



the pioneer

Established 1865

DEHRADUN, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3

www.dailypioneer.com

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

INSIDE

WORLD 8 LEADERS OF INDONESIA, TURKIYE HOLD TALKS ON DEFENCE, ECONOMIC TIES



SUPREME COURT SLAMS PARASITES

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

On political parties promising freebies ahead of polls, the Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday said instead of bringing people into the mainstream for national development, Aare we not creating a class of parasites? A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih said it would be better to make people a part of the society's mainstream and contribute towards national development.

are not willing to work." The top court was hearing a matter concerning the right to shelter of homeless persons in urban areas and said people got free rations and money without working. "We quite appreciate your concern for them but would it not be better to make them a part of the mainstream of society and permit them to contribute to the development of the nation?" the bench asked. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said there was hardly anybody in the country who did not want to work, if they had work. The judge said, "You must be having only one sided knowledge. I come from an agricultural family. Because of the freebies in Maharashtra, which they just announced prior to elections, agriculturists are not getting labourers." The court, however, said it did not want to debate.

Judges said everybody, including attorney general R Venkataramani, was on the same page that providing shelter to the homeless merited due attention. "But at the same time, should it not be balanced?" the bench asked. Venkataramani said the Centre was in the process of finalising the urban poverty alleviation mission, which would address various issues, including the provision of shelter for the urban homeless. The bench asked him to verify from the Centre the time frame within which the scheme would be applicable and also place on record the aspects covered by it. "In the meantime, the attorney general is also requested to take instructions as to whether till the implementation of the said scheme, the Union of India would continue with the National Urban Livelihoods Mission," it said.

The bench further asked the Centre to collate information from all states for the consideration of the issue on a pan-India basis. One of the petitioners during the hearing said it was unfortunate that the cause of the homeless was not being addressed as it was last on the priority. The bench was irked when he claimed the authorities showed compassion only for the rich, not the poor. "Don't make a speech of Ramlila Maidan in this court," said Justice Gavai, "And don't make unnecessary allegations. Don't make a political speech here. We won't permit our courtrooms to be converted into a (place of) political battle." The judge went on to add, "How do you say the compassion is shown only for the rich? Even for the government, how can you say this?" Painting a picture that the

government did not do anything or show concern for the poor was not in a good taste, the court added. Bhushan said as per a note placed before the bench, as on December 4, 2024, a total of 2,557 shelters was sanctioned by the States or Union Territories and 1,995 shelter homes were functional with a capacity of 1.16 lakh beds. He said a survey showed there were about 3 lakh urban homeless in Delhi alone. Bhushan said as per the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, the total capacity of the shelters was 17,000 persons of which only 5,900 such facilities had beds. The DUSIB counsel said the board had 197 shelter homes running in Delhi as on date with a total capacity of 17,000 persons. In the last four years, he said, the average maximum occupancy was 5,500 in all shelter homes.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron at the Mazargues Cemetery to pay their respects to the fallen heroes, in Marseille PTI

Modi, Macron walk together

PTI ■ PARIS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday called for enhancing trade and investment ties between the two countries and committed to further deepening their engagement in the Indo-Pacific and various global forums and initiatives. After their wide-ranging talks, the two leaders also underlined their commitment to concrete actions to ensure that the global AI sector can drive beneficial social, economic, and environmental outcomes in the public interest. A joint statement issued after the meeting here said the talks covered a full spectrum of bilateral relations, as well as key global and regional issues. The two leaders stressed an urgent need for reform in the United Nations Security Council and agreed to coordinate closely on various

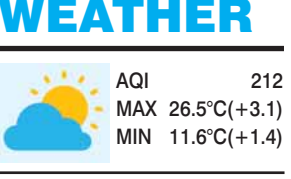
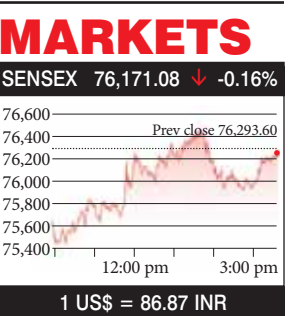
global issues, including the UNSC matters. French President Macron reiterated France's firm support for India's permanent membership of the UNSC. The two leaders reaffirmed their strong commitment to India-France Strategic Partnership while noting that it has steadily evolved into a multifaceted relationship over the past 25 years. Prime Minister Modi flew together from Paris to Marseille in the French Presidential Aircraft last evening and held discussions here on the full spectrum of bilateral relations and key global and regional issues. This was followed by delegation-level talks after arrival in Marseille. The two leaders reviewed cooperation in the strategic areas of defence, civil nuclear energy and space. They also discussed ways to strengthen collaboration in the fields of technology and innovation.

UPSC updates registration system online

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has introduced certain changes in its online application system for the civil services preliminary exam after aspirants complained of technical glitches while applying through it, according to an official notice. The Commission had recently extended the last date to apply for the civil services preliminary exam 2025 till February 18.

The UPSC said in the notice that some entries have been made "editable" in the one-time registration for filling up of the online application. "In view of the queries/difficulties raised by the candidates in filling up the online application form for the civil services examination, 2025, the Commission has decided the following changes in the one-time registration (OTR) for filling up of the online application," it said. The candidates are "not allowed to make any change(s) in the columns relating to "Name (as per Class X)", "Date of Birth", "Father's Name", "Mother's Name", "Mobile Number" and "Email ID" in the OTR profile, the Commission said in the notice.



MAGHI PURNIMA: 2 CRORE DIPS

More than two crore devotees took a dip in the Sangam till 6 pm on Wednesday on the occasion of Maghi Purnima. With the 'snan' on Maghi Purnima, another auspicious day for holy bath, the month-long 'Kalpavas' will be ending and around 10 Lakh 'Kalpavasis' will start leaving the Maha Kumbh. The administration has requested them to follow traffic rules and use only authorised parking spaces. Overall since the start of the Maha Kumbh, over 47 crore people have taken a dip in the Sangam. The Maha Kumbh will conclude on February 26 with the final 'Amrit Snan' on the occasion of Mahashivratri. Meanwhile, Adityanath greeted everyone on the holy bathing festival while the UP government has also launched a safety drive for the pilgrims.

Kerala ragging turns serious

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOTTAYAM (KERALA)

Five third-year students have been arrested for allegedly ragging first-year students at the Government Nursing College here, police said on Wednesday. A case was registered after three first-year students lodged a complaint, alleging that the ragging had been ongoing for nearly three months at the nursing institute, which functions under the Government Medical College. According to the complaint, the ragging began in November last year. The students reported that the incidents involved extreme brutality. They alleged that they were forced to stand naked and subjected to severe physical abuse using dumbbells, including tying them to their private parts. Further allegations include injuries inflicted using compasses and similar objects, followed by the application of lotion on the wounds. Additionally, they were forced to have cream applied to their faces, heads, and mouths. The accused students have been suspended, college authorities said. The action was taken following an inquiry conducted under the anti-ragging law, they added. The arrested students have been identified as Samuel Johnson

(20), Rahul Raj (22), Jeev (18), Rijil Jith (20), and Vivek (21). The complaint also states that senior students regularly extorted money from juniors on Sundays to buy alcohol and frequently assaulted them. On November 16, the accused allegedly forced a first-year student to transfer Rs 300 via Google Pay and hand over Rs 500 in cash under threats. Police revealed that the money was used for alcohol consumption. On December 13, a first-year student endured extreme physical torture. That night, the accused allegedly entered his room, tied his hands and legs, and restrained him. They then poured lotion all over his body and inflicted injuries using a divider. They also forced another first-year student in the room to record the incident on a mobile phone. Unable to endure the harassment any longer, three students finally lodged a complaint with the Kottayam Gandhinagar police. College authorities stated that the affected students had not informed hostel officials, teachers, or parents about the abuse. Upon receiving the complaint, the college promptly took action. Once the investigation confirmed the allegations, the case was handed over to the police, they added.

Sajjan Kumar convicted for Sikh riots murders

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Rouse Avenue court on Wednesday convicted former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in a case related to the killings of two men in Saraswati Vihar on November 1, 1984, during the anti-Sikh riots. The arguments on the quantum of sentence in the case will take place on February 18. The Congress leader, who is currently serving a life sentence in another anti-Sikh riots case in Delhi Cantonment, was produced from Tihar jail before special judge Kaveri Baweja, who pronounced the conviction order. "I am of the opinion that Prosecution has been able to prove its case against the Accused beyond reasonable doubt. Thus, Accused Sajjan Kumar S/o Ch.Raghunath Singh is hereby convicted for offences punishable under Sections 147/148/149 IPC and for offences punishable under Sections 302/308/323/395/397/427/ 436/440 read with Section 149 IPC," Special Judge Kaveri Baweja said in her 139 pages order on Wednesday. The order said, "I am of the considered opinion that the Prosecution has been able to bring home the guilt of the Accused. It has been established that the Accused was instigating the mob, which was armed with deadly weapons i.e. lathis and sarias etc. and that the mob being an 'unlawful assembly' within the meaning of Section 141 IPC used force and violence in prosecution of the common object of looting, committed the offence of rioting armed with deadly weapons. Further, the fact that the members of the 'unlawful



Former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar at the Rouse Avenue Court, in New Delhi PTI

assembly' were armed with iron rods, lathis, bricks etc. also proves that alleged offences were committed after having made preparations for committing such offences." The case attracts a maximum punishment of death penalty and life-term imprisonment as the minimum sentence. Kumar was produced before the court from Tihar jail to pronounce the verdict. He was convicted for the murder of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984. Special judge Kaveri Baweja aside from saying that a mob took part in rioting and killed the victims, held, "It has further been established that Kumar, being a member of such unlawful assembly, is guilty of having committed the murder of Jaswant Singh and Tarundeep Singh, the husband and son of the complainant, during the

incident." The conviction judgment said, "The complainant who witnessed the brutal killing of her husband and son can certainly not be expected to forget the face of the person who was instigating the mob to carry out the said killings and looting and her deposition in court fortifies her stand that it is accused who was not only present during the alleged incident but also instigating and leading the mob which resulted in commission of the aforesaid offences." The judge rejected Kumar's argument that the statement of the complainant couldn't be trusted as she named him belatedly and held at the time of the incident, she was not aware of the identity of the accused as she was admittedly new to the area and had never seen him earlier.

CBI arrests DTC officials

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested six officials of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) on charges of corruption and bribery. This is the first major crackdown by the apex investigating agency in the national capital after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lost the recently concluded Assembly elections. Sources said, the arrests follow multiple complaints alleging widespread corruption in the department. The CBI launched a thorough surveillance operation to verify these claims before taking action. Upon investigation, authorities found prima facie evidence indicating corruption at various levels, leading to the arrests. The arrests are a part of a larger corruption case, which is being investigated by the CBI. The DTC has been in the eye of storm over allegations of corruption against its officials. The BJP had alleged a scam in the purchase of 1,000 low floor buses by DTC during the AAP Government in Delhi. The Chief Secretary of Delhi had then recommended the CBI to investigate the matter. The recommendation was approved by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

NEWS BRIEFS

Ram Janmabhoomi chief priest passes away

LUCKNOW: Acharya Satyendra Das, the chief priest of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple, breathed his last at SGPGI, Lucknow. He had been battling health complications after suffering a stroke earlier this month. Despite receiving intensive care, doctors were unable to save him. His passing has cast a pall of sorrow over Ayodhya, where he had served as the chief priest since 1993. Over the decades, he became a symbol of devotion, witnessing the long and tumultuous journey from the Babri Masjid demolition to the consecration of Ram Lalla in the grand new temple.

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi and Naik Mukesh Singh Manhas of 9 Punjab, martyred in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast near the Line of Control (LOC) in the Akhnoor sector of Jammu on Tuesday, were both engaged and waiting to tie the knot in April 2025. A pall of gloom descended on the families of the soldiers as the mortal remains of these two bravehearts were dispatched to their hometowns in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand and Samba for the last rites on Wednesday. At both places, the telltale signs of ongoing renovation work were visible as their families were eagerly waiting to solemnize their marriage ceremonies. A solemn wreath-laying ceremony was organised at the Air Force Station in Jammu where Lt-Gen

Navin Sachdeva, General Officer Commanding of the Nagrota-based White Knight Corps paid homage along with several other senior police and civil officers. Captain Bakshi, who hailed from Hazaribagh in Jharkhand, had recently visited his home to oversee wedding preparations scheduled for April 5. A coursemate who had recently attended an advanced training course in the Army War College, Mhow while paying tributes to Captain Bakshi said he was very passionate about his duty. "He was a bold officer and always led from the front. We were all looking forward to attending his marriage ceremony and now we have to join a prayer meeting in his sweet memory." A close relative of Captain Bakshi said his family runs a Restaurant in Hazaribagh. Lovingly known as Puneet, Captain Bakshi had recently resumed his duties in the



Army personnel pay tribute to soldiers who were killed in a suspected IED blast near LoC, in Jammu's Akhnoor PTI

first week of February 2025. Captain Bakshi's father, Ajinder Singh Bakshi, and mother, Neelu Bakshi, were left crestfallen by the

loss of their elder son. The entire Hazaribagh community is mourning the martyrdom of their brave son of the soil.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Wednesday condoled the death of Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi and the slain army jawan. State BJP chief Babulal Marandi also expressed grief over the death of the army personnel. "Received the sad news of the martyrdom of Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi from Jharkhand and another army jawan during a search operation in Akhnoor, Jammu. May Marang Buru grant peace to the souls of the martyred soldiers and give strength to the bereaved families to bear this difficult time of grief," Soren posted on X. Meanwhile, a religious function was going on at the residence of Naik Mukesh Singh Manhas in Samba when the army authorities reached out to them to inform them about the IED blast and injuries suffered by their son in the Akhnoor sector.

Naik Mukesh Singh Manhas returned to his Army unit in the Akhnoor sector on January 28 after a two-week holiday for his ring ceremony. He too was constructing his home ahead of tying the nuptial knot. Naik Mukesh Singh comes from a family of patriots. His father Chagatar Singh served in the Jammu and Kashmir police while his younger brother is currently serving in the Indian army. Paying glowing tributes to Naik Mukesh Singh, former Sarpanch Mukhtiyar Singh remembered him as an enthusiastic cricketer, motivator, and always ready to extend a helping hand to the needy. Naik Mukesh was set to get married around April 20-21, the grieving father said, as his relatives and neighbors made a beeline in front of the house to convey their condolences.



New road safety policy to reduce accidents in mountainous areas of Uttarakhand

State cabinet endorses many proposals including increase in pension of former MLAs

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand government has decided to bring in a road safety policy-2025 to put a check on the number of road accidents in the mountainous areas of the State. A decision in this regard was taken in the meeting of the State cabinet held at the State secretariat on Wednesday. In the meeting chaired by the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, a total of 32 issues were discussed.

In the new road safety policy, the transport department has proposed to create 11 new posts of Assistant Regional Transport Officers (ARTO) with an objective of increasing enforcement of regulations and checking of vehicles in the mountainous areas of the State. The new posts of the ARTO are created in the 10 mountainous districts of the State.

The cabinet also decided to raise the pension of former MLAs from existing Rs 40,000 to Rs 60,000. The allowance payable to the former MLAs was also increased from existing Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000 per year for the number of years served by them as the legislator. The



cabinet also approved the proposal to increase the travel allowance given to the MLAs during the period in which the house is in session.

In an important decision, the cabinet approved the proposal to hand over the task of operation of Pravasi Janshakti recruitment agency to Uttarakhand Purva sainik kalyan Nigam Limited (UPNL). The land for the setting up of the office will be provided by the UPNL free of cost.

A proposal to amend the government order on payment of the incentive to the apple growers under the

intensive horticulture scheme was also approved by the State cabinet.

The cabinet also approved the plan to reorganise the departmental structure of the election department of the State. In the new structure there will be 387 posts.

The cabinet approved the proposal of the Forest department under which an incentive of Rs 30,000 per year will be given to the village Panchayat level forest fire safety committees. Under the plan 50 per cent of the amount will be given at the start of the forest fire season and remaining 50 per cent at the end of the

season after analysing the performance of the village Panchayat fire safety committee concerned. Every such committee will be allotted 500 to 600 hectares of forest area.

The cabinet also approved the plan of the finance department to reduce VAT on the natural (PNG and CNG) gas which will make the tariff at par with the neighbouring States.

In an important decision aimed at pleasing the employees, the cabinet amended the Leave Travel Concession (LTC) rates. In the new plan the employees

having level 10 pay band and higher will be eligible for air travel or first class railway travel. The employees on level VI to IX will be eligible for second class railway fare. The LTC facility is available to the State government employee and his family after completion of five years of service and is given once in 10 years.

In an endeavour to promote winter tourism and tourism activities in the remote areas of the State, the cabinet approved the plan to operate Yatra of Adi Kailash and Om Parvat by M I -17 helicopter.

Cabinet approves State budget 2025-26

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Pushkar Singh Dhami cabinet in its meeting held on Wednesday endorsed the State budget-2025-26. The budget estimates are expected to be more than Rs one lakh crore this year. The budget will be tabled by the finance minister Premchand Agarwal dur-

ing the budget session of the Vidhan Sabha commencing in Dehradun from February 18. It was expected that discussions on the proposed land laws will also be held in the meeting but it is learnt that this was not on the agenda.

38th National Games set to be a big success: CM Dhami

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said while inaugurating the wrestling and hockey competitions held at the Vandana Katariya National Hockey that the State govern-

ment is offering an alluring career avenue for many," he

held in permanent facilities rather than makeshift structures. While expressing concern about youth becoming prey to substance addiction, he said that they should properly occu-



ment's focused approach had resulted in hitherto successful conduct of the 38th National Games. Also, he expressed gratitude on behalf of the people of Uttarakhand to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving the State an opportunity to host the event. "All events of the National Games are progressing smoothly and the players from other States are having a positive experience in Uttarakhand," he said. He expressed satisfaction over excellent sports facilities being provided in the State to the participants to excel themselves. Notably, the State has moved up to the top ten in the medal table, a substantial improvement from the 25th place in the previous 37th National Games held in Goa. "Uttarakhand is estab-

lishing itself as a sports hub. We are going the whole way to carefully hone the sporting talents in the youngsters of the State. Sports is offering an alluring career avenue for many," he

held in permanent facilities rather than makeshift structures. While expressing concern about youth becoming prey to substance addiction, he said that they should properly occu-

PM to visit U'khand for winter Yatra

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the State for the now on-going winter Yatra. Notably, this is the first winter Yatra being organised in the State. "Preparations are underway for the Char Dham

Yatra as well," he said. Also, he noted that alongside the Nanda Raj Jat Yatra in the State, the Ardh Kumbh would be organised on the banks of Ganga in 2027. "We have started preparation well in advance," he said.

No third-party access to UCC registration data in U'khand: Kukreti

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

No third party will have access to information provided during service registration under the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand. Only the total number of registrations will be made public without revealing any personal details, the additional secretary, Home, Nivedita Kukreti said. She stated that maintaining the confidentiality of information has been given priority in the UCC and personal details such as name, address, mobile number, Aadhaar number, religion and caste will not be made public at any level. The number of registrations under the UCC will be visible on the official website but no individual information will be accessible. She stated that only the person who has applied for a service under the UCC will be able to seek details related to their own application. If the



application was filed jointly, the co-applicant will also have access to the details. No other person will be able to obtain this information. Kukreti said that the data related to UCC registrations will be shared with the local police station for record-keeping. However,

access to these details will be available to the station in charge only under the supervision of the respective senior/superintendents of police. Any misuse of information at any level will lead to action as per the applicable rules, she added.

Cong misleading people on smart meter installation: BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party claimed that many Congress-ruled states have smart meters installed but the party is creating unnecessary hurdles in Uttarakhand just for the sake of politics. The BJP State media in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan stated this in response to the Congress's opposition to the installation of smart electricity meters in Uttarakhand. He accused Congress of misleading the public and acting as a barrier to efforts aimed at reducing electricity theft. Chauhan alleged that the opposition does not want Uttarakhand to progress economically or provide better services to consumers. He stated that smart meters are crucial for

both consumers and the electricity department, ensuring transparency, accurate billing and better financial management.

Chauhan stated that chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has introduced free electricity benefits, providing 200 units in high-altitude areas and 100 units in plains areas. He stated that smart meters will provide consumers with real-time electricity consumption updates, online access to usage details, automated billing alerts and easy payment options.

He stated that nearly 20 crore smart meters are approved for installation nationwide, with over 55

lakh already in use. Uttarakhand has also completed the selection process for agencies to implement the system. According to Chauhan, smart meters will eliminate billing fraud, reduce consumer complaints and allow users to track their usage through a mobile app. Monthly meter readings will no longer be required and consumers will avoid late fees and billing discrepancies. The system will also improve power management by providing real-time data for better planning. Chauhan said that smart meters are not just beneficial for consumers but also for the electricity department, as they will curb power theft and increase revenue.

Congress threatens to start agitation on smart meter installation

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The vice president of Uttarakhand Congress Suryakant Dhasmana has said that the decision of the State government to install smart meters is a step in the direction of handing over the electricity generation and distribution system to Gautam Adani. He said that the Congress will oppose the installation of smart meters and soon it will launch a Statewide agitation on the issue.

He said that the manner in which the senior leaders and spokespersons of BJP are listing out the benefits of smart meters reminds one of the similar efforts to highlight the benefits of smart city Dehradun five years ago. Dhasmana said that the people of Dehradun were shocked and felt cheated

when the then District Magistrate of Dehradun abruptly declared the culmination of Dehradun smart city project after spending thousands of crores of rupees on it. He said that despite spending crores of rupees Dehradun city still lacks a proper drainage system. The city continues to suffer from drinking water shortage and no new source of water for the city has been added. The garbage collection in Dehradun is completely dependent on the contractors and the roads of Dehradun are pathetic. Dhasmana said that the installation of smart meters will give no benefit to the consumers and their installation will pave the way for the entry of Adani in the power generation and its distribution in the State.

Prepare plan for exploration of mineral wealth: CS to officers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief secretary Radha Raturi has directed the Mining department to prepare a comprehensive working plan for exploration of the mineral wealth in the State.

entrepreneurs for developing methodology for exploration, extraction, processing and recycling of critical minerals.

She highlighted the need to

leading experts in evaluation, exploration, extraction, mining sustainability and supply chain analysis of critical minerals while adding that the IIT Roorkee will have a major role



The CS chaired a meeting of the officers of Mining department, IIT Roorkee, Monash University Australia and business representatives held at the State secretariat on Wednesday.

In the meeting the CS asked the Mining department, experts of IIT Roorkee and

develop a common platform on the principles of cooperation, partnership and complementarity between the State government, education sector and industry for self-reliance in the sector of minerals in the State.

Raturi also stressed on the necessity of taking the help of

in this endeavour.

The CS said that special training programmes, workshops and applied research and capacity building need to be strengthened to develop expertise in critical mineral technologies. Secretary Brijesh Kumar Sant and others attended the meeting.

Cybercriminals dupe Rudrapur municipal commissioner of Rs 1.84 lakh

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Rudrapur municipal commissioner Naresh Chandra Durgapal has fallen victim to cyber fraud, with cybercriminals siphoning off approximately Rs 1.84 lakh from his bank account. Following his complaint, the police have registered a case against an unidentified individual and have started an investigation. According to the officials, the investigations revealed that the fraudsters

complaint filed with the police, the commissioner stated that on February 7, an unknown person accessed his phone without authorisation and withdrew Rs 1.55 lakh and Rs 29,000 from two different bank accounts. According to the police complaint, the fraudsters first installed malware on his mobile device and then transferred the registered bank number to another unautho-



used malware software to gain unauthorised access to the mobile number linked to the commissioner's bank account. By intercepting SMS notifications, they carried out financial transactions without his knowledge.

The officials said that in the

raised device. Expressing concern over potential future fraud, the commissioner also reported the matter to the national cyber helpline in 1930. The officials said that the police have registered a case under relevant sections and an investigation into the incident is ongoing.

Early blooming of Buransh worrisome: Chandi Prasad Bhatt

PNS ■ NEW TEHRI

In a quirky state of things, 'Buransh' - Uttarakhand's State tree - which used to bloom in 'Chait' (March-April) is now displaying its floral beauty in 'Magh' (February) itself. This plant is rich with medicinal value

Botanists, the flowering takes a period of 15-20 days.

Scientifically known as Rhododendron, Buransh is a group consisting of over 1,000 species of woody plants belonging to the Ericaceae

Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri, Chandi Prasad Bhatt observed that the changes in weather are affecting vegetation as a whole and the early blooming of 'Buransh' is one of the changes being found in nature. "The crop cycle and



whose juice is considered good for those who suffer from erratic heart functioning.

Those who are in the know attribute this untimely flowering to global warming and scanty winter rain. As per the

family most of which are known for bright red flowers. It is found in regions with altitude ranging from 5000 to 8,000 feet above the sea level.

The founder of the 'Chipko' Movement and recipient of

the wilds are being affected, too. Many plants which would grow in the hills are disappearing fast. We are all concerned. These must be researched and a solution must be found," he noted.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Yunus Govt in the crosshair

Bangladesh army shifts away from the Yunus Government as it calls for stronger ties with India amid chaos and downward slide

Bangladesh is currently facing a period of political uncertainty and unrest as the government led by Muhammad Yunus finds itself increasingly at odds with the country's powerful military establishment. The recent statements made by General Waker-uz-Zaman, the Chief of Army Staff, at the Dhaka International Marathon 2025, indicate a significant shift in the military's stance towards the civilian government. His emphasis on peace, stability and international cooperation—particularly with India—suggests growing dissatisfaction within the army ranks regarding the Yunus administration's policies and governance approach. The military in Bangladesh has historically played a crucial role in maintaining internal stability, often stepping in when political crises spiral out of control. With political tensions escalating under the Yunus government, the army appears to be distancing itself from the administration, signalling a potential realignment in the country's power dynamics. Several factors seem to be driving the military's dissatisfaction with the Yunus government. This indicates the military's concerns over the deteriorating economic conditions and increasing social divisions under Yunus's leadership. Persistent political unrest could be damaging to foreign investments and economic growth, both of which are essential for national development.

The military appears to be worried about governance inefficiencies and security concerns, especially as political violence and mass protests become more frequent. The Yunus government's inability to control these disruptions may be viewed as a failure to ensure stability, a key concern for the army. Bangladesh's military leadership values strong bilateral relations with key regional powers. General Waker's remarks about India underscore the army's desire for a pragmatic foreign policy approach that prioritises stability and mutual benefits rather than ideological stances or populist rhetoric. General Waker-uz-Zaman's statement emphasising India as an important neighbour and a key partner in regional security and economic cooperation suggests a strategic recalibration in Bangladesh's foreign policy. His remarks that Bangladesh "depends on India in many matters" and that both countries should respect each other's strategic interests signal a clear endorsement of closer ties with New Delhi. India and Bangladesh share deep economic linkages, including trade, energy cooperation and infrastructure projects. A stable relationship with India ensures continued economic growth and regional connectivity. Cooperation in counterterrorism efforts and border management is crucial for maintaining peace and stability. Bangladesh's military leadership might be viewing stronger ties with India as a means to maintain a balanced foreign policy, ensuring that Dhaka does not become overly reliant on any single regional power. The balance of power between the civilian leadership and the military will be crucial in determining the country's direction in the coming months.



leadership values strong bilateral relations with key regional powers. General Waker's remarks about India underscore the army's desire for a pragmatic foreign policy approach that prioritises stability and mutual benefits rather than ideological stances or populist rhetoric. General Waker-uz-Zaman's statement emphasising India as an important neighbour and a key partner in regional security and economic cooperation suggests a strategic recalibration in Bangladesh's foreign policy. His remarks that Bangladesh "depends on India in many matters" and that both countries should respect each other's strategic interests signal a clear endorsement of closer ties with New Delhi. India and Bangladesh share deep economic linkages, including trade, energy cooperation and infrastructure projects. A stable relationship with India ensures continued economic growth and regional connectivity. Cooperation in counterterrorism efforts and border management is crucial for maintaining peace and stability. Bangladesh's military leadership might be viewing stronger ties with India as a means to maintain a balanced foreign policy, ensuring that Dhaka does not become overly reliant on any single regional power. The balance of power between the civilian leadership and the military will be crucial in determining the country's direction in the coming months.

PICTALK



Devotees perform rituals during the Thaipusam festival at Vadapalani Murugan temple, in Chennai

Mann ki baat: Leading the global revival of radio



SANTOSH MATHEW

As we celebrate World Radio Day, Mann Ki Baat reminds us that the essence of communication remains the same—connecting, inspiring and bringing people together

Radio is not just a medium; it is a lifeline that transcends borders, connects people and amplifies voices. On World Radio Day, as the world celebrates the power of this enduring platform, India stands at the forefront of a remarkable communication revolution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly broadcast, Mann Ki Baat, which recently aired its 118th episode, exemplifies how radio is experiencing a renaissance in the digital age, proving to be one of the most effective tools of governance, inspiration, and soft power diplomacy. When UNESCO designated February 13 as World Radio Day in 2011, the objective was clear: to recognise the influence of radio in fostering dialogue, spreading awareness, and bridging communities worldwide.

In India, Mann Ki Baat is a testimony to the enduring power of radio. Launched in 2014, this monthly programme has transformed into one of the largest and most effective communication experiments in the world, reaching millions of listeners not just in India but globally. With an unparalleled ability to engage audiences through storytelling, Modi's initiative underscores the relevance of radio in an era dominated by digital noise. At a time when many predicted the decline of traditional radio, Mann Ki Baat has revived and redefined its significance.

The programme's strength lies in its simplicity and relatability. Every episode delivers not just policy discussions but also inspirational stories of common citizens, grassroots innovations, cultural heritage and national achievements. The 118th episode was no different, weaving narratives that resonated with the spirit of nation-building, environmental consciousness, and collective responsibility. Beyond its national appeal, Mann Ki Baat has become an instrument of India's soft power diplomacy. The global Indian diaspora tunes in eagerly, fostering a sense of connection with the homeland. The broadcast's reach extends beyond national boundaries, often being



translated into multiple languages, including regional South Asian tongues, strengthening India's diplomatic and cultural ties with neighbouring nations. As India emerges as a global leader, leveraging radio as a tool for soft power projection enhances its image as a nation that values dialogue, shared heritage and cooperation. South Asia, a region bound by deep historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, finds an unexpected bridge in Mann Ki Baat.

The programme's themes—self-reliance, community-driven initiatives, environmental sustainability and youth empowerment—are not just relevant to India but also resonate with India's neighbours. In an era where integration efforts in South Asia often face political roadblocks, the revival of radio as a medium of cultural and ideological exchange holds immense potential. India's radio diplomacy, through Mann Ki Baat, can become a catalyst for fostering deeper South Asian engagement, promoting shared developmental narratives, and creating common aspirations among regional populations. The 118th episode once again demonstrated how radio can be used as a participatory medium. Modi's interactions with citizens, his references to



AS INDIA EMERGES AS A GLOBAL LEADER, LEVERAGING RADIO AS A TOOL FOR SOFT POWER PROJECTION ENHANCES ITS IMAGE AS A NATION THAT VALUES DIALOGUE, SHARED HERITAGE AND COOPERATION

letters and messages from listeners, and his emphasis on people-centric governance make Mann Ki Baat an inclusive space for dialogue. Unlike social media platforms that are often fragmented and dominated by echo chambers, radio, through this programme, emerges as a unifying force that connects the masses uninterruptedly and intimately. From the fishermen in Tamil Nadu to the farmers in Punjab, from students in Meghalaya to entrepreneurs in Gujarat, Mann Ki Baat speaks to every Indian, transcending linguistic, geographic, and socio-economic barriers. It harnesses the power of storytelling to amplify the voices of unsung heroes, small businesses, and cultural custodians. Radio has always been a tool of influence, but Mann Ki Baat takes it a step further by combining traditional broadcasting with modern digital integration. The program is simultaneously aired on multiple platforms, including community radio stations, AIR (All India Radio), podcasts, and social media channels. This hybrid model ensures that the message reaches every demographic, from the rural farmer with a transistor radio to the urban professional tuning in via a smartphone app. On World Radio Day, as glob-

al discussions revolve around the revival and impact of radio, Mann Ki Baat stands as a shining example of how the medium can be harnessed for nation-building and diplomacy. Countries across the world can draw lessons from India's use of radio as a tool for constructive engagement, leadership communication, and global outreach. In an era where polarization is rampant, radio's ability to create a sense of collective consciousness is more valuable than ever. India, with its vast diversity, has found in Mann Ki Baat a unifying voice that reflects the aspirations of its people. The power of voice, the magic of words, and the intimacy of audio storytelling are elements that make this programme not just a political initiative but a cultural phenomenon. As the world looks for ways to reinvigorate traditional communication platforms, India's example showcases that radio is not just surviving but thriving in the digital age. Mann Ki Baat is leading this revival, proving that in the cacophony of digital noise, the human voice still holds the power to unite and inspire.

(The writer is an Associate Professor Centre For South Asian Studies, Pondicherry Central University. Views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AI FOR PUBLIC GOOD

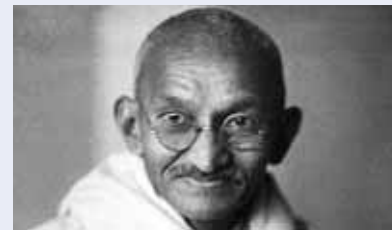
Madam — Artificial intelligence has become a truly global technology. The adoption of AI in healthcare, education, finance, labour and transportation is impacting society on a global scale while fundamental breakthroughs are being facilitated by research collaborations around the world. Its rapid deployment also creates major challenges in terms of the reliability of information, the protection of basic rights and accessibility. It is the international community's responsibility to maintain balance in our societies and to craft AI that respects universal values. The Paris AI Summit has been focused on several key themes related to opportunities, benefits and governance of AI. Also, these themes include AI for public good, for global AI governance, for innovation and culture and for environmentally sustainable AI solutions. The aim of the summit is to strike a balance between technological advancement and the preservation of universal values. The Paris AI Summit is of significant importance for the future of AI due to its focus on global governance, accessibility and ethical development of AI. The AI Action Committee at Paris, co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, shed light on India and France's joint work in the five dedicated working groups to tackle key issues for tomorrow: Public interest AI, future of work, innovation and culture Trust in AI and global AI governance. The role of India in the Paris AI Summit is laudable.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

US TARIFFS ON ALUMINIUM, STEEL

Madam — US President Donald Trump has virtually dropped another bomb on the global economy with the announcement of levying a 25 percent duty on steel and aluminium imports and reciprocal duty on all other imports from all countries. India is one of the largest exporters of steel to the US. While the world was aware of Trump's unconventional policies, his blanket threat to impose reciprocal tariffs—without any exceptions—almost upends the World Trade

Gandhi's insight on education



propos the article "Rekindling Gandhian values in education." Mahatma Gandhi wrote a few articles in a simple manner on the value of education that should serve as a big motivation for the students of our country. If the students read those writings and apply them in the modern perspective, they will surely give a new dimension to our education system. Gandhi played a significant role in value

education by emphasising the importance of moral and ethical principles. He encouraged educators to teach values like truth, non-violence and respect for others. He felt that instilling these values in students would help them become responsible and compassionate individuals.

Gandhi described himself as a curious and eager learner during his student days. He valued education and believed that it was essential for personal growth. We have to apply Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on value education as a demand of time. Gandhi's unique and refined views about value education are not only important but are worth applying not only in India but also in the rest of the world.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Organisation's (WTO) mandate to promote free trade by eliminating tariffs, quotas and other restrictions.

The free trade regime in the last 20 years kept inflation in manufactured products under control globally. However, Trump's populist agenda to find jobs for his support base consisting of semi-literate people in the US could damage the US-led alliance based on the Bretton Woods system. While the immediate threat from Trump's tariff on steel and aluminium could be negligible, the Indian economy could face the heat from fleeing foreign investors which could affect stock valuations and rupee weakness which could result in imported inflation.

N Sathasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

AFFORESTATION NEEDED TO SAVE FORESTS

Madam — It is indeed a matter of concern that a government agency like NHAI is overenthusiastic in felling a huge number of trees but not interested in attending to the compensatory afforestation. The government brought amendments in the Forest Act last year, which is sure to reduce

the forest cover in the country. Already the country's forest cover has come down from the recommended level of 1/3 to 1/5 of the land area.

Now we can expect further deterioration in the status, as using forest land is permitted for shikar and industrial activities. The centuries-old valuable thick forests in the Northeast are threatened with their very existence in the coming years. Mines are given to private players to hasten the process of exploiting the fossil fuels. This is an act that goes against the concern of everyone over the fast-changing climate. Every mine project begins with the destruction of forests in the vast sheet of hill areas, which will take many decades to reconstruct by afforestation efforts. It is high time the moments to save forests take the form of a people's movement to sensitise all the concerned and save the globe to make it fit enough to live. The apex court's concern conveyed to NHAI is welcome.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Breaking barriers: Building a future for women in science

Trailblazing women scientists continue to defy the odds, proving that inclusion is not just a matter of fairness but a necessity for scientific and societal progress



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

In the 21st century, where scientific breakthroughs continue to shape our world, the persistent under-representation of women in science remains a glaring issue. Women have been at the forefront of some of the greatest scientific achievements across the globe in diverse fields from basic science to space science. Despite these inspiring role models, systemic barriers continue to stifle women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It's time we confront these challenges and build a future where women can truly thrive in science. What kind of scientific world are we building if we exclude half of our population?



Without the full participation of women, we lose access to a vast pool of talent, creativity, and innovative solutions that could address some of our biggest challenges. Many girls are discouraged from pursuing science from a young age due to stereotypes that frame these fields as "unsuitable" or "too difficult." The so-called "leaky pipeline" begins to take its toll as early

as high school, with fewer girls opting for science-related studies and careers. Even for those who break through these initial hurdles, the challenges persist in higher education and professional life. Women in research face a lack of mentorship, unequal access to funding and systemic biases in hiring and promotions. The numbers speak for themselves: UNESCO reports that only 35 per cent of STEM students globally are women, and their representation in leadership roles remains even lower. In India, the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) confirms that while the number of women pursuing science has grown, their presence in top research positions and leadership roles is still dismal. Despite these odds, many Indian women scientists have

defied the status quo and achieved remarkable success. Dr Indira Hinduja revolutionised reproductive medicine by developing India's first test-tube baby in 1986 and pioneering the gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT) technique. Dr Soumya Swaminathan's leadership as Chief Scientist at the World Health Organization (WHO) played a crucial role in global health policy. Kalpana Kalahasti, a senior scientist at ISRO, was instrumental in India's triumphant Chandrayaan-3 mission and earned a spot in Nature's list of notable figures in 2023. These trailblazers not only pushed the boundaries of scientific knowledge but also broke societal barriers, paving the way for future generations of women in science. Does this make any difference to the society? Society benefits from more inclusive and comprehensive solutions when women are at the forefront of scientific innovation. Areas like maternal health, gender-specific medicine and community health interventions often flourish because of women scientists who understand these challenges first-

hand. Inclusion isn't just about fairness—it's about enriching science itself. So, how do we move forward? Building a future for women in science requires collective effort on multiple fronts. We must dismantle the structural barriers hindering women's advancement, provide mentorship programmes and promote policies that ensure equal hiring, funding, and career progression opportunities. Educational institutions should actively encourage girls to pursue STEM fields, while workplaces must offer flexible work environments that allow women to balance personal and professional responsibilities. It is time to tear down these barriers and build a future where every young girl who dreams of becoming a scientist can do so without limitations. When women are given equal opportunities to contribute to science, we all stand to gain—from groundbreaking discoveries to a more inclusive and prosperous world.

(The writer is the Dean Academic Affairs, Garden City University, Bangalore, views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

ONE FAITH ONE WORLD

It's easy to point fingers when things go wrong, but true growth begins with self-reflection



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

All of us have heard the famous phrase "United We Stand, Divided We Fall" during our school days through the simple story of an old farmer who, on his deathbed, taught the importance of unity to his disunited sons through a bundle of sticks. That story still holds an important place in our society and has even gained popularity because discord, disunity, strife and warfare have assumed unprecedented proportions in the modern world. Today, one of the most arduous challenges that face humanity is to establish harmony among people of different religions.

There is no doubt that political and religious leaders have time and again endeavoured to bring people onto a common platform and find ways and means to forge better understanding and acceptance of each faith. But despite their hard efforts, not much has changed. Hence, the greatest question of all at present is whether can the diverse religions and faiths ever be united. If so, then how? If we walk down history lane, we would find that one of the important reasons why the need for religious harmony originated is that the most



violent wars and conflicts in human history were based on religious intolerance and hatred. It might be a shocking statement, but it's the harsh reality that religions, which are supposed to make people more peaceful and loving, have today become the biggest cause of discord and bloodshed in the world. It's so appalling to see organized groups across the globe sworn to spread terror in the name of religion and carry out ethnic cleansing in the name of removing evil from the world.

If we closely examine the growth of each faith through the centuries, it reveals an interesting pattern. Even though there are some common values and tenets in all faiths, there are far too many misconceptions and conflicting beliefs that have continually fanned mistrust and hostility among the masses. It's quite imperative to know that, at the time of their inception, every religion had the power of purity, truth, and unity.

Gradually, cracks, factionalism, shallowness, delusion, deception and ritualistic adherence devoid of spiritual significance began to appear. Hence, instead of empowering spiritual values, religions perpetuated dogmas, disciplines, and barriers that segregate people on many lines. Many fall prey to the very evils they preach against, such as the lust for power, pleasure and money. There can be better understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of each faith, but there cannot be unity unless there is a single or common belief. So, what's the best way to reach a common solution acceptable to all faiths? According to divine knowledge imparted by the Supreme Almighty, everything in the eternal cycle of the human world drama goes through a change, which means that everything degrades from a perfect state to an imperfect, fragmented state. Be it human souls, nature, religions, or civilisations, almost everything passes through the sato (pure), rajo (mixed) and tamo (impure) stages as the time cycle spins from the Golden Age to the Iron Age.

As of today, we are witnessing the tamo-pradhan (most degraded) stage of all aspects of human existence, and religions are no exception to this process of change. Hence, we can envisage a unified faith only in terms of the spirituality inherent in all faiths. It is said that God is Truth, and true religion embodies that truth. Hence, when humans embrace that truth in their hearts, there will be a unified world. So, let us all stand united with one unified faith to welcome the new world where truth, peace and harmony will prevail.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

The MBA dilemma: Why degrees alone no longer guarantee success



DINESH SOOD

Once considered a guaranteed gateway to lucrative careers, the MBA is under scrutiny as unemployment rates rise—even among graduates from elite institutions



The job market for MBA graduates has reached a critical juncture, sparking conversations that resonate with a growing number of aspirants and professionals grappling with the changing realities of employment. Once seen as a surefire ticket to high-paying corporate roles, the MBA degree is scrutinised for relevance in an evolving economic landscape. This issue is not confined to India alone; even graduates from elite institutions like Harvard, Stanford, and Wharton feel the squeeze. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that in 2024, 23 per cent of Harvard Business School's MBA graduates were jobless. Other top-tier business schools like Stanford and Wharton have seen similar dips, with unemployment rates hovering around 20 per cent.

The problem is not just limited to the United States. According to the International Labour Organisation's Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024, 13 per cent of the global youth labour force was unemployed in 2023—a staggering figure representing nearly 65 million people. This unsettling trend makes traditional, generalist MBA degrees less appealing than targeted skill certifications. A recent Forbes report highlighted how some MBA graduates have succeeded by lowering their expectations and opting for less conventional roles. In an era where industries are shifting dynamically, the rigid, cookie-cutter MBA model is struggling to keep pace. The need for a 360-degree reimagining of this degree has never been more pressing.

Degrees Alone Won't Cut It Anymore One fundamental truth is becoming evident: degrees alone no longer guarantee job or entrepreneurship security. The future belongs to professionals who continuously upskill and adapt to meet the ever-changing demands of the workforce. What used to be a clear, structured career trajectory for MBA graduates—typically leading to consulting, finance, or management roles—is now blurred. The stark reality is that a prestigious qualification, while valuable, no longer provides



WHAT USED TO BE A CLEAR, STRUCTURED CAREER TRAJECTORY FOR MBA GRADUATES—TYPICALLY LEADING TO CONSULTING, FINANCE, OR MANAGEMENT ROLES—IS NOW BLURRED

immunity against unemployment or underemployment. Even more telling is the global shift in job seekers' mindsets. While travelling to Canada, I recently observed an MBA graduate running a salon branded "MBA Barber Shop." This reflects an important reality—many skilled gig jobs are vital for holistic growth, but traditional academic pathways have often dismissed such careers as unworthy. Yet, most developed nations respect one's skills rather than qualifications or family background. We must ask: Why doesn't Indian society do the same? **Skill Respect Over Degree Prestige**

The changing job landscape demands a fundamental shift in how we perceive employment, education, and career success. Skill acquisition is about individuals learning new competencies and families being sensitised to alternative career paths. It is about communities understanding the implications of an evolving job market. It is about cities and regions acknowledging and respecting those who possess the skills necessary to sustain a livelihood, irrespective of whether they hold an MBA or a B.Tech degree.

The MBA has been a gateway to professional and financial success for decades. However, the economy's evolution demands a departure from this narrow thinking. In India and many other countries, social conditioning has led to an unspoken hierarchy of professions. White-collar corporate roles are celebrated, while vocational or blue-collar jobs are often overlooked. This mindset is outdated and damaging in a world where adaptability and skills matter more than mere academic credentials. **A 360-Degree Skills Revolution** What we need now is a complete rethinking of education and skill development. The traditional MBA

must evolve from a broad-spectrum business degree into a dynamic, skills-focused program that integrates emerging industry trends. A 360-degree approach should include everything from finance to marketing and HR. MBA programmes must incorporate niche skills such as data analytics, digital transformation, sustainability management and entrepreneurship in beauty-wellness, the most emerging sector. Instead of theoretical coursework, there should be a stronger focus on apprenticeships, live projects and problem-solving in real-world business scenarios.

Understanding AI, automation, and emerging technologies should be a core part of the curriculum to prepare graduates for future-ready roles. Rather than treating entrepreneurship as an alternative, business schools should actively promote and equip students with the skills to start and sustain their ventures. Business schools must recognise the gig economy's rise and train students to navigate freelance and contract-based work models. **Beyond Livelihood—Dignity in Work**

Redefining career success means placing equal value on all forms of work. Whether a person is an MBA graduate managing a corporate division, an AI consultant, a skilled tradesperson, or a self-employed barber, their ability to contribute meaningfully to society matters. The prestige of a job should be measured not by its title but by its impact and sustainability. Parents, educators, and policymakers have a role in fostering this change. We must instil in young minds that success is not confined to traditional white-collar professions. Regardless of their chosen field, a skilled individual should be celebrated just as much as a corporate executive. If an MBA graduate decides to become an artisan,

a chef, a salon owner or a renewable energy technician, they should be seen as pioneers, not failures. **The Need for Institutional Change**

Educational institutions must move beyond outdated frameworks and align themselves with industry demands. Business schools should foster adaptive thinking, preparing students for unconventional but lucrative career paths. The focus should be on problem-solving, digital proficiency, and entrepreneurial agility rather than rigid academic theories.

Governments and industries should also contribute by incentivising skill-based education. Scholarships, subsidies, and awareness campaigns can help shift societal perspectives on what constitutes a respectable and rewarding career.

Conclusion: A Future Built on Skills Once a golden ticket to corporate success, the MBA faces an existential crisis. If it is to remain relevant, it must undergo radical transformation. A degree is no longer a guarantee; what truly matters is an individual's ability to adapt, innovate, and deliver value in an ever-changing world. As a society, we need to support and encourage young professionals in their quest to discover their true potential—even in jobs that were once considered "odd." In reality, no job is odd; what matters is its necessity and impact. By embracing a 360-degree perspective on skills and careers, we can build a more inclusive, resilient, and future-ready workforce. The time for change is now.

(The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation, and a Network Member, of India International Skill Centres. View express are personal)

Ethics-driven AI in predictive healthcare: Building a foundation of trust and accountability

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising predictive healthcare, offering early disease detection, personalised treatment plans and improved patient outcomes

In today's rapidly advancing healthcare landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a transformative role, particularly in predictive healthcare. AI's ability to analyse vast datasets enables early disease detection, personalised treatment plans and improved patient outcomes. The global AI in healthcare market, valued at approximately \$15.4 billion in 2022, is projected to surge to \$187.95 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 37 per cent.

Yet, with this potential comes a responsibility to ensure that AI is used responsibly, ethically, and equitably. Establishing a framework that prioritises privacy, fairness, transparency and accountability is essential to protect patient rights and



GERALD JAIDEEP

maintain public trust. The Power of AI in Predictive Healthcare AI's role in predictive healthcare is primarily driven by machine learning and data analytics, empowering it to forecast diseases, assess risk factors, and recommend preventive measures. By examining patterns in com-

prehensive datasets, such as medical histories, genetic profiles, lifestyle information and real-time health data, AI can predict the likelihood of conditions ranging from diabetes and cardiovascular diseases to complex ailments like cancer and Alzheimer's.

This shift from reactive to preventive care can ease the burden on healthcare systems and improve patient quality of life. For example, AI-based diagnostics for diabetic retinopathy have shown an accuracy rate of over 87 per cent, enabling early detection and timely intervention. Similarly, IBM Watson's Oncology AI has achieved 90 per cent accuracy in cancer treatment recommendations that align with those of human oncologists. However, to har-

ness AI's potential responsibly, it's crucial to address the ethical challenges it introduces. **Safeguarding Data Privacy and Security**

The ethical use of AI in healthcare hinges on the responsible management of patient data. Predictive healthcare AI relies heavily on sensitive information, including medical, genetic, and behavioural data. Yet, the need for privacy is ever more pressing—72 per cent of Americans express significant concerns about data privacy in AI applications, particularly in healthcare.

In 2022, nearly 50 million healthcare records were exposed to data breaches in the United States, underscoring the need for strong data security protocols. To protect this information, AI systems must



prioritise rigorous security measures such as encryption, anonymisation and regular audits.

Patients should also provide informed consent, clearly explaining how their data will be used and stored. By centring data protection in AI development, healthcare can ensure patient confidentiality and foster the trust necessary for AI's

continued adoption. **Addressing Bias for Fair and Equitable Predictions**

AI's reliance on historical data introduces the risk of bias, which can lead to predictions that disproportionately impact certain demographic groups. Research has shown that AI models trained on biased data result in 35 per cent more misdiagnoses for Black and Hispanic patients compared to white patients. In healthcare, such biases could exacerbate disparities for marginalised populations.

Ensuring fairness requires AI systems trained on diverse, representative datasets, as well as continuous monitoring and adjustments to detect and correct biases. A study published in Nature Medicine found that AI systems trained on

inclusive datasets significantly reduce diagnostic discrepancies, underscoring the importance of inclusivity in training data. Collaboration with healthcare professionals and ethicists is also vital to developing AI solutions that are equitable and serve all patients effectively.

Promoting Transparency and Explainability in AI Models

The complexity of AI algorithms often results in "black box" decision-making, where the reasoning behind predictions is not fully understood by users or developers. In predictive healthcare, this lack of transparency can hinder trust and adoption among patients and healthcare providers alike. In a survey by the American Medical Association, 67 per cent of healthcare providers

expressed reservations about using "black-box" AI systems, highlighting the need for explainable AI. Currently, only 23 per cent of AI-based diagnostic tools meet explainability standards to ensure transparency. By developing interpretable models, researchers can make AI's decision-making processes accessible to healthcare providers, enabling them to communicate AI-driven recommendations clearly and fostering patient involvement in care decisions.

As AI continues to advance, a strong ethical framework will be essential to uphold public trust and ensure that AI-driven healthcare remains a force for good.

(The writer is CEO, Medvarity; views are personal)

Trump admn battles lawsuit to block USAID dismantling

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Trump administration will present an unforbearing argument for dismantling the US Agency for International Development to a federal judge Wednesday: USAID is rife with "insubordination" and must be shut down for the administration to decide what pieces of it to salvage. The argument, made in an affidavit by political appointee and deputy USAID administrator Pete Marocco, comes as the administration confronts a lawsuit by two groups representing federal employees. USAID staffers deny insubordination and call the accusation a pretext to break up the more than 60-year-old agency, one of the world's biggest donors of humanitarian and development assistance. Accounts of USAID staffers filed Tuesday in support of the lawsuit revealed new details of the destruction of the agency. That includes a sworn statement from a USAID staffer describing a special leader in billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency teams allegedly directing USAID staffers on Monday in the immediate termination of about 200 USAID programs without proper authorisation or process. US District Judge Carl Nichols, an appointee of President Donald Trump, dealt the administration a setback Friday in its dismantling of the agency, temporarily halting plans to pull all but a fraction of USAID staffers off the job worldwide. Nichols is due to

Trump readies matching tariffs on trade partners

Washington (PTI): President Donald Trump is taking additional action to upset the world trade system, with plans to sign an order as soon as Wednesday that would require that US tariffs on imports match the tax rates charged by other countries. "It's time to be reciprocal," Trump told reporters earlier this week. "You'll be hearing that word a lot. Reciprocal. If they charge us, we charge them." The president had suggested that the order would come on Tuesday or Wednesday. But when Tuesday passed without the tariffs being officially announced, Trump was asked if he would sign the order on Wednesday and Trump answered: "We'll see what happens." As Trump has unleashed a series of tariffs after being in power for less than a month, he has fully taken ownership of the path of the US economy. It's a bet that his economic ideas can eventually deliver meaningful results for vot-

ers, even if by Trump's own admission the import taxes could involve some financial pain in the form of inflation and economic disruptions. For all of Trump's talk, the impact will likely depend on the details of the tariffs and how other nations respond. A reciprocal tariffs order could amount to a substantial tax hike to be shouldered largely by US consumers and businesses as the Census Bureau reported that the country had total imports of USD 4.1 trillion last year. The tariffs could set off retaliatory measures by trading partners that could roil growth around the globe and reset where the United States stands with allies and rivals alike. By signing the order, Trump would fulfil his long-standing pledge to raise taxes on most imported goods, a clear break with his recent White House predecessors who saw tariffs as either targeted tools to use strategically or barriers worth lowering.

Leaders of Indonesia, Turkiye hold talks on defence, economic ties

PTI ■ BOGOR

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto on Wednesday for talks aimed at strengthening economic and defence ties between the two Muslim-majority nations. The two countries are holding their first High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council summit after agreeing to create the forum at a meeting in Bali in 2022. Erdogan's state visit to Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and Southeast Asia's largest economy, was his second stop in a four-day visit that also includes Malaysia and Pakistan. "This meeting is the highest regular bilateral forum

between the two countries where all matters of common interest will be discussed, including strategic issues and priorities," said Indonesian foreign ministry spokesperson Rolliansyah Soemirat ahead of the visit. A Turkish statement said the discussions will be focused on current regional and global issues, particularly the war in Gaza. On Monday, the Turkish leader met Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and reiterated his opposition to a US proposal to relocate Palestinians from Gaza and said Israel should pay for the territory's reconstruction. "We do not consider the proposal to exile the Palestinians from the lands they have lived in for thousands of years as

something to be taken seriously," Erdogan said. Erdogan and his wife, First Lady Emine Erdogan, arrived in Jakarta late Tuesday and was welcomed by Subianto at Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport in a light rain. Erdogan rode with Subianto in a motorcade to his hotel. Indonesia and Turkiye have built an increasingly close relationship in recent years, and the two leaders previously met in Ankara last July when Subianto was still president-elect and defence minister. Subianto pledged to "elevate defence cooperation and other strategic fields for mutual benefit". The two countries signed a defense cooperation agreement in 2010, under which

Indonesia's state-run arms producer Pindad and Turkiye's FNSS jointly developed a new model of medium tank. In 2023, the two countries inked a plan of action for joint military exercises and defence industry cooperation. In addition to Indonesia, Turkiye has HILSCC cooperation forums with 21 other countries, including Pakistan. Turkiye and Indonesia plan to sign agreements on trade, investment, education and technology during Erdogan's visit. Erdogan will head on to Pakistan on Wednesday, where he and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will address the Pakistan-Turkiye Business and Investment Forum and attend another HILSCC meeting.



President Donald Trump, greets Marc Fogel at the White House, Tuesday.

Investigators file criminal complaints against Duterte

Manila (PTI): Philippine government investigators filed criminal complaints, including sedition, against Vice President Sara Duterte on Wednesday over her public threat to have the president assassinated if she herself was killed in an escalating political storm. National Bureau of Investigation Director Jaime Santiago said at a news conference that the complaints of inciting to sedition and grave threats against Duterte were filed at the Department of Justice, which would decide whether to dismiss the complaints outright or elevate them to court. The vice president, a lawyer and daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte, reacted briefly by saying that she had expected the move by the NBI. She has accused her political rivals of taking steps to prevent her from seeking the presidency when President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's term ends in 2028. The vice president's father himself, whose presidential term ended in 2022, is facing legal troubles. The International Criminal Court has been investigating the widespread killings under a brutal anti-drug crackdown he oversaw while in office as a possible crime against humanity. Sara Duterte ran as Marcos' vice presidential running mate in 2022. Their whirlwind political alliance, however, quickly frayed and deteriorated into a bitter feud in an Asian democracy that has long been hamstrung by clashing political clans. Last week, the vice president was impeached by the House of Representatives on a range of accusations that included her threat to have Marcos, his wife and House Speaker Martin Romualdez killed if she herself were fatally attacked in an unspecified plot that she brought up in an online news conference in November. The impeachment complaint, which was signed by majority of the more than 300 members of the House, which is dominated by Marcos' allies, also included allegations of largescale corruption and misuse of her office's confidential funds.

THE PIONEERS CLASSIFIED

LOST & FOUND
Dear sir my name is zubaida w/o Dilshad my property paper chain are lost in Delhi, Property address-village sarawa pargana sarawa teshil & dist- meerut details -book no-1 documents no-137, zild no-2129, page no-15 to 30 Date- 08/01/2001. PD(1478)C

CHANGE OF NAME
I Rank No.3407092N, NK. Narender S/o Ishwar Singh R/o Bhawar (2) Sonipat Haryana 131302 inform that name of my mother Nirmla has been mentioned in my office documents wrongly as Nirmal Devi, Correct name of my mother is Nirmla which may be amended accordingly. PD(1466)A

I, Kumari Ankita Shekhawat, D/o- JC-472785Y Sub Jaswant Singh, R/o- Vill & PO- Pardoli Badi, Teh & Dist- Sikar, Rajasthan- 332041, have changed my name from Kumari Ankita Shekhawat to Ankita Shekhawat, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1470)C

I, Kumari Priyanka, D/o- JC-472136N Sub Hony Capt Mahender Singh, R/o- Vill- Unchi Bhandor, Post- Beri, Teh & Dist- Mahendergarh, Haryana- 123029, have changed my name from Kumari Priyanka to Priyanka Rani, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1471)C

I, Sapana Tanwar D/o- JC-472758P Sub Suresh, R/o- Vill & PO- Khudana, Dist- Mahendergarh, Haryana- 123029, have changed my name from Sapana Tanwar to Sapna Tanwar, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1472)C

I, Rama Shankar Singh, Father of- JC-472158M Sub Rakesh Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill- Banakara, Post- Pashuhari, Teh- Belthara Road, Ballia, U.P.- 221715, have changed my name from Rama Shankar Singh to Ramashankar Singh, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1473)C

I, Kunti Devi, Mother of- JC-472735N Sub Sanjeev Kumar, R/o- H. No.- 31, Vill & PO- Churiyala, Thana- Bhojpur, Dist- Ghaziabad, U.P.- 201201, have changed my name from Kunti Devi to Kanti, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1474)C

I, Mohani Devi, Mother of- JC-472136N Sub Hony Capt Mahender Singh, R/o- Vill- Unchi Bhandor, Post- Beri, Teh & Dist- Mahendergarh, Haryana- 123029, have changed my name from Mohani Devi to Mohini Devi, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1475)C

I, Pramila Devi, Mother of- JC-472158M Sub Rakesh Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill- Banakara, Post- Pashuhari, Teh- Belthara Road, Ballia, U.P.- 221715, have changed my name from Pramila Devi to Parmila Devi, vide affidavit dated 12/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1476)C

UN: Abuses against Hindus, Ahmadiyya muslims during protests

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Human rights abuses were inflicted on some members of Bangladeshi Hindu, Ahmadiyya Muslim, and indigenous communities during anti-discrimination protests and its aftermath last year, a UN report said. "Bangladesh's former government, security and intelligence services, alongside violent elements associated with the Awami League party, systematically engaged in a range of serious human rights violations during last year's student-led protests," the report by the UN Human Rights Office said. The report said that in the aftermath of the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government last year, "widespread attacks were reported against Hindu homes, businesses, and places of worship, especially in rural and historically tense areas such as Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, and Dinajpur, as well as other places such as Sylhet, Khulna, and Rangpur". The report said this destruction was especially prevalent in areas perceived to be sympathetic to the Awami League as Hindus

have often been stereotypically associated with this political faction. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Fact-Finding Report: 'Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh' also documents "troubling instances" of retaliatory killings and other serious revenge violence targeting Awami League officials and supporters, police and media as the former government started to lose control of the country. Hindus, Ahmadiyya Muslims, and indigenous people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts were also subjected to human rights abuses. While some 100 arrests about attacks on distinct religious and indigenous groups have reportedly been made, the perpetrators of many other acts of revenge violence and attacks on such groups still enjoy impunity," the report said. It added the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights interviewed Hindu business owners and homeowners in some of these areas who reported that their businesses, houses, land and

religious sites had been targeted while shops owned by Hindus were also looted. "The violence often involved property destruction, arson, and physical threats, compounded by insufficient police responses, suggesting systemic impunity, and potential political motives," it said. One interviewee said that Hindu funeral sites and temples were vandalized in Thakurgaon, and other witnesses described that after attacks on their property, approximately 3,000 - 4,000 Hindus from those villages fearing communal violence sought refuge near the border with India. Affected families reported a pervasive sense of insecurity and heavy financial losses, with many losing essential items, livestock, and whole businesses, the report said. The report further said that witnesses and victims' accounts provided to one source indicated that attacks were primarily carried out by individuals involved in "victory processions" celebrating the Hasina government's collapse. "While the identity of the perpetrators in these attacks was not always

clear, witnesses to some of the incidents testified the attackers were local supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami, and other organised groups." However, there were also interventions from these political parties condemning the violence. After August 6, there were localised efforts by BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, student groups, and Christian organisations to protect houses and places of worship of the Hindu community, the report said. BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Students against Discrimination leaders, and Interim Government Chief Advisor Mohammed Yunus all made public statements condemning the violence, it noted. Several allegations were reported of violent mobs coercing Hindu headmasters and teachers to resign. The report added that "some local members and supporters of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami opposition parties bear responsibility for human rights abuses committed during revenge attacks, including against members of the Hindu community". The report noted there had been a longer record of attacks

on places of worship, especially temples and shrines, in Bangladesh. In terms of the period under consideration in this report, between August 5 and 15, media and other local sources reported attacks on places of worship associated with Hindu, Ahmadiyya, Buddhist, and Christian communities across several regions. According to information submitted to OHCHR, three temples were attacked and set ablaze, along with the looting of approximately 20 houses, in Burashardubi, Hatibandha, and Lalmonirhat, reflecting significant levels of community unrest. There was also an arson attack in Meherpur on a temple of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), it said. Specific incidents reported to OHCHR also underlined the complexities surrounding these attacks. "For example, the Kali temple in Nandipara was attacked on August 7, but, upon investigation, it became clear the damage stemmed not from religious intolerance, but rather a local dispute over land ownership," it said.

Relatives of Israeli hostages terrified as Gaza ceasefire teeters

PTI ■ TEL AVIV

After 16 months of excruciating uncertainty, Idit Ohel finally received word this week that her 24-year-old son, a hostage in Gaza, is still alive. She said she fainted upon hearing the brutal details of his captivity from freed hostages who had been held with him by Hamas since October 7, 2023. Bound by chains in an underground tunnel, Alon Ohel has subsisted on a piece of bread or less each day. "He hasn't seen sunlight in 493 days," she told reporters on Monday. As the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas seems increasingly at risk of falling apart — Hamas says it will not free three hostages on Saturday as planned, and Israel says it's ready to resume the war if it doesn't — families of the hostages are struggling to maintain hope. They are pleading with

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to give up on the ceasefire framework, and to speed up the timeline of releases if possible. Their worries about the ceasefire collapsing have been exacerbated by President Donald Trump's demand that all of the hostages be freed by Saturday — and his insistence that Gaza be emptied of all Palestinians and redeveloped as a tourist enclave controlled by the United States. The emaciated state of three hostages released last Saturday has infuriated Israelis and terrified families of the remaining hostages, especially as more details come out about the conditions of their captivity. The situation is especially difficult for relatives of hostages who are not on the list of 33 hostages expected to be released in the ceasefire's first, six-week phase, which began on January 19. The agreement requires Israel

to free 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees, whose families are also worried about how their enemy treats them. Two hostages released on Saturday, Or Levy and Eli Sharabi, were held together with Alon Ohel, and a fourth hostage, Eliya Cohen. The four were held underground since their kidnapping. Idit Ohel said Cohen is expected to be released in the ceasefire's first stage; Ohel would be freed in the second stage, if Israel and Hamas reach that point. Levy, Ohel, and Cohen were kidnapped from a bomb shelter near a music festival in southern Israel, along with Hersh Goldberg-Polin, an American-Israeli who was killed in captivity in August. "It breaks my heart to know he was chained and to know what happened to him in the tunnels from people in the tunnels," Cohens fiancée, Ziv Abud, 27, told reporters on Tuesday.

Germany extends border controls by six months

PTI ■ BERLIN

Berlin (PTI): Germany's outgoing government on Wednesday extended by six months the border checks it imposed on all its frontiers last fall as it attempts to cut the number of migrants arriving in the country, an issue that has become a top issue in the campaign for the February 23 election. Chancellor Olaf Scholz said his government notified the European Union's executive commission of the extension to September 15. "With the border controls, we are pushing irregular migration down successfully. The figures prove this," he said. Germany turned back 47,000 people back at its borders, seeing one-third fewer asylum requests year-on-year and arresting 1,900 smugglers. The country was already controlling its borders with Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria and Switzerland before it

Germany extends border controls by six months

extended the checks last September to its remaining borders, with France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark. The EU has a visa-free travel area known as Schengen that allows citizens of most member states to travel easily across borders for work and pleasure. Switzerland also belongs to Schengen although it is not an EU member. According to the EU, member states are allowed to temporarily reintroduce border controls in cases of a serious threat, like internal security. But it also says border controls should be applied as a last resort in exceptional situations, and must be limited in time. German opposition leader Friedrich Merz, the front-runner in the election, wants to go further than the current government.

Germany extends border controls by six months

extended the checks last September to its remaining borders, with France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark. The EU has a visa-free travel area known as Schengen that allows citizens of most member states to travel easily across borders for work and pleasure. Switzerland also belongs to Schengen although it is not an EU member. According to the EU, member states are allowed to temporarily reintroduce border controls in cases of a serious threat, like internal security. But it also says border controls should be applied as a last resort in exceptional situations, and must be limited in time. German opposition leader Friedrich Merz, the front-runner in the election, wants to go further than the current government.

US Defence secy makes first visit to NATO with allies

PTI ■ BRUSSELS

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday made the first trip to NATO by a member of the new Trump administration, as the allies wait to learn how much military and financial support Washington intends to provide to Ukraine's government.

Hegseth held talks with UK Defence Secretary John Healey, before a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Hegseth's predecessor, former Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, set up the forum for drumming up arms and ammunition for Ukraine in 2022.

Over nearly three years, around 50 countries have collectively provided Ukraine more than USD 126 billion in weapons and military assistance. But the meeting this week was convened by another country for the first time: the United Kingdom. All previous chairmen of the forum were gathered by the United States.

No decision has been made on who might chair the next meeting, if one is called.

Hegseth wasn't expected to make any announcement on new weapons for Ukraine. His trip comes less than two weeks before the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Most US allies fear that Russian President Vladimir Putin won't stop at Ukraine's borders if he wins, and that Europe's biggest land war in decades poses an existential threat to their security.

US President Donald Trump has promised to quickly end the war. He's complained that it's costing American taxpayers too much money. He has suggested that Ukraine should pay for US support with access to its rare earth minerals, energy and other resources. Some US allies worry that a hasty deal might be clinched on terms that aren't favorable to Ukraine. On top of that, Trump appears to believe that European countries should take responsibility for Ukraine's security going forward.

Washington's 31 NATO allies also want to hear what Trump's new administration has in store for the world's biggest security organization. Trump traumatized his European partners during his first term in office by threatening not to defend any member that doesn't meet NATO guidelines for military spending.

NATO is founded on the principle that an attack on any ally must be considered an attack on them all and met with a collective response. Membership is considered to be the ultimate security guarantee, and it's one that Ukraine is trying to secure.

Kyiv's security needs and defense spending will be discussed on Thursday. European allies have hiked their military budgets since Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine, and 23 are estimated to have reached or exceeded last year's target of spending 2 per cent of gross domestic product.

However, a third of members still haven't reached that threshold, and Trump is almost certain to target them again. Recently, Trump called for NATO members to increase defense spending to 5 per cent of GDP, a level that no member has reached so far — not even Poland, which is the closest, spending more than 4 per cent and expected to approach 5% this year. Speaking to reporters in Germany on Tuesday, Hegseth wouldn't commit to having the US increase its defense spending to 5 per cent of GDP.

Hegseth said that he believes that the US should spend more than it did under the Biden administration and "should not go lower than 3 per cent."

He said any final decision would be up to Trump, but added that "we live in fiscally constrained times" and need to be responsible with taxpayer money.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Since Mr. Anoop Singh Sr. Azad Singh seeking a home loan from INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK for the property i.e. House No. 60, area measuring 299.2 sq. yds. Block-F, situated at Village Gadipur, Thesil Badshapur and District Gurugram, Haryana; hereafter referred to as "said property".

That, the said property was transferred several times. That, Mr. Jagdish Chander (80%) and Yogesh Kumar (20%) was owner through Sale Deed dated 09.02.2022. Thereafter, they have transferred between themselves 1/3rd Share Each i.e. Jagdish Chander (33.33%), Mr. Yogesh Kumar (33.33%) and Mr. Parvesh (33.33%) through transfer deed 1579 dated 03.05.2024. Finally, Mr. Parvesh (33.33%) has transferred his right to Mr. Jagdish Chander (16.66%) and Mr. Yogesh Kumar (16.66%). Therefore, Mr. Jagdish Chander (50%) and Mr. Yogesh Kumar (50%) became owner transfer deed dated 15.02.2025. Now, that Mr. Jagdish Chander and Mr. Yogesh Kumar were absolute owners of the said property. Therefore, Mr. Anoop Singh is purchasing said property. If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sale transaction, he/she may contact the undersigned with the documents/proof substantiating his/her objections/claims/details of disputes within seven (7) days from the date of this publication. Village Gadipur, Thesil Badshapur, District Gurugram, Haryana. If any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 8560292588 within 15days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing) or Director (Housing), Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

M/S PASS & ASSOCIATES LLP
B-132, L.G.F. Malviya Nagar
New Delhi-110017, Mob: 9991116066

FOR SALE
FOR IMMEDIATE SALE
300 SQ YDS. 12 MTR ROADE
2/12 DLF PHASE-1 GURGAON,
PRASHANT WADHWA SHANTI
PROPERTIES
☎-9891555575

PUBLIC NOTICE
LOSS OF ID CARD

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID card of Ravenna issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. Having ID Card No. 2511336 has been found missing and/or lost on 11-02-2025. Anyone, who find the said ID Card, is requested to return the said ID Card to The Manager Dept Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, Plot 7, Community Centre, S.D. Tower, Sector-8, Rohini, N. Delhi-85.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorized person holding the said ID Card No. 2511336.

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

For ICICI Bank Limited
---Sd---
Date: 11.02.2025
Place : Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all: SURESH CHANDER SAHU S/O LATE SH. OM PARKASH SAHU & SMT. SUMAN RANI SAHU W/O. SH. SURESH CHANDER SAHU both R/O HOUSE NO.332, TOPKIANA BAZAR, STREET NO.4, AMBALA CANTT., HARYANA-133001 allottee/owner of LIC FLAT NO.50, SECOND FLOOR, BLOCK-D-1, POCKET-4, SECTOR-34, ROHINI, DELHI, have applied for certified copies conveyance deed in DDA. The original documents i.e. POSSESSION LETTER, NOC FOR WATER AND ELECTRICITY CONNECTION of the above said flat have been lost. An LR NO.2579346/2025 dated 12/02/2025 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 8560292588 within 15days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing) or Director (Housing), Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
E-TENDER CALL NOTICE

No. EM/MCHP/Tender-01/25/53
Date: 10/02/2025

Name of the Work: "Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of one no. of Stacker 4000 TPH Capacity". Estimated cost: Rs.55,10,00,000/- Last date & time of submission of bid: 12.03.2025 up-to 17:15 Hrs. Refer our website for details <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (M)
MCHP, PPA

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Dharamvir Singh Bhati and Abhishek Bhati claims to be owner and in possession of Prop. No. 208, Block-B, Sec-46, Noida, U.P., hereinafter called the said property by virtue of Transfer Deed Cum Gift Deed dated 03.02.2025 executed by Rajesh Bhati through GPA holder (His Brother) Dharamvir Singh Bhati reg vide Doc. No. 1682 R/w Transfer Deed dated 14.09.2007 reg. vide Doc. No. 2893, and Said Dharamvir Singh Bhati and Abhishek Bhati has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients Standard Chartered Bank ITO Branch, any person's having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex, N.D-19
Mobile No. 9818399999

FEDERS ELECTRIC AND ENGINEERING LIMITED
Reg. Off: 6 and 6/1 UPS/IDC Industrial Area, Sikandrabad, Bulandshahr, UP-203205
CIN: L29299UP1957PL0021118 Email: imcapital19830@gmail.com
Website: <https://imcapitals.com/fedders-electric-engineering/>

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024 (Rs. in Crore)

Particulars	Standalone		
	Quarter Ended	Nine Months Ended	Quarter Ended
	31.12.2024 (Unaudited)	31.12.2024 (Unaudited)	31.12.2023 (Unaudited)
1 Total Income from operations	93.72	337.27	191.54
2 Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax	3.57	31.28	41.01
3 Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary items)	3.97	31.08	41.01
4 Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss) for the year (after tax and Other Comprehensive Income/(Loss) (after tax))	2.33	30.21	41.05
5 Equity paidup share capital	30.00	30.00	30.00
6 Earnings per share (Not annualised) :			
Diluted (₹)	1.32	10.36	13.67
Basic (₹)	1.32	10.36	13.67

1. The above results were reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee & approved by the Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on 11th February, 2025. The Financial results for the Third quarter ended 31st December, 2024 have been limited reviewed by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.

2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Unaudited Standalone Quarter ended filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Unaudited Standalone Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites, www.bseindia.com & www.nseindia.com and on the company website <https://imcapitals.com/fedders-electric-engineering/>.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors of Fedders Electric and Engineering Limited
Sd/-
VISHAL SINGHAL (Managing Director)
DIN: 03518795

Place : Sikandrabad (U.P.)
Date : 12th Feb, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to general public at large that my client Axis Bank Limited, having one of its Branch at Ground Floor, Tower-1, Axis House, Sector-12B, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, is in possession of Loan facility to Sh. Pradeep Sharma against security of DDA's Janta Flat bearing No.60, in Block-B, in Pocket-11, on Third Floor, in the layout plan of Housing Estate Jasola, situated at Jasola, New Delhi, hereinafter referred to as "Said Property". Smt. Usha Ram W/o Sh. Darshan Singh acquired the Said Property from Smt. Sarita Crauhan W/o Sh. Neeraj Crauhan vide Sale Deed bearing Doc. No. 4429 on 26.03.2022, who died intestate on 17.08.2022 leaving behind her only son, Gunvinder Singh Sodhi as per SMC No. 9069000163951 dated 26.09.2022 issued by office of the District Magistrate Kalkaji, who intends to sell the Said Property to Proposed Borrower. Any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to title or interest in the said property/portion in any manner whatsoever, must immediately contact the undersigned in writing along with supporting documents in respect of their claim(s) objection(s). If no such claim is received within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, then it will be presumed that no one has any paramount right, title, or interest in the Said Property and even if someone has any claim/objection, he/she/they have given up the same.

Himanshu Ahuja (Advocate)
Contact No: 9810310373, 011-41830049
E-mail Address: alolegals@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public Notice regarding cancellation of property

This Public Notice is from M/S JKG Construction Pvt Ltd for Mr Tarun Kumar bearing unit no. C1-1405 at JKG Palm Court, Plot No. GH-01D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, Uttar Pradesh- 201009.

We have offered possession of your allotted unit in February 2021, basis which we have shared final demand notice of unit C1-1405 on 09.04.2022, 02.06.2022, 16.08.2022, 07.10.2022, 17.08.2024, 24.08.2024 & 26.08.2024 you failed to make the payment as per final demand notice. Hence we have cancelled your allotted unit via cancellation intimation letter dated 02.12.2024. Neither got any response from your end nor we have received any payment so far which tantamount to your tacit acceptance that you are no more interested in taking possession of the said flat.

Hence your allotted flat C1-1405 is being cancelled on 16.01.2025, as such the allotment has become null & void and you have no claim on the dwelling unit and your deposited amount shall be refunded as per BBA Claus.

For M/S JKG Construction Pvt Ltd

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that my client Abdul Hamid S/o Abdul Wahid R/o House No. 878/33A, Ward No. 6, Pili Khana, Mehrauli, South Delhi, Delhi-110030 has renounced disowned and severed all their relations with his son Abdul Sahil on account of his misdeeds from all the self-acquired movable as well as immovable properties belonging to my client, Abdul Sahil will not stake for any claim of any nature whatsoever in the said properties of my client any person dealing with Abdul Sahil will do so at his own risks and perils.

Ramesh Kumar (Advocate), D/O- M-1, Malviya Nagar, ND-17

PRAKASH WOOLLEN & SYNTHETIC MILLS LIMITED
Regd. office. 18th KM Stone, Delhi Moradabad Road, NH24, Village-Amhera, Distt: J.P.NAGAR-244102, U.P.
CIN: L17291UP1979PLC004804
PH: 91-9760091983, Email: info@prakashwoollen.com, Website: www.prakashwoollen.com

Extract of Standalone Unaudited Results for the Quarter Ended 31/12/2024 (Rs in lakhs)

Particulars	Quarter ended			Nine months ended		Year Ended
	3 months ended (31.12.2024)	Preceding 3 months ended (30.09.2024)	Corresponding 3 months ended in the previous year (31.12.2023)	Year to date figures for current period ended (31.12.2024)	Year to date figures Year to the previous year ended (31.12.2023)	
1. Total income from operations (net)	5707.87	2827.13	4889.55	9922.14	9029.26	10214.36
2. Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax and Exceptional items	(338.34)	(191.42)	173.71	(582.85)	3.47	18.51
3. Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax and after Exceptional items	(338.34)	(191.42)	173.71	(582.85)	3.47	18.51
4. Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax and Exceptional items	(496.07)	(99.13)	172.70	(626.79)	13.88	95.97
5. Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(496.07)	(99.13)	172.70	(626.79)	13.88	79.80
6. Equity Share Capital (Face value Rs 10 each)	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98
7. Other equity	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Earnings per share for discontinued & continuing operations (of Rs. 10/-each):						
(a) Basic	(4.84)	(0.97)	1.68	(6.11)	0.14	0.94
(b) Diluted	(4.84)	(0.97)	1.68	(6.11)	0.14	0.94

Notes:

- The above results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on February 12, 2025.
- The standalone results have been prepared in accordance with the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 (Ind AS) prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 and other recognised accounting practices and policies to the extent applicable.
- The company is engaged in the blankets business, therefore, there is only one reportable segment in accordance with the Accounting Standards on Segment Reporting (Ind AS 108). Hence segment reporting is not applicable to the company.
- The blankets business is seasonal in nature and accordingly financial results for the quarter are not representative of the whole year.
- Previous year/ quarter figures have been regrouped wherever required.

By Order of The Board
For Prakash Woolen & Synthetic Mills Limited
Vijay Kumar Gupta
Whole Time Director & CFO
DIN: 00335325

ORIENTAL NAGPUR BETUL HIGHWAY LIMITED
Regd. Off.: Unit No 307A, 3rd floor, Worldmark 2 Asset Area No 8, Hospitality Dist. Delhi Aerocity, New Delhi - 110037.
E-mail: onhlinvestors.relations@orientalinfrastructure.com; CIN: U45400DL2010PLC203649
FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 (₹ in Millions)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 31.12.2024 (Un-audited)	Quarter Ended 31.12.2023 (Un-audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2024 (Audited)
1	Total income from operations (net)	1,019.67	952.42	3,918.30
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax and Exceptional Items)	469.78	497.03	2,020.75
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional Items)	469.78	497.03	2,020.75
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional Items)	436.37	495.83	1,973.07
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	436.79	495.87	1,973.09
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	181.35	181.35	181.35
7	Reserves (excluding (excluding Debenture Redemption Reserve)	8,541.15	7,692.75	8,269.23
8	Securities Premium	3,443.66	3,443.66	3,443.66
9	Net Worth	10,999.19	9,479.21	9,942.89
10	Paid up Debt Capital/Outstanding Debt	17,830.28	20,098.18	18,969.53
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-	-
12	Debt Equity Ratio	1.77:1	2.12:1	2.13:1
13	Earnings Per Share (of Rs 10/- each)			
1 Basic:	24.09	27.34	108.80	
2 Diluted:	24.09	27.34	108.80	
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve	1,376.70	1,605.12	1,491.82
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.03:1	1.10:1	1.14:1
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	2.06:1	2.01:1	2.00:1

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of the un-audited financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulations 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the un-audited financial results are available on the websites of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the listed entity (<http://www.nagpurbetulhighway.in>).
- For the other line items referred to in Regulation 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange and are available on the websites of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the listed entity (<http://www.nagpurbetulhighway.in>).
- The un-audited financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at its meeting held on February 12, 2025.
- The financial results of the company have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting standard prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of Oriental Nagpur Betul Highway Limited
Sd/-
Rajesh Yadav
Director
Place: New Delhi
Date: February 12, 2025

SAANEH INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENTS LIMITED
Regd. Office: Deilton House 4801 Bharat Ram Road 24 Daryaganj New Delhi -110002
CIN: L74899DL1980PL060079, Phone No. 011-45795859, Website: <https://sanehi.in/>, E-mail: sanehitd@gmail.com

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 (Rs. In Lakhs)

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended 31.12.2024	Nine Month ended 31.12.2024	Quarter ended 31.12.2023	Quarter ended 31.12.2024	Nine Month ended 31.12.2024	Quarter ended 31.12.2023
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
1	Total income from operations (net)	4.10	4.10	1.07	18.52	26.47	23.93
2	Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	3.41	0.27	(0.28)	16.83	20.84	19.31
3	Net Profit for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	3.41	0.27	(0.28)	16.83	20.84	19.31
4	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	3.06	(0.07)	(0.28)	10.04	9.03	19.31
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	880.20	1,371.25	287.01	3,316.41	5,145.05	1,105.91
6	Equity share capital (Face Value of Rs.10/- each)	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00
7	Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items) (Face Value of Rs. 10/- each)						
(a) Basic (Rs.)	1.28	(0.03)	(0.12)	4.18	3.76	8.05	
(b) Diluted (Rs.)	1.28	(0.03)	(0.12)	4.18	3.76	8.05	

NOTES:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Unaudited Quarterly Financial Results filed with the 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 Stock Exchange Website (www.sei-india.com) and on Company's Website (<https://sanehi.in/>).
- The above results have been prepared in accordance with principle and procedures of Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) as notified under the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 as specified under section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- The above Unaudited Financial Results (Standalone and Consolidated) were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their respective meetings held on February 11, 2025.

For and on behalf of the Board
Sd/-
Vivek Gupta
Director
DIN No.: 00035916

Place : Delhi
Date : February 11, 2025

ReNew Fazilka Solar Power Private Limited
CIN No. : U40108HR2015PTCO05470
Regd. Office : ReNew Hub, Commercial Block-1, Zone-6, Golf Course Road, DLF City Phase-V, Gurugram 122009, Haryana, India
Corporate Office : ReNew Hub, Commercial Block-1, Zone-6, Golf Course Road, DLF City Phase-V, Gurugram 122009, Haryana, India Phone No. : 124 489 6670/80

Statement of Standalone Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024 (Amounts in INR millions, except share and per share data, unless otherwise stated)

Particulars	Quarter ended 31 December 2024	Quarter ended 30 September 2024	Quarter ended 31 December 2023	9 months ended 31 December 2024	9 months ended 31 December 2023	Year ended 31 March 2024
	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	Audited
Total Income from Operations	40	35	40	126	122	238
Net Profit for the year (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	46	41	32	144	129	182
Net Profit for the year before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	46	41	32	144	129	182
Net Profit for the year after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	35	30	23	107	96	134
Total Comprehensive Income for the year [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	35	30	23	107	96	134
Paid up Equity Share Capital	21	21	21	21	21	21
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	6,601	6,567	6,431	6,601	6,431	6,494
Securities premium	6,063	6,063	6,063	6,063	6,063	6,063
Net worth	6,642	6,608	6,497	6,642	6,497	6,534
Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	2,898	3,114	3,259	2,898	3,259	3,259
Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Debt Equity Ratio	0.43	0.47	0.50	0.43	0.50	0.49
Earnings Per Share* (face value of per share INR 10) (for continuing and discontinued operations)						
1. Basic:	8.69	7.42	5.67	26.33	23.46	32.89
2. Diluted:	8.69	7.42	5.67	26.33	23.46	32.89
Capital Redemption Reserve	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Debenture Redemption Reserve	216	95	33	116	33	53
Debt Service Coverage Ratio*	1.04	1.12	1.57	2.15	3.88	3.0

New tax bill introduces Tax Year, omits Assessment Year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The simplified Income Tax bill 2025, which brings in the concept of 'tax year' and abolishes the archaic and complicated terms 'previous' and 'assessment years', is likely to be introduced in Parliament on Thursday.

The bill comprises 536 sections, 23 chapters and 16 schedules in just 622 pages. It does not bring in any new taxes, but only simplifies the language of the existing Income Tax Act, 1961. The six-decade old legislation has 298 sections and 14 schedules. It had 880 pages when the Act was introduced.

The new bill seeks to replace the Income Tax Act, 1961 which has become too voluminous due to the amendments made over the last 60 years. The new law is expected to come into effect from April 1, 2026.

The new bill has omitted redundant sections, like those relating to Fringe Benefit Tax. The bill is free from



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the Parliament House complex presenting the 'Union Budget 2025-26' -PTI

'explanations or provisos', thereby making it easier to read and comprehend.

Also, the word 'notwithstanding', which was used excessively in the Income Tax Act, 1961, has been done away with in the new bill and almost everywhere replaced with the term 'irrespective'.

The bill uses shorter sentences and has been made reader friendly with the use of tables and formulae. Tables have been provided for provisions relating to TDS, presumptive taxation, salaries, and deductions for bad debt. The 'Taxpayer's Charter' has been included in the bill which outlines the rights and

obligations of the taxpayers. The bill replaces the term 'previous year' as mentioned in the Income Tax Act, 1961 with 'tax year'. Also, the concept of assessment year has been done away with. Currently, for income earned in the previous year (say 2023-24), tax is paid in assessment year (say 2024-25).

This previous year and assessment year (AY) concept has been removed and only tax year under the simplified bill has been brought in.

Once introduced in the Lok Sabha likely on Thursday, the Bill will be sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance for further deliberations.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the new I-T bill said that the Income-tax Act passed in 1961 has been subjected to numerous amendments since its passage 60 years ago. "As a result of these amendments the basic structure of the Income-tax Act has been overburdened and language has become complex, increasing cost of compliance for taxpayers and hampering efficiency of direct-tax administration," it said. Tax administrators, practitioners and taxpayers had also raised concerns about the complicated provisions and structure of the Income Tax act.

Trump readies matching tariffs on trade partners

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

United States (US) President Donald Trump is taking additional action to upset the world trade system, with plans to sign an order as soon as Wednesday that would require that US tariffs on imports match the tax rates charged by other countries.

"It's time to be reciprocal," Trump said earlier this week. "You'll be hearing that word a lot. Reciprocal. If they charge us, we charge them."

The president had suggested that the order would come on Tuesday or Wednesday. But when Tuesday passed without the tariffs being officially announced, Trump was asked if he would sign the order on Wednesday and Trump answered: "We'll see what happens."

As Trump has unleashed a series of tariffs after being in power for less than a month, he has fully taken ownership of the path of the US economy.

It's a bet that his economic ideas can eventually deliver meaningful results for voters,

even if by Trump's own admission the import taxes could involve some financial pain in the form of inflation and economic disruptions. For all of Trump's talk, the impact will likely depend on the details of the tariffs and how other nations respond.

A reciprocal tariffs order could amount to a substantial tax hike to be shouldered largely by US consumers and businesses as the Census Bureau reported that the country had total imports of \$4.1 Trillion last year. The tariffs could set off retaliatory measures by trading partners that could coil growth around the globe and reset where the United States stands with allies and rivals alike.

By signing the order, Trump would fulfil his long-standing pledge to raise taxes on most imported goods, a clear break with his recent White House predecessors who saw tariffs as either targeted tools to use strategically or barriers worth lowering.

Trump has broken with that precedent by saying he wants to return the United States to

the 1890s when taxes on imports were the government's dominant source of revenues. But should job gains never materialise and should inflation stay high, it's an easy line of attack for Democratic lawmakers and candidates that Trump helped the ultrawealthy at the expense of the middle class.

"No matter which way you slice it, costs are going to climb for consumers," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said earlier this month. "I will work with my colleagues to undo this mess, get costs down and get these billionaires out of the way."

Trump put 10 per cent tariffs on China over its contributions to the production of the illicit drug fentanyl, and China has taken retaliatory measures. He said he is ready if necessary on March 1 after a 30-day suspension, to put tariffs on Mexico and Canada over his belief they should do more to fight illegal immigration and drug smuggling.

Samsung to upskill teachers

ABHI SINGHAL ■ NEW DELHI

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the education landscape, making classrooms more interactive and personalised. AI-driven tools help educators analyse student performance, customise lesson plans, and enhance engagement through digital platforms.

Recognising this shift, Samsung has introduced a new initiative called Galaxy Empowered, aimed at upskilling 20,000 teachers across the country by 2025. This community-led program will equip educators with modern teaching techniques and digital tools to enhance classroom learning.

The initiative was launched in New Delhi in the presence of Olympic Gold Medallist Abhinav Bindra, who emphasised the importance of equipping teachers with the right resources to improve education standards.

The program will provide teachers with training through workshops, online courses, and certification programs, ensuring they stay ahead in an evolving educational landscape. Samsung's Galaxy Empowered aims to transform classrooms by integrating technology into



daily lessons. Teachers will learn to use interactive apps, digital platforms, and gamification techniques to make learning more engaging for students. The program also focuses on hands-on training, giving educators access to mentorship opportunities and specialised curriculum support.

The initiative is structured around three main components: technology upskilling, hands-on training, and networking opportunities. Educators will have access to flexible online courses, in-person bootcamps, and a library of resources. In addition, they can connect with

fellow teachers, industry experts, and thought leaders through exclusive events and panel discussions. Participants in the program will also receive special benefits, including discounts on Samsung devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops. Additional perks include extended warranties, free insurance, and time-limited offers on consumer electronics. Through Galaxy Empowered, Samsung is making a significant contribution to the education sector, ensuring that teachers have the necessary tools and knowledge to prepare students for a technology-driven future.

Retail inflation slows to five-month low

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing the downward trend, retail inflation fell to a five-month low of 4.31 per cent in January, mainly due to a decline in the prices of vegetables, eggs, and pulses.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation was 5.22 per cent in December and 5.1 per cent in January 2024. The previous low inflation was in August 2024 at 3.65 per cent. The CPI has been on a decline since October.

The inflation in the food basket was 6.02 per cent in January, the lowest after August 2024 when it was 5.66 per cent.

There is a decline of 91 basis points in headline inflation of January 2025 in comparison to December 2024 and it is the lowest year-on-year inflation after August 2024, the National Statistics Office (NSO) data showed. According to the data, the top five items showing the highest year on year inflation were coconut oil (54.2 per cent), potato (49.61 per cent), coconut (38.71 per cent), garlic (30.65 per cent), peas (30.17 per cent). On the other hand, the key items having the lowest year on year inflation in January were jeera (-32.25 per cent), ginger (-30.92 per cent), dry chilies (-

11.27 per cent), brinjal (-9.94 per cent), LPG (excluding conveyance) (-9.29 per cent). Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) years effected a rate cut of 25 basis points after a gap of five years to spur growth as inflation was in its comfort zone. The central bank has been mandated by the government to ensure CPI remains at four per cent with a margin of two per cent on either side. NSO further said a significant decline in headline and food inflation in the rural sector was observed in January 2025. It was 4.64 per cent in January compared to 5.76 per cent in the preceding month.

The food inflation in the rural sector was 6.31 per cent in comparison to 8.65 per cent in December 2024. Similarly, urban inflation witnessed a sharp decline from 4.58 per cent in December 2024 to 3.87 per cent in January. Food inflation decreased from 7.9 per cent in December to 5.53 per cent in January 2025. Housing inflation rate was marginally higher in January 2.76 per cent over December.

"The significant decline in headline inflation and food inflation during the month of January, 2025 is mainly attributed to decline in inflation

of vegetables, eggs, pulses and products, cereals and products, education, clothing and health," NSO said.

The data further showed that top five states which had higher inflation than the national average in January were Kerala (6.76 per cent), Odisha (6.05 per cent), Chhattisgarh (5.85 per cent), Haryana (5.1 per cent), and Bihar (5.06 per cent). The lowest inflation was in Delhi at 2.02 per cent. The NSO collects price data from selected 1,114 urban markets and 1,181 villages covering all states and UTs on a weekly roster.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA said the CPI inflation fell appreciably sharper than expected to a five-month low, led primarily by food items, vindicating the unanimous rate cut effected by the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) last week.

"Looking ahead, ICRA believes that the growth-inflation outlook suggests that there is room for another 25 bps rate cut in either the April or the June 2025 meetings. The exact timing of the same would depend on the incoming data, global developments, and the movements in the USD and INR pair," she added.

Equity investors' wealth erode by ₹18 Lakh Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Investors suffered an erosion of ₹18 Lakh Crore in six days of market fall, where the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked three per cent, amid continuous foreign fund outflows and trade war worries.

The 30-share BSE Sensex, which had tanked more than 900 points intra-day, ended at 76,171.08, down by 122.52 points or 0.16 per cent following a recovery in bank stocks in the last hour.

During the day, the benchmark tanked 905.21 points or 1.18 per cent to sink below the 76,000-level and hit a low of 75,388.39.

Since February 4, the BSE bellwether gauge has slumped 2,412.73 points or 3.07 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms slumped ₹18,04,418 Crore to ₹4,07,46,408.11 Crore (\$4.69 Trillion) since February 4.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Mahindra and Mahindra, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports, Titan and

Infosys were the biggest laggards. Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, Larsen and Toubro, UltraTech Cement, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,486.41 Crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

"Markets were extremely choppy and gyrated sharply in intra-day trade. After crashing over 900 points in early trade, markets recouped lost ground in late trade but select profit-taking in IT, banking and auto stocks saw benchmarks end marginally lower," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.49 per cent and midcap index went lower by 0.45 per cent.

"Equity markets displayed resilience today, with Nifty rebounding nearly 250 points from the day's low to close at 23,045, down just 26 points (-0.1 per cent)," Siddhartha Khemka, head, research, wealth management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Sensex, Nifty fall for sixth day dragged by FII outflows

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets closed lower for the sixth straight day on Wednesday with Sensex falling by 122 points on unabated foreign fund outflows and trade war worries.

The 30-share BSE Sensex, which had tanked more than 900 points intra-day, closed at 76,171.08, down by 122.52 points or 0.16 per cent following a recovery in financial stocks in the last hour.

During the day, the benchmark tanked 905.21 points or 1.18 per cent to sink below the 76,000-level to hit a low of 75,388.39.

The NSE Nifty dipped 26.55 points or 0.12 per cent to 23,045.25, marking its sixth straight day of losses. Intra-day,

it tumbled 273.45 points or 1.18 per cent to 22,798.35, falling below the crucial 23,000-mark. Since February 4, the BSE bellwether gauge has slumped 2,412.73 points or 3.07 per cent, while the Nifty tanked 694 points or 2.92 per cent.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Mahindra and Mahindra, ITC, Power Grid, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports, Titan and Infosys were the biggest laggards. Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, Larsen and Toubro, UltraTech Cement, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,486.41 Crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. "The Indian market saw a slight

recovery from the sharp intraday declines, however, overall sentiment remained weak due to elevated broader market valuations and muted Q3 earnings growth. Concerns over excessive valuations are expected to sustain the ongoing consolidation phase," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Additionally, uncertainty regarding the impact of metal tariffs added to market caution, Nair said.

"The upcoming release of US CPI inflation data will provide further market direction," he added.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading higher.

Rupee falls eight paise against USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee failed to sustained its recovery and depreciated eight paise to close at 86.87 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday due to a firm American currency and unending outflow of foreign funds.

According to forex traders, rupee stayed firm initially but lost grounds amid volatile domestic equity markets that also added to the trend of withdrawal by foreign institutional investors.

They said the easing crude oil prices supported the Indian currency at lower level but at the same time the currency markets saw muted participation awaiting cues from the inflation and

industrial output data to be released by the government.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.44 and moved between the high of 86.36 and the low of 86.91 against the greenback during intra-day. The unit ended the session at 86.87 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a fall of eight paise from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee appreciated 66 paise, logging the maximum single-day gain since March 3, 2023, to close at 86.79 against the US dollar.

The steep surge came a day after the unit plunged to near 88 per US dollar-level during intra-day on Monday, though the currency ended the session with gains at 87.45 against the greenback.

SEBI slaps ₹2.83 Crore notice to ex-TV anchor

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and has sent a demand notice to Pradeep Bajinath Pandya, who was anchoring stock market shows on a television channel, and seven other entities for failing to pay ₹2.83 Crore fines that have been imposed in connection with fraudulent trading activities.

Apart from Pandya, Toshee Trade, Mahan Investment, Manish Vasanti Furiya (HUF), Manish Vasanti Furiya, Alpa Alpesh Furiya, Alpesh Vasanti Furiya (HUF) and Alpesh Vasanti Furiya were also sent notices to pay the fines.

The demand notices came after these entities failed to pay the

penalties imposed on them by the SEBI in June last year.

The markets regulator warned that assets, including bank accounts of Pandya and other entities, will be attached if they failed to make the payment within 15 days of the notices issued on February 7.

In seven separate demand notices, SEBI has directed these entities to pay ₹2.83 crore, including interest and recovery costs within 15 days.

In June last year, SEBI had barred Pandya and seven other entities from the securities market for five years and imposed a fine of ₹2.6 Crore collectively for indulging in fraudulent trading activities.

Pandya was the host and co-host of various shows at CNBC Awaaz till August 2021, while

Alpesh Furiya appeared on the television channel as a guest and external expert and gave stock recommendations on his X handle.

A high correlation was noted between the stock recommendations given by Pradeep Pandya on the show 'Pandya Ka Funda' and the buy-today-sell-tomorrow trades and intra-day trades executed by Alpesh Furiya and connected entities during the period from November 2019 to January 2021.

Alpesh Furiya, capitalised on this privileged information, executed trades through his own accounts and those of related entities, positioning himself to profit before the recommendations were publicly aired, it added.

Equity mutual funds see ₹39,688 Crore inflow in January

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' confidence in equity mutual funds remains strong with the segment attracting ₹39,688 Crore in January, driven by sharp inflow in small cap and flexi-cap schemes, even as market volatilities continued. However, this was 3.56 per cent lower than the net inflow of ₹41,156 Crore registered in December. The latest fund infusion by investors also marks the 47th consecutive month of inflows into the segment, according to data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) on Wednesday.

Moreover, inflows into systematic investment plans (SIP) came at ₹26,400 Crore, a tad lower from December's ₹26,459 Crore. The SIP assets under management stood at ₹13.2 Lakh Crore, which is

around a fifth of the overall pie. "Despite market volatility, SIP contributions remained robust, totalling ₹26,400 Crore for the month. We will continue to educate investors to stay invested through phases of volatility with a focus on disciplined, long-term approach to wealth creation," Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive, Amfi, said.

The decline in equity fund inflows occurred amid sluggish equity markets, with the BSE Sensex dropping by 1.28 per cent in January.

The investors' focus towards making the most of the market fall in January can also be gauged from the fact that around 30.7 Lakh new folios were added in January, Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar Investment



Research India, said. Further, volatility in the Indian equity markets, combined with geopolitical uncertainties and anticipation of the Union Budget, led to a decline in equity mutual fund AUM, Jatinder Pal Singh, CEO, ITI Mutual Fund, said.

The assets under management

(AUM) for equity-oriented mutual funds dropped by 4 per cent in January to ₹29,46 Lakh Crore from ₹30.57 Lakh Crore in December.

Within the equity schemes, sectoral or thematic category attracted investors with the highest net inflow at ₹9,016 Crore, which is way lower than

₹15,331 Crore inflow in December. The midcap category saw inflows of ₹5,148 Crore in January 2025, while the smallcap category witnessed inflow of ₹5,721 Crore, the data showed.

The small and midcap schemes of mutual funds continued to attract investors with inflows highlighting their preference for these segments largely driven by the high returns that they have generated over the last few years, Srivastava said.

The large schemes, which are being recommended by a slew of experts as a safer bet, saw inflows rising to ₹3,063 Crore in January from ₹2,010 Crore in December, while inflow in flexi-cap category grew to ₹5,697 Crore from ₹4,731 Crore.

Apart from equities, debt funds

registered an inflow of ₹1.28 Lakh Crore in the month of January, against an outflow of ₹1.27 Lakh Crore in December. The inflow in debt funds was primarily in the overnight, ultra-short duration, low duration and money market funds along with liquid funds which offset the outflows in debt funds with a maturity of over one year, Sanjay Agarwal, senior director, CareEdge Ratings, said.

Additionally, the inflows into gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) to the tune of ₹3,751 Crore indicate a shift toward safer assets during uncertain times.

The overall assets under management of mutual funds came at ₹67.25 Lakh Crore as on January 31, 2025 as compared to ₹66.93 Lakh Crore in the previous month.

INBRIEF

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY INTER-DEPARTMENT GIRLS' CRICKET TOURNAMENT CONCLUDES

AMRITSAR: Under the able guidance and support of Vice Chancellor Prof (Dr) Karamjeet Singh the Guru Nanak Dev University successfully organised the Inter-Department Cricket (Girls) Tournament as part of the Fit India program initiated by the Government of India.

GAUTAM SOLAR AIMS FOR 5 GW BY 2025

NEW DELHI: In a record-breaking achievement, Gautam Solar has established a state-of-the-art solar module manufacturing plant in Bhiwani, Haryana, within just one year.

CPA AUSTRALIA, ASSOCHAM HOST GLOBAL SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN INDIA

NEW DELHI: New Delhi witnessed a landmark global summit on 'Accelerated Value Creation for Sustainable Growth', jointly hosted by CPA Australia and ASSOCHAM. The event brought together industry leaders to explore emerging cross-border trends and local challenges.

Bhaker finishes second in 25m pistol at National selection trials

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker finished second in women's 25m pistol in her return to competitive shooting after Paris Olympics as Rhythm Sangwan emerged winner in the event on day five of the Rifle/Pistol National Selection Trials (Group A) here on Wednesday.
Paris Olympics bronze medallist Swapnil Kusale and Arya Rajesh Borse also won the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) T1 and the women's 10m air rifle T2 events at Dr Karni Singh Shooting range (DKSSR) here. Haryana's Rhythm beat Bhaker -- who won a bronze each in the women's individual and mixed team events in the Paris Olympics -- for the top spot after a couple of shoot-offs from the final group that had four other Olympians in the fray. Swapnil was next, a class apart in the men's 3P T1 final, while Borse registered a memorable triumph in a high-quality high scoring women's air rifle T2 final, falling just one short of the world record score achieved at the same venue.
Rhythm wins via shoot-off Manu has been relentless in her first competition after the Paris Games, topping the women's 25m pistol trials for a second straight time, her



294 in the second rapid-fire qualifying round in the morning giving her a total of 591. Punjab's Simranpreet Kaur Brar, among the most consistent shooters in recent times in the event, was second with 588.
Also making the final eight cut were four other Olympians -- Rahi Sarnobat (588, 3rd), Esha Singh (586, 4th), Heena Sidhu (580, 5th) and Sangwan (578, 7th), setting up a thrilling decider.
In the end, Rhythm and Manu were tied with 37 hits after the 10-series of

In the final, however, Swapnil led after the first five shots of the first kneeling position right till the end, pulling away expertly after every stage of the gruelling event. He ended with a 465.1, 2.6 ahead of Akhil, who was second. Veteran Chain Singh finished third.
Arya triumphs in women's air rifle Maharashtra's Arya, another shooter in rousing form, won the women's 10m air rifle T2 trial after an intense final.
Newly-crowned national champion Ananya Naidu set the tone with a scorching 53.1 after the first five-shot stage and continued to lead the field till the 20th shot of the 24-shot final.
Two-time Olympian Elavenil Valarivan gave her company for most part of the contest with Arya at sixth after 10 shots.
Then from the 11th to the 21st shot, Arya shot nothing below 10.4, ending the string with a perfect 10.9 to take the lead, as Mehuli Ghosh climbed up to beat Elavenil to the podium.
As both Arya and Ananya went into the final two shots on the same score (231.9), the former nailed a couple of 10.8s to finish with 253.5. Ananya also finished with two high 10s to her credit but fell 0.5 short in the end calculations.

Saint-Etienne fans banned from French league game

PTI ■ PARIS
Saint-Etienne supporters have been banned by French authorities from travelling to Marseille for this weekend's Ligue 1 game between the two clubs with the biggest fan bases in France.
In an order published Wednesday, France's interior ministry said there is a "real and serious risk of confrontation" between the rival fans.
Second-placed Marseille takes on struggling Saint-Etienne at the Stade Velodrome on Saturday.
While Marseille vs. Paris Saint-Germain remains the biggest match in French soccer, and is known as "Le Classique," Saint-Etienne and Marseille have a special rivalry of their own. They were the two most decorated clubs in French football before PSG started its dominance after Qatari investors took over in 2011.
Saint-Etienne -- which has 10 league titles to its name, one more than Marseille -- dominated French football during the 1960s and '70s. Mediterranean club Marseille



became one of Saint-Etienne's strongest rivals after regaining a spot in the topflight in 1966. Marseille, still the only French club to win the Champions League (in 1993), finished runner-up behind "Les Verts" in 1970 and won its first title in 23 years ahead of Saint-Etienne in 1971.
Although their rivalry softened eventually with Saint-Etienne's sporting decline, both clubs still enjoy the support of a national fan base and their matchups are always intense.
Off the field, relations between Marseille and Saint-Etienne fans have been marked by animosity for decades.
Justifying its decision to ban away fans at the Velodrome, the interior ministry said "this strong antagonism has on several occasions led to serious clashes requiring the intervention of the police, some of whose members have been injured, and to the throwing of missiles and the lighting of fireworks."
In March 2024, Saint-Etienne fans ambushed Marseille fans on a motorway and threw stones at their bus convoy. In response, Marseille supporters got off their bus to attack a Saint-Etienne supporter who had reportedly announced their arrival.
Marseille is second in the French league, 10 points behind runaway leader PSG. After 21 matches, Saint-Etienne is languishing in 16th place in the 18-team league.



Algerian boxer Imane Khelif says she has 'never stayed down'

PTI ■ PARIS
Algeria boxer Imane Khelif, who found herself in the middle of a bitter divide about gender in sports during the Paris Olympics, has denounced "false and offensive" accusations from the International Boxing Association.
"I have been knocked down more times than I can count. But I have never stayed down," Khelif said late Tuesday on her Instagram account.
The IBA said this week it will file criminal complaints against the International Olympic Committee in the U.S., France and Switzerland. The Swiss-based IOC allowing female boxers Khelif and Lin Yu-ting to compete and win gold medals in Paris last year "may serve as grounds for criminal prosecution," the IBA claimed.
Khelif responded by saying she "will take all necessary legal steps to ensure that my rights and the principles of fair competition are upheld."
"Those responsible of these actions must be held accountable, and we will pursue all available legal avenues to ensure that justice prevails," she added.
The Russian-led IBA has been banished from the Olympics but it cited an executive order on transgender athletes by United States President Donald Trump to justify the criminal complaints.
Khelif said the IBA has "again made baseless accusations that are false and offensive, using them to further their agenda. This is a matter that concerns not just me but the broader principles of fairness and due process in sport."
The IOC has consistently said the boxers from Algeria and Taiwan, who were assigned female at birth and identify as women, complied with all the rules for the Olympic tournament. Both also competed in Tokyo in 2021 and did not win medals.
Khelif and Lin were disqualified from the 2023 world championships run by the IBA, which said they failed eligibility tests.
"The two female athletes mentioned by IBA are not transgender athletes," the IOC reiterated on Monday.
Khelif advanced through the Olympic Games amid international scrutiny and unfounded speculation about her sex. Despite being born and raised as a woman, she found herself at the center of Western debates about gender, sex and sports after failing unspecified eligibility tests for women's competition from the IBA in 2023.
"I have seen adversity before," Khelif said. "I have fought through every setback, every false accusation, every attempt to erase me. And I have won. Each obstacle has only strengthened my resolve."

Jamshedpur FC look to prevail over NorthEast United in ISL

PTI ■ JAMSHEDPUR
Jamshedpur FC will look to bounce back from their away loss to Bengaluru FC and remain in contention for the top-2 place finish when they host NorthEast United in their Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Thursday.
Jamshedpur have 34 points from 19 games on the back of 11 wins and a draw to be at the third spot in the standings. Their aim will be to stay in contention for the second spot which FC Goa occupy currently with 36 points.
The top-2 finishers do have to compete in the single-leg eliminator since they directly qualify for the semi-finals.
NorthEast United, on the other hand, are at sixth spot with 29 points and they have competition from Odisha FC (24), Kerala Blasters FC (24), and Punjab FC (24) who are closely following them. The Highlanders have drawn thrice and won once in their



previous five matches. Earlier this season, the Highlanders had claimed a thumping 5-0 victory against the Red Miners in Guwahati. Another triumph would make Jamshedpur FC the seventh opponent against whom the visitors complete a league double in the competition.
Jamshedpur, however, have not faced losses in any of their five home fixtures against NorthEast United, drawing thrice in the process. Notably, the Highlanders are the only side against whom Jamshedpur have kept multiple home clean sheets (three) in the competition.
Jamshedpur FC have been on an encouraging run at home in the current campaign, emerging victorious in eight of their 10 games. The Highlanders are unbeaten in their previous four games on the road, and the last time they registered

such a longer stretch was for five encounters between October-December 2018.
Jamshedpur FC head coach Khalid Jamil is not reading too much into the reverse fixture.
"In our last match against them, we didn't get a good result. We need to approach this match positively and work hard," he said.
NorthEast United FC head coach Juan Pedro Benali has a straightforward mindset ahead of the coming match, which is to earn three points.
"Jamshedpur FC are a very dangerous team. Any mistake against them can lead to a goal. We need to win as many points as possible and qualify for the playoffs," Benali said in the pre-match press conference.
The two sides have played each other 15 times in the ISL, with Jamshedpur FC winning six games and NorthEast United FC emerging victorious thrice. Six matches have produced draws.

Kerala enters Ranji Trophy semifinals

PTI ■ PUNE
Kerala produced a Kdoughty batting effort to hang on to a draw against Jammu and Kashmir, and progressed to the Ranji Trophy semifinals on the back of a slender 1-run first innings lead here on Wednesday.
Player of the match Salman Nizar (44 not out, 162 balls, 8x4) and Mohammed Azharuddeen (67 not out, 118b, 9x4 2x6) saw off nearly 43 overs during their unbroken 115-run alliance for the seventh wicket as Kerala made 295 for six in their second innings.
Their partnership was enough for Kerala, overnight 100 for two, to see off the final day's proceedings, and set up a semi-final meeting with former champions Gujarat from February 17.
This will only be Kerala's second appearance in the Ranji Trophy last four round after the 2018-19 season. They had lost to eventual champions Vidarbha by an innings and 11 runs at Wayanad last time.
"We believed in ourselves and took it (partnership) through the blocks of 10 runs each. J&K bowlers were also made our task tough. It was a similar approach we had adopted in the first innings," said Nizar during the presentation ceremony.
The left-handed batter had also made a vital unbeaten 112 in Kerala's first innings and stitched an 81-run alliance with Basil Thampi to give Kerala a crucial 1-run lead.
"We tried our best, but unfortunately we could not go all the way in this match. Credit to Kerala batters. But we are proud of the way we fought till here, and hopefully, we can achieve more," said J and K skipper Paras Dogra after the match. Jammu and Kashmir left-arm spinner Abid Mushtaq also received an on-the-spot warning by field umpires for chucking.

Sri Lanka beat Australia by 49 runs

PTI ■ COLOMBO
Asalanka scored a career-mentioned by IBA are not transgender athletes," the IOC reiterated on Monday.
Khelif advanced through the Olympic Games amid international scrutiny and unfounded speculation about her sex. Despite being born and raised as a woman, she found herself at the center of Western debates about gender, sex and sports after failing unspecified eligibility tests for women's competition from the IBA in 2023.
"I have seen adversity before," Khelif said. "I have fought through every setback, every false accusation, every attempt to erase me. And I have won. Each obstacle has only strengthened my resolve."



Avishka Fernando fell in the next over when he was caught by Australia captain Steve Smith off fast bowler Aaron Hardie, who took 2-13 in six overs.
Kusal Mendis (19), Kamindu Mendis (5) and Janith Liyanage (11) fell in quick succession to leave the hosts precariously placed on 55 runs for five wickets.
But Asalanka and Dunith Wellalage's 67-run partnership off 68 deliveries for the sixth wicket provided Sri Lanka with a base for a competitive total. Wellalage made a useful 30 off 34, including a six and two boundaries, before being caught by Smith off spinner Matthew Short.

Sri Lanka looked in trouble again at 135-8 after losing two more quick wickets, but No. 10 batter Eshan Malinga came to Asalanka's assistance by keeping his captain company in a 79-run ninth wicket stand in which he contributed just one run.
Asalanka hit 127 off 126 deliveries, including five sixes and 14 fours.
Fast medium Sean Abbott took 3-61.
Sri Lanka fast bowler Asitha Fernando struck in the first over of Australia's chase by trapping Short lbw with no score on the board. In his second over he had Jake Fraser-McGurk caught and bowled. Cooper Connolly and Smith, too, were dismissed quickly to leave Australia at 31-4.



Torrent Group becomes majority stakeholder in Gujarat Titans

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD
Healthcare major Torrent Group became the majority shareholder of Gujarat Titans after acquiring 67 percent (2/3rd) stake from current owners CVC, the IPL franchise announced on Wednesday.
The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and approvals, including from the BCCI.
"Torrent Group has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire majority stake of 67% in the renowned Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise, Gujarat Titans (Irelia Sports India Private Limited) from Irelia Company Pte Ltd ("Irelia") -- currently fully owned by funds managed or advised by CVC," the press release stated.
"As part of the deal, Irelia will retain a substantial minority stake of 33% in the franchise," it further stated.
The CVC in 2021 had bought the Gujarat franchise for INR 5625 crore and incidentally Torrent was one of the bidders.
The current valuation of GT is believed to be INR 7500 crore and as per IPL sources, Torrent has paid something to the tune of Rs 5025 crore to acquire two-third stake.
The deal is a win-win situation for both as CVC has not only retained one-third share but also got back 89 percent of the amount originally invested in buying the team.
Speaking on the occasion, Jinal Mehta, Director, Torrent Group, said, "With the acquisition of a majority stake in the Gujarat Titans, we are excited to have the opportunity to elevate our fan experience and unlock new growth avenues in the years to come."
Siddharth Patel, Managing Partner at CVC, commented: "We are excited to announce this deal, which marks the beginning of a new chapter in India's most popular sporting event and our team Gujarat Titans. "Our participation in Indian Cricket started strongly, securing the Gujarat franchise, winning the IPL title in our first season and emerging as runners up in our second season."

Sachin, Pooja and Sawan win gold in National Games

PTI ■ DEHRADUN
Javelin thrower Sachin Yadav of Uttar Pradesh, 18-year-old high jumper Pooja Singh of Haryana and long distance runner Sawan Barwal of Himachal Pradesh rewrote National Games records and won gold medals on the concluding day of athletics competition here on Wednesday.
In the absence of the likes of Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Jena, 25-year-old Yadav sent his spear to a Games-record distance of 84.39m in his fifth attempt to win the gold and establish himself as one of the top javelin throwers in the country.
He bettered the earlier Games record of 82.23m set by Rajinder Singh in the 2015 edition.
"My goal was to achieve the World Athletics automatic qualification mark (85.50m) but missed it," Yadav said at the post-event interaction.
"I'm close to my goal and should be able to achieve 85.50m in the next competition."
Yadav's 84.39m now ranks as the fifth career-best throw by an Indian after Chopra (89.94m), Jena (87.54m), Shivpal Singh (86.23m) and Davinder Singh Kang (84.57m).
Uttar Pradesh swept the medals with Rohit Yadav -- another member of 80m club -- winning the silver with a performance of 80.47m while state-mate Vikash Sharma took home the bronze with 79.33m. It was Yadav's fourth 80m-plus

throw, having joined the elite club in 2023 with a 80.27m during the Federation Cup. In June, he won the title in the Indian Grand Prix 3 with a throw of 82.69m, which was his earlier personal best before Wednesday's record-breaking effort.
He threw 80.04m during the National Open Championships qualification round in September last year.
Daughter of a mason from Fatehabad district of Haryana, Pooja cleared 1.84m to defend the women's high jump gold she had won in the 2023 edition, bettering the earlier Games record of 1.83m set by Swapna Barman of West Bengal in the 2022 edition of the Games.
Pooja, who has a personal best of 1.85m -- a national U20

record -- which she had produced last year, used to train on makeshift high jump pit made up of sacks of hay when she started the sport.
She won a silver medal at the Asian U20 Championships in 2023, a gold in the Asian U18 Championships the same year and finished sixth at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year.
Gobika K of Tamil Nadu won the silver after clearing 1.79m while Abhinaya Shetty (1.77m) of Karnataka took home the bronze.
Barwal won the men's 5000m in a time of 13 minute and 45.93 seconds, bettering the earlier Games record of 13:50.05s set by G Lakshmanan of Services in the 2015 edition. It was his second gold and second Games record in this

edition. He had clinched the men's 10,000m title on Saturday with a Games record time of 28:49.93s, bettering the earlier mark of 28:54.29s set by Gulveer Singh in the 2022 edition in Gujarat.
The 26-year-old Barwal was a bronze medal winner at the 2023 Asian Half Marathon race. He also won the 2024 Delhi Half Marathon title among the Indians.
Gagan Singh of Haryana was second with a time of 14:00.04s while Sunil Dawar of Madhya Pradesh finished third with 14:01.33s.
In the women's 400m hurdles, Tamil Nadu's Vithya Ramraj pocketed her third successive National Games gold, adding to her top of podium finish in the 2022 and 2023 editions of the Games.
Ramraj, who jointly holds the national record of 55.42 seconds along with the legendary PT Usha, clocked 58.11 seconds to win the gold.
The 26-year-old Ramraj, a member of the Indian 4x400m relay team that took part in the 2024 Paris Olympics, joined women's 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji and men's 110m hurdler Tejas Shiree in winning gold in three successive Games.
It was, however, a below-par performance from Ramraj as her timing was more than one second off the mark from her Games record of 56.67 seconds she had set in the 2022 edition.
Thamil Nadu finished 1-2 as Shreevarthani SK took home the silver with a time of 59.86 seconds, while Maharashtra's Neha Dhable (1:00.52) secured the bronze.

India thrashes England by 142 runs, sweeps series 3-0

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD
A robust batting show led by the Shubman Gill's attractive century heralded India's 142-run hammering of England in the third and final ODI as the hosts completed a dominant 3-0 clean sweep to culminate preparations for the Champions Trophy, here on Wednesday. India ticked all the remaining boxes with vice-captain Gill (112) following up his twin fifties earlier in the series with a seventh ODI ton of his career while middle-order mainstays Virat Kohli (52) and Shreyas Iyer (78) pushed India to a formidable 356 in the first half. Indian bowlers then took over the mantle to complete the England demolition job, bundling out the visitors for a mere 214 in 34.2 overs to complete a comprehensive victory — their second largest in ODIs in terms of runs against a familiar opponent. There was no change in the script for England, who came crashing down against spin after a sparkling start against

pace, which was provided by the pair of Ben Duckett (34) and Phil Salt (24) in tow. The slowness of the surface aided Indian bowlers as strike-making became difficult as the match progressed. Duckett took charge of England's response early on but played one shot too many. After smacking Arshdeep Singh (2/33) for four consecutive boundaries around the park in the fifth over, he again went after the left-arm seamer but was deceived by the 'pace off' knuckle ball. The mishit was collected cleanly by India skipper Rohit Sharma at mid-off and Arshdeep soon bounced out Salt, albeit off a slower one which the batter hit meekly to Axar Patel for a simple grab. Tom Banton gave a good example of himself playing his first ODI against India, hitting a couple of attractive reverse sweeps against spinners but he could not push on beyond a 41-ball 38 with four fours and two sixes. Joe Root perished for just 24 when an inside edge off Axar (2/22) crashed into his



stumps and Harshit Rana (2/31) hastened the end of England's resistance by getting the rid of Harry Brook (19) and Jos Buttler (6) in quick succession. From 84/2 after 10 overs, England's resolve petered

out as Indian bowlers tightened the screws with regular strikes and the visitors also lacked gumption on a pitch which remained true in its nature. Earlier, Gill led the way with a fluent 112 while Kohli and

Iyer also cashed in on ideal conditions in their last outing before the Champions Trophy, helping India set a 357-run target. Gill anchored India's innings en route to his seventh ODI ton — 112 off 104 balls

(14x4s, 3x6s) which also took his average past 60 in the format — while putting on two century stands with Kohli and Iyer to consolidate for India. The India vice-captain Gill also achieved the unique feat

of scoring a century each across the three international formats at the same venue. Gill, meanwhile, has also scored an IPL hundred here at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Attacking the fast bowlers and spinners alike, Gill's knock was replete with rich strokes particularly down the ground. The opener displayed immaculate footwork at the crease early on to take the attack to the opposition and remained resolute to score off spin, until he was cleaned up by Adil Rashid (4/64). On his part, Kohli took his time to find the rhythm and when he did, the batting mainstay looked hitting his strides. Kohli made the most of a juicy overpitched delivery from Mark Wood which he drove through the covers for his first four, then got on top of the ball from Saqib Mahmood to swat it for another boundary through mid-wicket and punished the England pacer for being wayward as he cut him for his third four. While his stroke play was compelling in the run-a-ball fifty for his 73rd half-

century, there were elements of struggle against leg-spinner Rashid. Rashid continued to have wood over Kohli as soon after he raised his bat for fifty, the England spinner had him caught behind with a loopy leg-break that took an outside edge before settling in the wicketkeeper's gloves. This was the fifth time Rashid has dismissed Kohli in ODIs. Kohli was stranded 37 runs short of becoming only the third batter ever to make 14,000 ODI runs, missing a personal landmark like his teammate Rohit Sharma earlier in the innings. It is expected to be completed during Champions Trophy. Coming off a terrific century in second ODI, Rohit (1) could not even get a start as a delivery from Wood which was angled in, straightened enough to take the outside edge and Phil Salt collected a sharp catch. Iyer only had himself to blame for missing out on a triple-digit score after he was caught behind on a delivery fired down the leg stump by Rashid, one that he needlessly chased and edged.



Starc withdraws, Smith to lead Australia in Champions Trophy

PTI ■ SYDNEY
Steve Smith-led Australia will be without their frontline pace attack at the Champions Trophy (CT) after fast bowler Mitchell Starc withdrew from the tournament citing personal reasons. The ODI World Cup holders have been forced to make several changes to their 15-member provisional squad due to injuries to captain Pat Cummins, pacer Josh Hazlewood, and all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, along with Marcus Stoinis' surprise retirement. "We understand and respect Mitch's decision," Chair of men's selectors George Bailey said on Wednesday. "Mitch is deeply respected for his commitment to international cricket and the priority he places on performing for Australia." Starc, who appeared to be in discomfort due to a left ankle issue during the latter stages of the final Test in Galle last week, will also miss the upcoming ODI series in Sri Lanka starting Wednesday. "His well-documented ability to play through pain and adversity, as well as forgoing opportunities in other parts of his career to put his country first, should be applauded," Bailey added. Cricket Australia said Starc has requested privacy and will

not be commenting on his decision. The development comes as a major blow for Australia, who will be without the three pacers — Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc — who played a crucial role in their 2023 ODI World Cup victory. "His loss is, of course, a blow for the Champions Trophy campaign, but it provides an opportunity for someone else to make their mark on the tournament," Bailey said. Smith, who is leading the side on the tour of Sri Lanka, will captain the team in the absence of Cummins and Marsh during the tournament, which will be played across Pakistan and the UAE. "The squad has changed significantly over the past month due to untimely injuries and the retirement of Marcus Stoinis," Bailey remarked. Pacers Spencer Johnson, Nathan Ellis, Sean Abbott, and Ben Dwarshuis have been named in Australia's final 15-man squad for the Champions Trophy. "The upside is that we have been able to call on players who have had international exposure and success over the past 12 months," Bailey said. "A strong core of some of our most experienced players will provide a strong foundation in our attempt to win this edition of the Champions Trophy.

India, England teams support BCCI's 'Donate Organs, Save Lives' campaign

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD
India and England cricket teams took the field for the third and final ODI here on Wednesday wearing green armbands to support the BCCI's initiative of "Donate Organs, Save Lives" campaign. The BCCI informed this in a statement shortly after the commencement of the match here at the Narendra Modi Stadium. "Both teams are wearing green armbands to support BCCI's initiative 'Donate Organs, Save Lives'. The initiative is spearheaded by ICC Chairman Mr Jay Shah," the BCCI release stated. The initiative was announced by ICC chairman and former BCCI secretary Shah on Monday.



Shah wrote on X, "On the occasion of the 3rd ODI between India and England in Ahmedabad on February 12th, we are proud to launch an awareness initiative — 'Donate Organs, Save Lives.' "Sport has the power to inspire, unite, and create lasting impact beyond the field. Through this initiative, we urge everyone to take a

step towards giving the greatest gift of all — the gift of life. "One pledge, one decision, can save multiple lives. Let's come together and make a difference!" he added. The initiative was supported by several Indian players, including Virat Kohli and vice-captain Shubman Gill. "Score the ultimate century.

Your organs can help others live beyond your lifetime. Register as a donor and make every life count," Kohli said in a video shared by the BCCI. Gill added, "Be the captain of life. Just like a captain leads the team to victory, you can lead someone to life by pledging to donate your organs." Other Indian cricketers to support the initiative were batters Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul. "One donor can save up to eight lives. Pledge today and hit a six for humanity," Iyer said. Rahul added, "Play the ultimate winning shot. Your decision to donate your organs can be the match winning moment in someone's life. Be a hero off the field too."



Ghazanfar ruled out of both Champions Trophy and IPL

PTI ■ KABUL
Teenage Afghanistan off-spinner AM Ghazanfar has been ruled out of both the ICC Champions Trophy (CT) and the IPL due to a lower back fracture that will keep him on the sidelines for at least four months, the country's cricket board announced on Wednesday. Left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote, originally named as a reserve, has replaced the 18-year-old in the main squad for Champions Trophy, which will be held in Pakistan and the UAE from February 19. The 20-year-old Kharote is a left-arm spinner and has played seven ODIs and six T20 Internationals since making his debut last year. Ghazanfar sustained the injury during Afghanistan's tour of Zimbabwe late last year, sidelining him for "at least four months." "AM Ghazanfar has been ruled out of the ICC Champions Trophy due to a fracture in the L4 vertebra (located in the lower back), specifically in the left pars interarticularis," the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) posted on X. "He sustained the injury during Afghanistan's recent tour of Zimbabwe and will be sidelined for a minimum

of four months, remaining under treatment during this period," it added. The IPL is scheduled to take place from March 21 to May 25 and Ghazanfar was to make his maiden appearance at the event after being bought by Mumbai Indians. The ACB also informed that off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman will continue to miss ODI action "until he has fully recovered," despite playing for Paarl Royals in the SA20 through January and early February. Mujeeb, who was not included in the provisional squad for Champions Trophy, last played an ODI during the 2023 World Cup. Afghanistan will begin their Champions Trophy campaign against South Africa on February 21 in Karachi, followed by matches against England and Australia. **Afghanistan squad for Champions Trophy** Shahidi (capt), Ibrahim Zadran, Ikrām Alikhil (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah (vice-capt), Azmatullah Omarzai, Gulbadin Naib, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Fareeh Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Nangeyalia Kharote, Naveed Zadran, Noor Ahmad.

Shikhar Dhawan among four event ambassadors for Champions Trophy

PTI ■ DUBAI
Former India opener Shikhar Dhawan was on Wednesday named as one of the four event ambassadors for the ICC Champions Trophy (CT) to be held in Pakistan and Dubai from February 19 to March 9. Besides Dhawan, the ICC has also named Pakistan's 2017 Champions Trophy winning captain Sarfaraz Ahmed, former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson, and New Zealand's legendary fast bowler, Tim Southee as event ambassadors. The quartet will write guest columns and will also attend matches, sharing their thoughts on the event, where the world's best eight teams will compete for the top



honour. "It is such a special feeling to be part of a Champions Trophy, and to be given the opportunity to enjoy the upcoming edition as an Ambassador is an honour," Dhawan said in an ICC release. "It's the ultimate competition where it's all on the line, and that is what makes it such a

thrilling spectacle. It's a tournament full of passion, pride, and determination, and that's what makes it such a thrilling and emotional journey for everyone. As India's highest run-scorer in the Champions Trophy, with an outstanding 701 runs across two editions, Dhawan

has long been one of the most iconic players in the history of the competition. He also holds the distinction of being the only player to win two consecutive Golden Bats (for the highest run-getter) in the tournament. His remarkable achievements include being named the Player of the Tournament in the 2013 edition, as well as holding the record for the most centuries in Champions Trophy history. "Some of my most cherished cricketing memories come from playing in the Champions Trophy. In the coming weeks, we will see the world's best teams pouring their heart and soul into every match, with everything they have worked for on the line," said Dhawan.

India adopts high-risk-high-reward approach in squad selection

PTI ■ BENGALURU
It aligns with head coach Gautam Gambhir's high-risk-high-reward approach but can India's Champions Trophy squad, having lost its game-changing pace talisman Jasprit Bumrah to injury, deliver the goods at the ODI showpiece? The answer to that question is not particularly straightforward given the audacious calls taken to decide the final 15. The selection risks start with the drafting in of five spinners. The Dubai-bound flight will feature Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarty in a spin-heavy bowling attack. Harshit Rana has replaced Bumrah with the more experienced Mohammed Siraj relegated to the group of non-travelling reserves alongside young batter Yashasvi Jaiswal and all-rounder Shivam Dube.

India's matches will be held in Dubai, a venue where pacers have found more success traditionally in the 50-over format. Available data shows that the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, where India will play all their matches, has hosted 58 ODIs since 2009, and pacers have taken 466 wickets here at an average of 28.6 and economy of 4.8. The spinners have combined to take 334 wickets till now at the DICS, and their average goes up to 30 but with a slightly better economy of 4.2. "The Dubai surface has a bit more carry than say in Sharjah, and the pacers here have found some good success and that's why Pakistan has picked more pacers in their squad, though they are supposed to play only a couple of matches here," a former national selector told PTI. "If you use the new ball well, then you can have a good

purchase there. I am not faulting the selection of Varun. He is in good form, but I would have liked to see one more experienced pacer in that side, someone like Siraj," he added. **Spinners' role in Dubai** From outside, having five spinners looks like an over-estimation of the conditions. But the management took a chance with Chakravarty because of his excellent recent form. Chakravarty has been trusted to deliver in a multi-nation tournament, after his failure to do so in the T20 World Cup 2021 at the same venue. What might have tilted the scales in his favour is the fact that none of India's league stage opposition in the Champions Trophy — Bangladesh, Pakistan and New Zealand — have played him before. The way he managed to trouble England in the ongoing home series on account of being an unknown entity for the visitors



also worked to his advantage. But on the flip side, it leaves Kuldeep Yadav in peril. With Jadeja and Axar being the first-choice spinners considering their batting prowess, the fight for the third spinner's slot will be between Kuldeep and Chakravarty. If India follows the template of the recent second ODI against England at Cuttack,

Chakravarty can pip the left-arm wrist spinner, at least in the initial stages of the Champions Trophy. **Why Siraj was overlooked** Another selection paradox is placing Rana ahead of Siraj as Bumrah's replacement for a tournament in which teams will have to do the tight-rope walk of three matches in the league phase.

Conventional thinking says that experience more than explosiveness matters in such events, but the wise men went ahead with Rana. According to skipper Rohit Sharma, ineffectiveness with the old ball led to Siraj's omission from the marquee event. On that count, Rana has already given them two examples of his ability to strike when the white ball loses its luster. In his T20I debut, Rana was the sixth bowler, a much-debated concussion substitute for Shivam Dube, and walked away with game-changing figures of 3 for 33. In ODIs, Rana went for a few runs, but showed the gumption to bowl across three spells in three various passages of the match. The risk that the management has taken is to trust Rana to grow in his role quickly and deliver in a high-pressure

tournament as and when he is called for. Why was Jaiswal dropped? A common line of thinking can be that the selectors wanted a bowler with some mystery element about him in the squad once Bumrah was ruled out with a lower back injury. So, they picked an in-form Chakravarty. Fair call. But why select him in place of Jaiswal, an opener? Should they have replaced a spinner for him? Perhaps Washington Sundar could have been the one to be omitted to accommodate Chakravarty. However, in one shot, the selectors have also avoided the opening conundrum that haunted them in the first ODI against England at Nagpur. It was tough to accommodate Jaiswal and Shreyas Iyer in the same eleven but an injury to Virat Kohli gave them a temporary relief. Once Kohli came back, Jaiswal missed out in the second

match, and the big wigs did not want an encore in Dubai. India is now placing confidence in Rohit, who made a hundred at Cuttack, and Shubman Gill, who scored two fifties in as many ODIs against England, to deliver at the top consistently in the Champions Trophy. They are hoping that Kohli will find a way to return to his imperious scoring ways and will not put pressure on the rest of the middle-order. The management has taken the risk of believing that the top five will be in fine fettle throughout the tournament. They have also risked the traditionally iffy fitness of Hardik Pandya and his ability to plug the gap as the third seamer behind Mohammed Shami and Arshdeep Singh or Harshit Rana. Looking at the squad, India seem to have taken one risk too many. Will they get the desired high reward? Or will they falter?