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HIRING GROWS BY 32
PER CENT: REPORT

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MANIPUR UNDER PRESIDENT RULE



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

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

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

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

New I-Tax bill to be simpler

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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

Modi, Gabbard talk counter-terrorism

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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



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

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

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

Waqf Bill report sparks protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The report of the joint committee of Parliament on the Waqf bill was tabled in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha amid uproar on Thursday, with the proceedings briefly adjourned following a heated debate between the treasury and the Opposition benches. In Rajya Sabha the Opposition MPs led by Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that dissent notes were deleted from the report. Later in Lok Sabha Home Minister Amit Shah asserting the BJP has no objection to the Opposition's dissent notes being included without redaction, and asked the Speaker decide according to procedures. When panel chairman Jagdambika Pal rose to table the report, Opposition members shouted slogans, which were countered by thumping of benches by the Treasury side. The Opposition members then staged a walkout, raising slogans against Pal. Amid noisy protests by the Opposition, Shah said, "Some opposition members have objected to their dissent notes not annexed fully. I wish to request you on behalf of my party that whatever their objections you can attach the same to the report as per parliamentary practice as you feel appropriate." "My party has no objection to it," he added. The Joint Committee of Parliament (JCP) on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill adopted the report on the draft legislation by a 15-11 majority vote. Earlier, reacting to Malikarjun Kharge's charges, at a press conference in Parliament House complex, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that certain portions which amounted to casting aspersions on the panel itself were



Members protest in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament. PTI

redacted. "Some of the points which amount to casting aspersion on the committee itself have been removed. The chairman of the committee has powers to do so," he said, asserting, "Everything has been done as per rules," he said. Later redacted portions were also submitted to Rajya Sabha. The report on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill was tabled in Rajya Sabha by BJP member Medha Vishram Kulkarni, a member of the panel. The tabling of the report was followed by uproar by members from the Opposition benches. The clamour continued as Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar tried to read out a message from President Droupadi Murmu. "Don't show disrespect to the President of India..." Dhankhar said and urged Kharge to ask the Opposition members to take their seats. As the uproar continued, the Upper House was adjourned till 11:20

am. When the Upper House reconvened, the chairman read out the message from the president that she had received the expression of thanks by members of the Rajya Sabha on her address to a joint sitting of Parliament on January 31. When the chairman tried to proceed with the Zero Hour, Opposition members continued to protest and some MPs trooped into the well of the House. Leader of the House JP Nadda regretted that the Rajya Sabha was not in order when the president's message was read out. Chairman Dhankhar said Samirul Islam, Nadimul Haque and M Mohamed Abdulla "created chaos and disruption in the House". Kharge was then called to speak. The Congress chief said dissent notes from the Opposition MPs to the Waqf bill were redacted from the report. "The report of the joint

committee of Parliament on Waqf... in which several members had given their dissent note has been taken out. Bulldozing the report by only keeping the views of the majority members is not right. It is condemnable, anti-democratic," he said. Calling it a "fake report", he said it should be withdrawn and sent back to a committee. The MPs are protesting not for personal reasons but because of the injustice being done to a community, he said. "This is not about any individual... These MPs are not protesting for their own sake, they are protesting for the community against which injustice is being done," Kharge said. DMK's Tiruchi Siva and AAP's Sanjay Singh also objected to the alleged removal of dissent notes from the report. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Rijiju, however, denied the charge. "There is no deletion or removal of any part of the report. Don't mislead the House. Opposition members (are) making unnecessary issues. The allegation is false," he said. Union ministers Bhupender Yadav and Nirmala Sitharaman also accused the opposition parties of misleading the Upper House, prompting another heated exchange between the treasury and the opposition benches. The Congress' Syed Nasir Hussain accused Rijiju -- who is also the Union Minority Affairs Minister -- of misleading the House and said, "My own dissent note has been redacted." TMC member Saket Gokhale said it was not a "religious" but a "Constitutional issue". Rijiju reiterated that the report had all annexures and nothing was taken out. The opposition MPs then staged a walkout and the House proceeded with the Question Hour.

PMLA misused like dowry law: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the ED for using the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to keep an accused in jail and questioned if the provision was "being misused" like the dowry law. A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan made the observation on Wednesday while granting bail to Arun Pati Tripathi, a former Excise Officer from Chhattisgarh. The top court expressed surprise at how the accused was kept in custody if a court order taking cognisance of the complaint was quashed by Chhattisgarh High Court. "The concept of PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) cannot be that a person should remain in jail. If the tendency is to keep the person in jail, even after cognisance is quashed, what can be said? See what happened in 498A cases. PMLA also being misused like that?" the bench asked. Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code protects married women from cruelty by their husbands and their relatives. During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), opposed the grant of bail, saying crooks could not get away on technical grounds. Raju submitted cognisance was quashed for



lack of sanction and that it was irrelevant for bail. Expressing dismay, the bench said, "It is shocking that the ED knows the cognisance was quashed, yet this was suppressed. We should summon the officers. The ED must come clean." "What kind of signals are we giving? Order taking cognisance is quashed and the person is in custody," the top court bench said. The top court was hearing an appeal of Tripathi, an Indian Telecom Services officer, challenging a Chhattisgarh High Court order denying him bail in connection with the high-profile liquor scam in the state. Tripathi, who served on

deputation as Special Secretary and managing director of the Chhattisgarh State Marketing Corporation Limited, was arrested after an ED investigation. The ED initiated the probe based on a predicate offence registered by the economic offences wing, Raipur, under multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act. The federal agency alleged a criminal syndicate comprising senior government officials, private individuals, and political executives manipulated the state's excise policies to extort illegal earnings from the liquor trade.

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

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

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

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



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



The bride and others are seen on the right image running to save their lives, in Lucknow. PTI

confused by the flashing lights and the screaming people, darted around the venue, looking for an

escape. Forest officials and police arrived after an urgent SOS and began

what turned into a five-hour game of hide-and-seek with the big cat. To locate the leopard, the

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

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



Curtains to come down on 38th National Games in Haldwani today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN/ HALDWANI

Curtains will come down on the 38th National Games which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 28 in Dehradun- on Friday in the presence of the Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Haldwani.

A total of 35 events were held in the National Games this year with Dehradun being the main venue for the event. Apart from Dehradun, the major venues for the event were Haldwani, Haridwar and Rudrapur. One of the aspects of the 38th NG was that the events were also organised in mountainous towns such as Khatima, Tanakpur, Almora and Tehri.

Uttarakhand, which has hosted the NG for the first time, has reasons to smile not just for its successful conduct but for the State having performed remarkably with a total of 104 medals which is the highest medal tally for the State in the National Games. The host State is in seventh position in the medal tally which is a remarkable improvement from 25th position the State got in 37th NG held at Goa.

The State government machinery is now focused on making the closing ceremony as memorable as possible. To review preparations with a few hours left for the programme to start, the chief minister



Pushkar Singh Dhami accompanied by the State Sports minister Rekha Arya conducted an on-ground inspection of the International Stadium in Gaulapur, Haldwani. While the CM stressed on water-tight security and all possible facilities for the guests and the spectators, Arya urged all concerned to use the ceremony to showcase Uttarakhand's tradition of warm hospitality and cultural uniqueness. Not just all the sportspersons who have won medals have been invited for felicitation but a presentation of yogasana is to feature in it. Further, renowned Bollywood singer Sukhwinder Singh and

Kumaoni singer Shweta Mahara will perform. The programme is scheduled to begin

at 2 PM, starting with performances by the Digari Group and Shweta.

Haryana minister hails 'excellent' conduct of National Game

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Haryana Sports minister Gaurav Gautam praised the arrangements made by the Uttarakhand government for the 38th National Games while visiting Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Dehradun to motivate the players representing Haryana. During his visit, he toured various sporting venues on

the campus, including Bhagirathi Hall which hosted the gymnastics events. He expressed gratitude to the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami for ensuring top-notch facilities for players who came from across India. He also interacted with the players, coaches and officials.

Public participation a must to combat forest fires: CM Dhami

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has said that public participation is key for controlling forest fires in the State. He stressed on inter departmental coordination, co-operation of social organizations, Mahila Mangal Dals, Yuvak Mangal Dals and Van Panchayats for preventing the incidents of forest fires.

The CM gave the instructions while supervising a mock drill organized by National Disaster Management Authority, Home ministry and Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority at IT Park Dehradun on Thursday.

On a stern note, the CM directed that strict action should also be taken against anti-social elements who set fire to forests. Emphasising coordination between different departments the CM directed additional chief secretary RK Sudhanshu to issue a letter to ensure participation of all departments to prevent incidents of forest fire.

The CM said that the Forest department should adopt Along with Sheetalakhet model and work should be done on chhaal,



talaiya and other measures to prevent forest fires. He added that emphasis should also be given on the use of modern technology in this endeavour. Dhami said that the State has to face many challenges due to forest fires and it causes loss of forest wealth and loss to wildlife.

He said that regular awareness campaigns should be undertaken to control forest fires and special attention should be

given to innovations. He has also appealed to the people of the State to play an active role in preventing incidents of forest fire.

The mock drill was organised at 16 places in six districts of the State. The objective of the drill was to deal with various situations due to forest fires, reducing response time, public cooperation and other effective measures to prevent them.

The CM appreciated the

exercise and said that such mock drills will definitely help in controlling forest fires.

The deputy chairman of State advisory committee on disaster Vinay Kumar Ruhela, principal secretary RK Sudhanshu, secretary Disaster Management Vinod Kumar Suman, IG Fire Mukhtar Mohsin, senior consultant of NDMA Aditya Kumar and others attended the meeting.

NABARD estimates credit potential of Rs 54,698 Cr for Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has estimated a credit potential of Rs 54,698 crore for Uttarakhand for the financial year 2025-26. This was disclosed in State focus paper-2025-26 released during the State Credit Seminar organised by the NABARD here on Thursday.

As per the paper, the credit potential of Uttarakhand for the year 2025-26 is 36 per cent more than last year. It has estimated total agricultural credit of Rs 19,306.96 crore, Rs 30,477.92 crore in MSME and Rs 4913.53 crore in other primary sectors for 2025-26.

Addressing the seminar, the chief secretary Radha Raturi said that the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) loan provided by the NABARD has given a special impetus to the development of infrastructure in the State. Terming migration as one of the major problems facing the State, the CS suggested that NABARD in collaboration with other agencies should start projects for solving the menace of migration. The CS said that district wise development plans can be made on



the basis of credit potential of the districts. She said that solar energy holds immense potential for the State and it can create employment in the rural areas.

Additional chief secretary, Anand Bardhan said that due to migration, the number of people engaged in agricultural activities in mountainous areas of the State is decreasing and the agricultural land is getting converted into barren lands. He said that aspirational areas in every district should be identified with the help of an external agency and schemes related to them should be prepared and amalgamated into the state focus paper. The chief general man-

ager of NABARD, Pankaj Yadav said that agriculture and rural development, promotion of small scale industries, increasing financial literacy and micro finance are the priority areas for NABARD. He said that the focus paper includes different policy initiatives of the central and State government. Yadav said that NABARD is providing assistance to the State from its creation.

Secretary SN Pandey, general manager of Reserve Bank of India Dipti Agarwal, convener of the State level bankers committee and GM of State Bank of India Deepesh Raj and others attended the seminar.

Government to defend UCC strongly in HC: BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party said that the State Government will present a strong advocacy in Uttarakhand High Court regarding the petition filed against the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). The State media in-charge of BJP, Manveer Singh Chauhan stated that the government respects the judiciary and will respond accordingly.

He said that those opposing women's rights or creating obstacles should not have any misconceptions, as the UCC from Uttarakhand will move forward towards a uniform legal system across the country. During a media interaction at the party headquarters, Chauhan said that the government has followed all judicial processes and will file its response soon. He said that the UCC was drafted through a constitutional process involving consultations with experts and the public under the leadership of



a Supreme Court judge.

He stated that inputs were taken from various social, political and regional representatives and after nearly three years of deliberation, legal and executive experts reviewed the draft before it was discussed in the State assembly. He said that the implementation of the UCC is now benefiting the people of the State. Responding to the opposition's reaction to the petition, he criticised those opposing the UCC, saying that their stance was expected.

He said that the same people had historically prevented the implementation of the UCC in the country and introduced laws such as the Muslim Personal Law and Waqf Board Act while imposing the Hindu Code Bill. He said that the UCC introduced in Uttarakhand will continue its course, ensuring legal uniformity across the country.

Uttarkashi prepares for Modi's Winter Yatra on Feb 27

PNS ■ UTTARKASHI

Preparations are in full swing in the Harsil-Mukhwa region of Uttarkashi district for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed Winter Yatra on February 27. The area is being decorated and construction work on roads, parking spaces and other necessary infrastructure is being carried out at a rapid pace. The finishing work on the road leading to the army helipad in Harsil is in its final stage. In Mukhwa village, the authorities are decorating Ganga temple and old structures in the village. They have also rebuilt a pedestrian path leading to the temple and stairs have been constructed for easier access too. A viewpoint is being developed within the temple premises for the PM to observe the Himalayan landscape and the Harsil Valley. Road improvements and safety measures are being implemented to ensure smooth access to the village. A

parking area is also in its final construction phase, as per the officials. During an inspection of the preparations on Thursday, the Uttarkashi district magistrate Mehrban Singh Bisht reached the helipad in his vehicle. The officials informed that until now, access to this helipad, which is operated by the army, was only possible on foot due to the



lack of a road. The new road will provide convenience to the army and facilitate the movement of dignitaries. The DM inspected the ongoing work and directed officials to

complete all tasks with efficiency. He instructed the construction of smart toilets at the parking site and improvements to the pedestrian path leading to the temple. He also reviewed the temple premises and held discussions with the Gangotri Temple Committee regarding the arrangements for the visit. He instructed officials to camp in the area and

oversee the work continuously. He instructed them to complete all work within a week as senior officials are expected to visit soon for further inspection.

Cong to raise smart meter issue in Vidhan Sabha: Pritam

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh has said that the Congress party is against the installation of smart meters and it will raise the issue in the upcoming session of the Vidhan Sabha. Interacting with the mediapersons here on Thursday, the senior Congress leader and MLA from Chakrata said that the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) should install the smart meters only after the consent of the consumers. Justifying the act of the Kichha MLA Tilak Raj Behed in which he smashed the smart meters, Singh said that Behed was registering his protest as the general public is not in favour of installation of these meters. Replying to a question on disension within the state unit of the Congress party, the Chakrata MLA said that Congress is a mega or-



ganisation and it allows internal democracy within the party due to which its leaders and workers express their feelings openly. He however added that all the leaders and workers of the party are completely dedicated towards the central leadership of the party. Singh added all the Congressmen are committed to make the party strong and want it to come back to power in the State.

Tiger mauls forest worker in Ramnagar division of CTR

PNS ■ RAMNAGAR

A tiger attacked and mauled a patrolling worker identified as Ganesh Panwar in Kaniya beat under Bijrani zone under Ramnagar forest division of Corbett Tiger Reserve. As the forest staff fired three rounds in the air to scare the tiger away, it left, leaving the injured worker bleeding profusely. He was rushed to Ramnagar Hospital. His condition was stated to be serious.



Upon receiving the information of the attack, CTR director Saket Badola and deputy director Rahul Mishra reached the hospital and inquired about the injured worker's condition. Later,

Badola said that the tiger had attacked Ganesh on his head, adding that it had been identified. He further said that an order had been issued to tranquilise and capture the tiger. "Our staff are patrolling the

area round the clock," he said. He also appealed to the villagers living in the forest's vicinity not to venture out into the forest area where the tiger was supposed to be lurking.

BJP MLA from Lansdowne likely to skip budget session in protest

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

BJP leader and Lansdowne MLA Dileep Singh Rawat is likely to miss the budget session of Vidhan Sabha if the State government fails to address the issue of stringent forest regulations that he claims are hindering development in his constituency. Rawat has consistently voiced concerns about stalled projects in his assembly segment, where 67 per cent of the area is forest-covered. He attributes these delays to rigid forest regulations that require the transfer of non-forest land which should be twice the size of the forest land used to the Forest department for any development initiative, including road construction. He had also asked the government in November last year to hold a special assembly session to comprehensively address these challenges, stating that

the current process is excessively bureaucratic and hampers essential development work. He had also appealed for a thorough review of existing rules, advocating amendments tailored to Uttarakhand's unique needs. Rawat informed The Pioneer



that chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami assured him that a four-hour discussion will be held during the budget session in Dehradun on the issue. However, he warned that if this commitment is not confirmed in the BJP legislature party meeting ahead of the budget session, he will refrain from attending the session.

International Yoga Festival to commence on March 1 in Rishikesh

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The International Yoga Festival will be held in Rishikesh from March 1 to March 7. Ahead of the event, the Tourism minister Satpal Maharaj held a meeting with the officials concerned of the Tourism department and other associated bodies to review preparations and give necessary directions on Thursday. During the meeting at the Tourism Directorate, Maharaj discussed the festival's outline, management and arrangements with officials. He stated that the event will feature programmes on yoga, meditation, health and wellness, with participation from yoga teachers and

practitioners from different countries. He directed officials to ensure all arrangements are in place well in advance. He also instructed that local artists and yoga gurus should be given prior-



ity in the festival. He said the event will provide an opportunity to learn about various yogic practices and receive guidance from spiritual leaders and yoga teachers.



संकल्प से शिखर तक



पुष्कर सिंह धामी
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड



38वें राष्ट्रीय खेल
उत्तराखण्ड 38
राज्य जयश्री लक्ष्मी

28 जनवरी-14 फरवरी, 2025

का



अमित शाह
केन्द्रीय मंत्री, गृह एवं सहकारिता
भारत सरकार

समापन

मुख्य अतिथि

अमित शाह

केन्द्रीय मंत्री, गृह एवं सहकारिता
भारत सरकार

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति



डॉ. मनसुख मांडविया
मंत्री, खेल, युवा मामले, श्रम एवं रोजगार
भारत सरकार

पुष्कर सिंह धामी
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

कॉनराड कोंगकल संगमा
मुख्यमंत्री, मेघालय

अजय टम्टा
राज्य मंत्री, सड़क एवं परिवहन
भारत सरकार

रक्षा निखिल खडसे
राज्य मंत्री, युवा मामले
एवं खेल, भारत सरकार

रेखा आर्या
मंत्री, खेल एवं युवा कल्याण,
उत्तराखण्ड

अजय भट्ट
सांसद, नैनीताल-उधमसिंह नगर
लोकसभा

डॉ. पी.टी. ऊषा
अध्यक्ष, भारतीय ओलंपिक संघ
एवं सांसद

14 फरवरी, 2025 | दोपहर 2:00 बजे
स्थान: अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्पोर्ट्स कॉम्प्लेक्स, हल्द्वानी, नैनीताल



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Revamping the tax regime

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

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



A formal Taxpayer's Charter has been included, outlining rights and responsibilities to promote transparency and fairness in tax administration. All TDS-related provisions have been consolidated under a single clause using simple tabular formats, reducing complexity and improving compliance. Additionally, the bill integrates key court rulings from the last 60 years, providing more legal certainty and reducing disputes. The tax treatment for employee stock options has been refined, offering a more transparent taxation structure to ensure fair and predictable tax treatment for employees receiving stock options. To make tax exemptions clearer,

income that does not form part of total income has now been moved to dedicated schedules instead of being scattered throughout the Act. These changes are expected to bring multiple benefits, such as simpler compliance, a clear taxation structure, reduced litigation, an easier TDS framework and greater predictability for employees with stock options. Despite these advantages, the bill faces certain challenges. Taxpayers and businesses will need time to adapt to the new terminologies and provisions. The removal of 'previous year' and 'assessment year' may cause temporary confusion during the transition. Additionally, the introduction of tables and streamlined TDS clauses will require updates in income tax return (ITR) forms, software utilities and reporting systems. The Income Tax Bill 2025 marks a significant step toward a more transparent, efficient and taxpayer-friendly system. While it does not introduce new taxes, its simplification of language, removal of redundancies, and integration of judicial precedents will reduce compliance costs and tax disputes. If successfully implemented, this bill could enhance tax administration efficiency and encourage better voluntary compliance among taxpayers. After deliberation by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, it is expected to come into effect from April 1, 2026. How it will actually work will only be clear then.

PICTALK



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

Russia combines diplomatic strategy with military tactics



NISHAKANT OJHA

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

Russia's military strategy has long been shaped by its geopolitical position, straddling both Europe and Asia. This dual identity has led to a warfare doctrine that merges Western technological advancement with Eastern strategic depth and endurance. The ongoing evolution of Russian military tactics provides valuable insight into its approach to global conflicts, shaped by a fusion of European and Asian influences. From the European side, Russia has historically adopted a professionalised military structure similar to Western armies, particularly during the Imperial era and through Soviet reforms. Its command structures have evolved to centralise authority while enabling flexibility on the battlefield. The modernisation of weaponry has also followed Western advancements, integrating precision-strike capabilities and network-centric warfare. Drawing lessons from NATO conflicts, Russia has enhanced its rapid manoeuvre warfare strategies, incorporating elements of German Blitzkrieg and modern NATO doctrines, which were evident in its campaigns in Georgia and Ukraine.

On the other hand, Russia's Eastern influences are deeply rooted in its strategic patience and attritional warfare, a legacy of the Mongol conquests and Soviet-era endurance strategies. Rather than seeking swift victories, Russia often engages in prolonged, resource-draining conflicts that wear down its adversaries over time. Its embrace of asymmetric and hybrid tactics aligns with guerrilla warfare methods, employing unconventional approaches such as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and proxy warfare. This strategic approach mirrors the methods used by China and other Eastern powers, relying on destabilisation rather than direct confrontation. Furthermore, Russia's influence in regional conflicts extends beyond conventional military engagements, utilising mercenaries like the Wagner Group and supporting separatist movements, a strategy similar to



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

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



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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COUNSELLING CENTRES FOR COUPLES

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

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

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

IAF CHIEF CRITICISES HAL

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

Supreme Court slams freebies



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

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

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

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

INVEST IN AI

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

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

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



GAURAV GANDHI

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

The 5G technology is widely recognised for its ability to deliver lower latency, faster speeds and improved connectivity, supporting a vast number of devices simultaneously. However, many consumers perceive 5G as an expensive innovation, primarily due to the high cost of chipsets, while overlooking broader cost factors. Although chipset expenses are a component, they do not represent the complete financial picture.



The Cost of 5G Hardware When considering 5G, it is common to focus on the price of chips. While 4G chips are priced below \$10, 5G chips currently exceed \$100. However, focusing solely on chipset costs ignores the larger financial framework. The primary expense of 5G stems from the extensive infrastructure required to support the network. Telecom providers must invest in building new base stations, fibre-optic networks, and antennas to enable 5G connectivity. Historically, new technologies such as cloud computing and smartphones were expensive when first introduced.

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

The Inevitable Drop in 5G Costs

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

Economies of Scale and Cost Reduction

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

of scale. As more telecom providers, businesses and consumers adopt 5G, the cost of deployment will continue to decline. The larger the global 5G network, the more cost-effective its implementation becomes. Research by Juniper predicts that global 5G connections will surge from 5 million in 2019 to 1.5 billion by 2025. Mass production plays a crucial role in reducing costs. Increased production volumes lead to lower prices for 5G hardware, including chips, antennas, and base stations.

The 5G base station market is expected to grow from \$37.44 billion in 2025 to \$132.06 billion by 2030, at a CAGR of 28.67 per cent, according to Mordor Intelligence. These massive investments will drive economies of scale, further lowering the cost of private 5G network deployment for businesses.

Affordable 5G Handsets and Private Networks

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

adoption.

5G's Impact on Business

As 5G technology becomes more affordable, businesses will have greater opportunities to enhance their operations. While early adoption may come with higher costs, the long-term benefits will far outweigh these expenses. 5G's ultra-fast connectivity and real-time data transfer capabilities will drive productivity, streamline processes, and facilitate better decision-making. Furthermore, 5G can revolutionise industries by enabling advanced applications in customer service, video streaming, and mobile capabilities.

The Future of 5G Affordability

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

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



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S AI DIPLOMACY

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Will 'Jan Vishwas 2.0' deliver real reform



A S MITTAL

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



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

A survey by EY-FICCI reveals that four out of five respondents believe corruption is a significant deterrent to foreign direct investment (FDI). This underscores the urgent need to overhaul India's compliance framework to foster a transparent, fair, and predictable regulatory environment. While the government initiated compliance reforms two years ago, progress has been sluggish.

The Jan Vishwas Act of 2023 was a step forward, decriminalising 180 provisions related to imprisonment clauses that burden businesses and entrepreneurs. However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's 2025 budget announcement about 'Jan Vishwas 2.0' aims to further decriminalise around 100 provisions. While this is a welcome step, it barely scratches the surface—over 20,000 provisions with imprisonment clauses remain untouched.

The Constant Flux of Compliance Rules

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



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

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

Another pressing issue is the overwhelming frequency of compliance updates, which fosters inefficiency and corruption.

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

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

Labour Laws: The Elephant in the Room

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

Simplifying Business Permits: A Digital-First Approach

Establishing a factory in India

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

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

One Nation, One Business Identity

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

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

A Global Perspective: The US Efficiency Threat

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

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

The Way Forward

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Grim Reality: What the Data Reveals

Road accident statistics paint

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

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

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



ASHIM SANAYAL

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

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

Strengthening Laws and Enforcement

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



term "accident" itself is misleading.

The Urgent Need for Action

Adopting a structured and data-driven approach to road safety is imperative. Studies indicate that focusing on key risk factors—such as speeding, non-compliance with seatbelt and helmet laws, and unsafe road designs—can significantly reduce casualties. Speeding alone contributes to approximately 73 per cent

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

Road Safety as a National Mission

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

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

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

A Collective Commitment to**Saving Lives**

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

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

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

DEHRADUN | FRIDAY | FEBRUARY 14, 2025

Erdogan urges India, Pak to resolve Kashmir issue

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through dialogue between India and Pakistan... President Erdogan, who is in Pakistan on a two-day visit, made the comments after holding one-on-one and delegation talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif...



with science, banking, education, defence, and health. Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz said that Pakistan was the second home of the Turkish leader and added that it was wonderful to have him back after five years... 'The people of Pakistan are extremely happy today to see you, along with your delegation, visiting your brotherly country,' he said.

ERDogan LASHES: The Turkish president was accompanied by First Lady Emine Erdogan and a delegation of investors and business leaders. A formal welcome ceremony was held in Erdogan's honour at the Prime Minister's House...

NATO allies insist Ukraine, Europe must be in peace talks

Several NATO allies stressed on Thursday that Ukraine and Europe must not be cut out of any peace negotiations as US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth denied that the United States is betraying the war-warred country... Europe is 'supposed to play a central or the main role in the peace order.'

Hegseth warned that the war in Ukraine must 'be a wakeup call' for NATO's European allies to spend more on their own defence budgets... Hegseth denied that the US has betrayed Ukraine by launching negotiations about its future without Kyiv's full involvement.

most powerful member — signalled that its security priorities lie elsewhere, including in Asia. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who was chairing Thursday's meeting, said that whatever agreement is struck between Russia and Ukraine, it is crucial that the 'peace deal is enduring, that Putin knows that this is the end, that he can never again try to capture a piece of Ukraine.'

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

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

Melbourne (PTI): Australia protested Thursday what it described as an unsafe and unprofessional interaction over the South China Sea where a Chinese fighter is accused of releasing flares that endangered an Australian military surveillance plane... SAR Televanture Limited

could have been able to ensure that the flares did not hit the P-8, Marles told Sky News. 'Had any of those flares hit the P-8, that would have definitely had the potential for significant damage to that aircraft,' he added.

ful, professional and restrained' Guo said. Australia has protested in its capital Canberra and in Beijing on Wednesday and Thursday, Marles said.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE: I am all that my client RAJ KUMAR BHANDARI owner of the ENTIRE UPPER GROUND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF...

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ERDogan lashes

The Turkish president was accompanied by First Lady Emine Erdogan and a delegation of investors and business leaders...

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Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024. Table with columns for Particulars, Quarter ended, and Year ended.

Notes: 1. Ratios have been computed as follows: - Earning per share (Basic & Diluted) = Profit after Tax / Weighted average number of equity shares...

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EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER & NINE MONTHS ENDED ON 31 DEC 2024

Table with 6 columns: Sr. No., Particulars, For The Quarter Ended On (31.12.2024, 30.09.2024, 31.12.2023), Nine Month Ended (31.12.2024, 31.12.2023, 31.03.2024), Year Ended (Audited)

NOTES: 1. The above Unaudited Financial Results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in their respective meetings held on 13th Feb 2025...

SAR Televanture Limited CIN: L45202UP2019PLC213062 Regd. Off.: B-16, First Floor, Sector 2, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301

EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER & NINE MONTHS ENDED ON 31 DEC 2024

Table with 6 columns: Sr. No., Particulars, For The Quarter Ended On (31.12.2024, 30.09.2024, 31.12.2023), Nine Month Ended (31.12.2024, 31.12.2023, 31.03.2024), Year Ended (Audited)

NOTES: 1. The above Unaudited Financial Results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in their respective meetings held on 13th Feb 2025...

Date: 13.02.2025 Place: Noida For SAR Televanture Limited Pankaj Nagpal Director

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

PTI BANGKOK: Some 260 people, including some Indians, believed to have been trafficked and trapped into working in online scam centres are to be repatriated after they were rescued from Myanmar...

triated. The army said that those rescued in the most recent operation came from 20 nationalities — with significant numbers from Ethiopia, Kenya, the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan and China.

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, P.H. CIRCLE, NAYABAZAR, CUTTACK-753004

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Invitation For Bids (IFB) No.ACEPHCTC-02/2024-25 Dtd.06.02.2025

APPOINTMENTS The Punjab state Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited (Milked Punjab) invites applications/resumes for appointment of one full time consultant (Sales & Distribution) with Head Quarter at Delhi on contract basis initially for period of one year (which could be extended further as per requirement)

LOST & FOUND I, Krishna Singh, Mother of JC-472354M Sub Manoj Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill-Medhauna, Tiloi, Dist-Amethi, U.P., have changed my name from Krishna Singh to Krishna Devi, vide affidavit dated 13/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

CHANGE OF NAME I, Jitendar S/o Hukum Singh R/o 846, GF-2, Sector-5, Vaishali, Ghaziabad (U.P) 201010 declare that my name has been wrongly written as Jitender in my Driving License No. P08062005442091. The actual name of mine is Jitendar. In future I will be known as Jitendar.

ADD INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-104, 3rd Floor, DDA Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020

EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2024

ADD INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Continued) Standalone (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data)

ADD INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Continued) Consolidated (Rs. in Lakh, except per share data)

PUBLIC NOTICE It is informed in public that my father SH. RAJBIR SINGH was the lessee of 50% share of Plot No. 008, Block P.K. Sector-122, NoIDA, Dist-Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 measuring 45 sq. mtr. My father SH. RAJBIR SINGH executed a will in my favour on 29-09-2023 of his share which was registered in the office of Sub Registrar-II, NoIDA Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh at Block No. III, Volume No. 963 at pages 271 to 282 at Document No. 226 on 25-05-2023. My father SHRI RAJBIR SINGH expired on 15-01-2025. I want to mutate above property in my favour on the basis of will, if any body have any objection for above mutation may file objection in the residential plot of NOIDA Authority Sector-6, NoIDA, within 30 days MOHIT BENIWAL.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Susmitha Watsia W/o Late Sh. Naresh Watsia R/o 32/GF/SBI Colony, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063 applied for transfer of ownership of flat No. T-3/0702, & customer ID No. KJH4003816-17 Plot Floor, LAKE HEIGHT, Sonapat, Haranya in her/his name claiming her/his legal heir of deceased Late Sh. Naresh Watsia S/o Harans Lal Watsia per document dated 04.02.2017 in records of office i.e. TDI INFRACORP (INDIA) LTD. Having its office Vandana building-11, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001. Any person having any objection for transfer of the said flat in favour of Mrs. Susmitha Watsia S/o Late. Sh. Naresh Watsia may send at the above noted office of company with supporting documents through email customer.care@tdiinfacorp.com within 15 days of the publication of this notice otherwise it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed transfer of the said flat in favour of Mrs. Susmitha Watsia S/o Late. Sh. Naresh Watsia.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all that my clients, Mr. Bantu Kumar & Mrs. Pooja (hereinafter called the 'Purchaser') intend to purchase the said portion from Mr. Jayant G.P.A of Mr. Narendar Kumar (hereinafter called the 'Attorney-holder'). In this connection, the Attorney-holder has informed the purchaser that he is the sole and absolute attorney holder in respect of the said property vide POA documents viz., GPA (registered as Document No. 12333 on 25.03.2003, and Will (registered as Document No. 5485 dated 25.03.2003) executed by Mr. Narendar Kumar in his favour. The Attorney holder has further informed that Mr. Narendar Kumar owned the said property by means of Revenue records. Thus, the Attorney holder is the sole and absolute attorney in respect of the said property including the said portion. The Attorney holder has also informed the purchaser that the said portion is not mortgaged anywhere and there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending regarding the said portion.

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED Regd. Office: 110, Bahar Road, New Delhi - 110 001

EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2024

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED (Continued) Standalone (Rs. in Lacs)

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED (Continued) Consolidated (Rs. in Lacs, except per share data)

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

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

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

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

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

MY MONEY SERVICES LTD. CIN : L67120DL1992PLC047890 Regd Office : 10-A, UNDERHILL, LANE, CIVIL LINES, DELHI-54

Extract of the Standalone Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and nine months ended 31st December, 2024

RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LIMITED Regd. Office: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur 244 901 (U.P.)

Extract of unaudited financial results for the quarter ended on 31st Dec. 2024

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED CIN- U45201DL2005PLC13361 Registered Office : 306-308, Square One, C-2, District Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110017

UNAUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Standalone (Rs. in million)

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Consolidated (Rs. in million)

Public Notice regarding cancellation of property This Public Notice is from M/S JKG Construction Pvt Ltd for Mr Manish Dutt Sharma and Mrs Shikha Sharma bearing unit no. C1-1604 at JKG Palm Court, Plot No. GH-01D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, Uttar Pradesh-201009.

SHRI ABHISHEK KUJUR Flat No. 611, Rama Apartments, Plot No.2, Set 11, Dwarka, South West Delhi-110075

Rungta Irrigation Limited Regd. Office: 101, Pragati Tower 26, Rajendra Place, New Delhi 110008

Statement of Standalone Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine Months ended 31-12-2024

RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LIMITED (Continued) Standalone Results

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Standalone Results

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Consolidated Results

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Standalone Results

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Consolidated Results

EMAAR INDIA LIMITED (Continued) Standalone Results

Exploring the Magic of Childhood

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



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



Nawazuddin Siddiqui, reflecting on his time at NSD with Vani Tripathi Tikoo, shared how their theatre journey shaped their understanding of narrative and imagination. He highlighted the book's core message, adults should embrace a child's creativity and view the world through their eyes, full of possibility.

Anup Soni's captivating reading added to the evening's charm, drawing the audience into the whimsical story. *Kyon Nahi Ho Sakte Haathi Lal* captures the playful spirit of childhood, offering a reminder that some of the most meaningful lessons come from the stories we tell our children.

The book is a tribute to the boundless imagination of childhood, celebrating art, creativity and the magic of storytelling. It encourages readers to embrace curiosity, cherish the joy in small moments and never lose sight of the wonder that makes childhood and every new idea, so special.

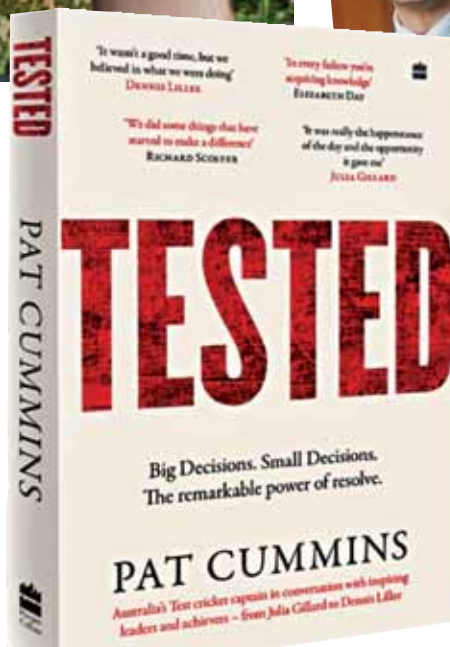


Australian cricket captain steps off the pitch into the world of storytelling with his book *Tested*, writes ABHI SINGHAL

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

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

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



ABOUT THE BOOK

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

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

MOMENT OF CHALLENGES IN PAT'S LIFE

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

RELEASING TOMORROW

Pat Cummins, Beyond the Game



CHAPTERS IN CONVERSATION WITH



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

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

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

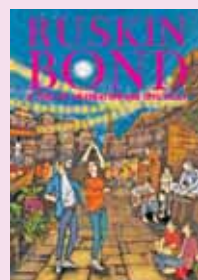
To this Pat wrote in the book, "I didn't feel prepared. I'd recently captained New South Wales in a handful of one-day matches, but before that I hadn't captained a side since I was fifteen. I hadn't even really thought that much about being the captain, even though I'd been a vice-captain for sometime.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

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

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



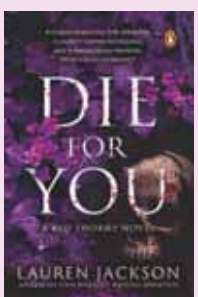
SOULFUL READS



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



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



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



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



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

NEW LAUNCH

The Ramayana in Art



BY TEAM VIVA

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

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

A Call to Protect the Earth

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



A Story of Unseen Affection forever

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

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

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

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



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

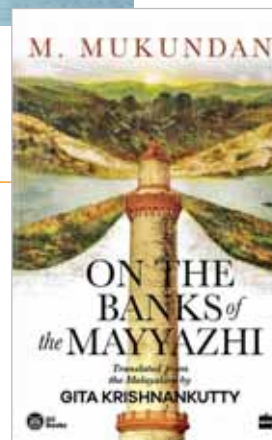
What brought Pappamma to my mind all of a sudden was the novel *On the Banks of the Mayyazhi* by M Mukundan, an avant-garde Malayalam writer. Mukundan was born in Mahe, a former French enclave in Kerala, now administered by the Union Territory of Puducherry. The novel, published in 1974, tells the story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

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

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

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

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



ABOUT THE BOOK

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



38th National Games
Uttarakhand 25
 SILVER JUBILEE YEAR
 January 28 - February 14 2025

Pushkar Singh Dhama
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Uttarakhand is moving forward steadily. Just as the state successfully hosted the G20 Summit, Similarly, the National Games successfully organized in Devbhoomi.

SANKALP SE SHIKHAR TAK

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

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

38th National Games
Successfully Organized

under the guidance of
Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji

From Devbhoomi to Khelbhoomi

The National Games were successfully held in Dehradun, Rishikesh, Tehri, Udham Singh Nagar, Haldwani, Haridwar, New Tehri, Nainital, Almora, Pithoragarh, and Champawat. Around 10,000 athletes from across the country participated in the event. Competitions were held across 35 sports disciplines. Devbhoomi Uttarakhand successfully hosted this historic opportunity. Promoting a sports culture to inspire youth, this event stands as a significant achievement in Uttarakhand's sporting history.

For more information, visit
www.38nguk.in

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