.

As dusk settled around us, our conversation turned to the role of community and connection. The Kumbh experience highlighted how human beings naturally seek confluence – with others, with higher meaning, with themselves. Yet modern life often pulls us toward isolation, even as our devices promise greater connectivity.

The memory of watching countless devotees take their sacred dip led us to reflect on transformation – how people seek it, whether through traditional spiritual practices or modern means. We pondered

whether the sacred waters of Sangam truly awakened everyone who bathed there, or if the real awakening came from the intention and belief they carried within.

As our evening of reflection drew to a close, we realised that the Kumbh had offered us more than just spiritual spectacle – it provided a powerful lens through which to examine our own relationship with tradition, technology, and mental well-being. The smoke from the sacred fires, which had seemed so prevalent during my visit, now felt like a metaphor for the way old and new intermingle in our quest for meaning and mental peace.

Our twilight discussion revealed that while the tools and expressions of spiritual seeking may evolve, the fundamental human desire for connection, meaning, and well-being remains unchanged. Whether through ancient ritual or modern practice, we all seek our own version of the sacred confluence, where the rivers of tradition, innovation, and personal growth meet to form something greater than their individual streams.

As the first stars began to appear in the darkening sky, the insights gained from examining these memories of Kumbh through the lens of our conversation felt both profound and practical – a reminder that sometimes the greatest understanding comes not from the experience itself, but from the thoughtful reflection that follows.

— The author's views are personal.
The author is a civil servant at the Ministry of Defence and a spiritual speaker

THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Dr. Tanu Jain

As our evening of reflection drew to a close, we realised that the Kumbh had offered us a powerful lens to examine our own relationship with tradition