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RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN **SLAMS THE CONGRESS**



President Droupadi Murmu addresses the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on the first day of the Budget Session in

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n an unprecedented move, the Rashtrapati Bhawan on Friday reacted strongly over the Congress leaders' comments on President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint session of the Parliament terming the remarks are "in poor taste, unfortunate and entirely avoidable".

The Rashtrapati Bhavan which has never responded to such political remarks, in a said statement such comments hurt the dignity of the high office and therefore are "unacceptable".

Soon after the President concluded her address to the joint sitting of both the Houses, Congress leaders

were seen discussing the speech. "The poor lady, the President, was getting very tired by the end...She could hardly speak poor thing," Sonia was heard saying in a video doing the rounds on social media.

The President's office said it believes that "it might be the case that these leaders were not acquainted with the idiom and discourse in Indian languages such as Hindi, and thus formed a wrong impression". In any case, such comments are in poor taste, unfortunate and entirely avoidable, the statement said.

These leaders have said that the President was getting very tired by the end and she could hardly speak. Rashtrapati Bhavan would like to clarify

was not tired at any point. Indeed, she has believed that speaking marginalised communities, for women and farmers, as she was doing during the course of her address, can never be tiring," the statement

said.

Modi too launched a scathing attack on the Congress, accusing its "shahi parivar" of insulting President Droupadi Murmu, who hails from a tribal background. In a direct response to Congress leaders' purported remarks on Murmu, Modi, at a public meeting in the national Capital said, "These Congress people think they are the masters of the country. The arrogance of the Congress

Prime Minister Narendra

Indian economy defies global slowdown



PROF. GAURAV VALLABH

With Sanskriti (culture) and Pragati (progress) moving in tandem, India stands on the brink of an economic transformationone that is propelling the nation towards becoming the world's third-largest economy. Driven by the guiding principles of Reform, Perform, and Transform, the government has laid a robust foundation for economic expansion through bold policy measures, strategic interventions, and commitment to inclusive growth. At the heart of this

transformative journey is the Economic Survey 2024-25, which, despite global turbulence, economic presents a confident yet pragmatic assessment of India's economic trajectory. While economies worldwide grapple with geopolitical uncertainties, supply chain disruptions, and inflationary pressures, India continues to defy global headwinds, reaffirming its status as one of the fastest-growing major economies.

The data speaks volumes. India's GDP expanded by an impressive 6.4 per cent in FY25, driven by a resurgence in rural demand, a boom in infrastructure investment, and a stellar performance by the services sector. Key economic contributors such

as agriculture (3.8 per cent) and industry (6.2 per cent) outperformed their historical (FY15-FY24), indicating broad-based growth momentum. The Indian economy is projected to expand at a rate of 6.3 per cent to 6.8 per cent in the financial year 2025-26 (FY26) Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)-a cornerstone of aggregate demand-is projected to grow at 7.3 per cent, underscoring robust household spending, particularly in rural areas. A strong rebound been consumption has evident in rising sales of twowheelers, three-wheelers, and tractors, signalling increased purchasing power and consumer confidence. A manufacturing resurgent sector is a cornerstone of India's economic revival, as reflected in its Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which has consistently remained the expansionary zone. December 2024, the PMI surpassed long-term averages, fueled by strong order books, rising exports,

and resilient domestic demand. Business sentiment remains overwhelmingly positive, with firms anticipating higher production, improved order inflows, and greater capacity utilisation in the coming quarters. Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has played a pivotal role in attracting investments, reinforcing India's position as global manufacturing Investment

private powerhouse. remains the backbone of India's economic expansion. According to the RBI's latest

report, private investment commitments surged from ₹1.6 Lakh Crore in FY24 to ₹2.45 Lakh Crore in FY25. public The particularly in infrastructure development, has been a critical catalyst, with General Government Capital Formation (GFCF) growing at 13.1 per cent, outpacing overall investment growth between 2019 and 2023.

government's commitment to high-quality capital expenditure evident, with capital spending now constituting

World

Source: IMF WEO (January 2025)

market and developing economies

21.4 per cent of total expenditure, up from 13 per cent in FY21. Additionally, the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) has unlocked ₹3.86 Lakh Crore worth of private capital across key infrastructure sectors, enhancing long-term growth potential. Infrastructure development remains a cornerstone of India's growth strategy, with a paradigm shift from a project-based approach to a corridor-based

one. The National Highway Network has expanded from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1.46 lakh km in 2024. Airport infrastructure investments exceeded ₹91,000 Crore (FY20-FY25) to modernise key hubs and expand air traffic capacity.

4.2 4.2

EMDEs

Chart I.2: Steady growth outlook

across country groups

AEs

Note: AEs- Advanced Economies, EMDEs- Emerging

■2023 **■**2024 **■**2025

efficiency has surged, wit operational capacity growing from 3 MTPA in FY24 to 21 MTPA in FY25. Renewable energy has seen remarkable progress, with installed capacity reaching 456.7 GW as of November 2024, of which 47 per cent comes from renewables. Meanwhile, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has transformed rural water accessibility, with tap water connections rising from 17 per cent in 2019 to 79.1 per

cent in 2024. Despite external headwinds, India's services exports continue to offset a widening merchandise trade deficit. In response to shifting global policies, India is expanding its trade footprint into highvalue sectors such as $b\ i\ o\ t\ e\ c\ h\ n\ o\ l\ o\ g\ y$ semiconductors,

quantum computing. Strategic partnerships in space, telecommunications further bolster India's positioning as a leader in advanced technology industries. India has made remarkable strides in research and development (R and D), with patent filings more than doubling since 2014-15 and patent grants increasing seventeen-fold. However, Gross Expenditure on R and D (GERD) remains

at 0.64 per cent of GDP, significantly lower than global counterparts like China, Japan, and the US, where business-funded R and D exceeds 70 per cent. Strengthening industryacademia collaboration and fostering innovation-led entrepreneurship remain key imperatives for the next phase economic

transformation. Continued on page 2

royal family has once again Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi that nothing could be farther been exposed." Continued on page 2 and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from the truth. The President

Modi takes a pot shot at the Opposition **DEEPAK KUMAR JHA** NEW DELHI

In a jibe at the Congress and other Opposition parties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday came out with a tongue-in-cheek comment by mentioning that it could be perhaps the first time ever since he took over as PM in 2014 that there has been no attempt from abroad to destabilise our legislative functions before the start of a Parliament session.

"This is the first session I am seeing in the last 10 years in which there has to stoke a fire from any foreign corner," the prime minister said briefing the media before the start of the Budget session.

The PM also took a swipe at Opposition parties, saying that there were people abroad ready to do mischief before every session since 2014 and there was also no dearth of those here who would fuel such attempts.

Modi was referring to the protests by Opposition parties, including the Congress in previous Parliament sessions over revelations made by now-disbanded US-based short seller Hindenburg Research on alleged stock manipulation and tax evasion by the Gautam

Adani group.
With Modi-led NDA's third term to bring in its first full-fledged budget on Saturday, the PM said he prayed that Goddess Lakshmi, who is associated with wealth, will bless the poor and middle class. He expressed confidence that this Budget session will infuse new confidence and energy in attaining the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. The prime minister also hinted new initiatives for the poor and middle class as well as women, he also said a mechanism has been designed for the participation of younger Parliamentarians in further nurturing the 'Viksit Bharat'. "Especially for young MPs, it is a golden opportunity, because the more awareness and participation... In the House today, the more fruits of a developed India they will see before their eyes. And therefore, this is a priceless



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media on the first day of the Budget Session of Parliament

opportunity for the young MPs," Modi said. Ahead of the tabling of the Economic Survey, the PM said his government has been working in mission mode in its third term for an all-round development and asserted that innovation, inclusion and investment have shaped its economic agenda. Modi also shared that several historic bills will be taken up during the Session and will become laws after comprehensive debate to strengthen the

"Particularly, important decisions will be taken during the Session to empower women to ensure they get equal rights and any sectarian or faith-based discrimination is removed," he said. Modi also expressed confidence that every MP, especially the young ones, will contribute to the agenda of 'Viksit Bharat' during the session.

Stressing on the mantra of 'Reform, Perform and Transform', Modi said fast-paced development has to be achieved and the maximum emphasis is on reform. He said the state and Central governments have to perform together and one can see transformation through public participation.

Continued on page 2

Kejriwal accuses CM Saini of conspiracy to poison Yamuna

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

▲Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Friday accused Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini of hatching a and force half of Dennis population to thirst due to the "poisonous" Yamuna to defame his party ahead of the Assembly polls on February 5 by sending highly-polluted waters to the national Capital. In his six-page written reply addressed to the chief election commissioner (CEC), AAP chief raised serious allegations against Saini and said the Haryana Chief Minister orchestrated a 'conspiracy' to influence the Delhi assembly election. He demanded that a criminal case should be filed against Saini regarding the

poisonous' Yamuna issue. In the response to the Commission's second notice, Kejriwal clarified that his earlier statements, which referenced the Yamuna being "poisoned," were made in the context of the rising ammonia levels in the water and were not intended to suggest any malicious intent outside of this environmental crisis. Warning that water could be used as a weapon to win elections if the EC fails to act, he said he was shocked that the poll body did not pass any order for the Haryana Chief Minister but chose to "hound" him.

n a startling revelation, Aam

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal with Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann and AAP MP Sanjay Singh before leaving to meet Election Commissioners, in New Delhi

Eight AAP MLAs resign before polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

▼n a major setback to the Aam **L**Aadmi Party (AAP), eight MLAs have resigned, ahead of the coming Delhi Assembly polls on February 5. The MLAs who resigned are Naresh Yadav (Mehrauli), Rohit Kumar (Trilokpuri), Rajesh Rishi (Trilokpuri), Rajesh Rishi (Janakpuri), Madan Lal (Kasturba Nagar), Girish Soni (Madipur), Pawan Sharma (Adarsh Nagar), and Bhawna Goud (Palam). Sources said **Continued on page 2** | these MLAs were disgruntled after

being denied tickets for the February 5 polls and were touch with other parties, BS Ioon (Bijwasan) was the first AAP MLA who gave his papers. Most of the MLAs shared their resignation letters on social media and slammed AAP over corruption and other issues.

Reacting to the development, South Delhi BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the ship of Aam Aadmi Party is sinking, that is why seven MLAs have resigned from the party. Continued on page 2

Poonch encounter: two terrorist killed **MOHIT KANDHARI** ■ JAMMU lert troops of the Indian army neutralised Altwo heavily armed Pakistani terrorists in

the fierce gunfight along the line of control in the Khari Karmara area of Poonch early Friday morning. This is the first major incident of terrorist-related violence in the last two years in the Khari Karmara area of Poonch. According to local reports, the movement of a

group of heavily armed Pakistani infiltrators was detected by the troops late Thursday evening while they (Pakistani infiltrators) were attempting to sneak inside the Indian territory taking advantage of the raging forest fires in the forward area. The security forces in the region were already

conducting massive combing and search operations based on local intelligence inputs about the suspected movement of terrorists in the upper reaches of Rajouri and Poonch. In a post on X, the Nagrota-based White

Knight Corps also confirmed the terrorist movement was detected last night at the Line of Control in the Poonch Sector.

The terrorist movement was detected last night at the Line of Control in the Poonch sector. Alert troops swiftly engaged the infiltrating terrorists, triggering an intense and heavy firefight. The anti-terrorist operation continued through the night, leading to the neutralisation of two terrorists. The search of the area thus far has resulted in the recovery of several weapons and war-like stores", White Knight Corps posted on X.

Continued on page 2

Ahead of polls and lucrative offers, Delhi students split on AAP and BJP

SANYA PANDEY NEW DELHI

With Assembly polls inching closer, several students of Delhi University and other higher educational institutions, residing in North Campus, have opined that the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has failed on various fronts in the last 10 years and there should BJP's "double-engine" government for better development and welfare of the people of national capital.

Though these students' are hoping for change in power in Delhi, some still have reposed their faith on AAP asserting that in the run-up to the Assembly elections, the BJP and Congress announced galore of "freebies", while the ruling dispensation has already delivered what it had be given a chance this election.

promised in last polls. They were also of the opinion that Delhi would witness a fierce contest between the AAP and BJP. Congress, which has unced "five guarantees" The announced including Rs 2,500 per month to every woman under the 'Pyari Didi Yojana', and eyeing to

return to power highlighting the works done by the previous Sheila Dikshit-led government in Capital, did not find a mention.

Navya Malhotra, a firsthighlighted time voter, various issues including pollution and sanitation, which she has claimed the AAP government has totally failed to address in the last 10 years. She said the BJP should

Talking to the Pioneer, the 18-year-old said, "I feel this time BJP should come to power in Delhi. The AAP has been saying that they were not able to do the work for the people because Arvind Kejriwal and his team members were put behind bars and Delhi doesn't have statehood. But,

10 years is a very long period. They didn't do much. "Kejriwal had talked about the slum areas, especially JJ colony, that he will take care of such

places. But, he failed to take any appropriate steps for waste management. It has become such a big problem. He hasn't taken care of this," she said.



completely failed. Because of definitely important to give a pollution, students' we were not chance to the BJP. Some people Referring to pollution, Navya said," The AAP government has Our time was wasted. So it is because he is saving Hindutva,

while some people are following him, because genuinely they cannot see any better party than

Referring to BJP's manifesto, she said, "In the BJP's manifesto, they are giving those things that Kejriwal has offered to people. But there are also different things like giving Rs 2,1000 to pregnant women, so the rural/lower sections will get monetary help. Kejriwal had also talked about monetary help, but overall development didn't work out quite well."

Mentioning the law and order situation, Navya said, "As a first time female voter, I feel safety in Delhi is a prominent issue, because I still can't freely roam out of my house at night. Even if I go downstairs I have to be quite

vigilant. The AAP has installed cameras. Are they functional ? Women safety is very prime. Delhi which has been given the title of 'rape capital', if that can be changed by a 'double-engine' government BJP, then why not 'Har Har Modi'. " Notably, the law and order of

Delhi comes under the Union Home Ministry. She also accused the incumbent

AAP MLA from Timarpur Dilip Pandey for not doing enough to mitigate the issues concerning the people of the constituency and said the BJP should be given a chance.

The AAP this time has fielded turncoat Surinder Pal Singh (Bitto), BJP Surya Prakash and Congress Lokendra Chaudhary.

Continued on page 2

Parliament panel discusses regulating | Road accident in Punjab online news, strengthening media laws leaves 11 dead, 15 injured

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ceveral members of a Oparliamentary committee on Friday pitched for strengthening laws related to the media and bringing news portals and OTT under their ambit as its chairman Nishikant Dubey raised issues like "rampant" paid news and some news channels turning to sensationalism for TRPs. Most members of the standing committee on

Communications Information Technology were of the view that the Press Council of India (PCI) Act, which covers the print India, must be strengthened and new portals should also come under its jurisdiction, sources

It is an odd scenario that the PCI, a quasi judicial body, can take cognisance of a report in a newspaper but cannot do the same if the report appears



on the same newspaper's portal, sources said. Similarly, the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act covers news channels but not the streaming platforms also known as OTT (Over The Top) services, they added. The committee on Friday

reviewed "implementation of

laws related to all forms of media" in the meeting. In his remarks, Dubey

expressed concern over "rampant" paid news aimed at suppressing reality and presenting rosy pictures. Gullible people take it as truth, he added. The BJP MP, sources said, also

flagged the headwinds facing traditional newspapers due to disruption and declining readership. Regional and vernacular media are facing severe financial crunch, he added. Dubey said fake news is playing "havoc" in the country, especially during elections, and added that

opinion adversely. In order to boost TRPs (Television Rating Points), many TV news channels focus on sensationalism over

media trials of sensational

cases sometimes affect its

legal course and shape public

serious journalism and TV debates often turn into a for platform matches and mud-slinging, he said, adding that crime and celebrity news disproportionate coverage, sidelining important issues, according to sources.

"Ethical boundaries are crossed many a time due to lack of strong regulatory mechanism," he said. Noting that the media plays a

key role as a between communicator government and people, he said conflict of interest among media owners, journalists and political entities affects the credibility of news.

Key functionaries from the Information Broadcasting ministry, Prasar Bharti, Press Registrar General and Press Council of India were among those who appeared before

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eleven people were killed and fifteen were injured in a collision between a pickup van and a canter truck in this district on Friday, police

The pick-up van was carrying mainly those working as waiters, who were going to attend a function at Jalalabad. The accident took place near a village in Guruharsahai sub-division, police said. The injured were undergoing treatment at various

hospitals, said police. Ferozepur's Superintendent of Police, Saumya Mishra said that soon after the accident, teams from "Sadak Suraksha Force" (SSF) reached on the spot and started the rescue operation.

Police said they

occurred at around 8 am. Deepshikha Sharma, Deputy Commissioner said that some of the critically injured were referred to the Guru Gobind Singh Medical

College in Faridkot, while few others were admitted at Civil Hospital in Jalalabad. ambulances had reached the spot immediately after the incident", said the DC, while adding that the

administration will bear the

cost of treatment of those

who are injured. Chief Minister Punjab Bhagwant Mann and many other leaders from various parties expressed grief at the loss of lives in the accident and wished speedy recovery

"In Ferozepur this morning, there was news of a major accident due to a collision investigating the reason between a canter and a pick-

to the injured.

community.

behind the accident which up vehicle, in which the news of the tragic death of waiters going to the wedding ceremony has been received and some people are said to be injured.

"I pray to God for the peace of the departed souls and the speedy recovery of the The injured. government stands with the affected families in this difficult time," Mann posted on X.

Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal, in his post on X, said, "Deeply saddened to learn about a fatal road accident near Guruharsahai in Ferozepur district this morning. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families & prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured. May all those affected by this tragic event find strength during this difficult period".

Dikshit criticises Kejriwal for dodging public debate

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

ongress leader Sandeep Dikshit Friday said that he had challenged Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal for a debate at Jantar Mantar but he did not turn up.

Dikshit, who is fighting the Delhi Assembly polls against Kejriwal in the New Delhi seat said, "The aim of the debate was to expose the failures and false promises of the Kejriwal government using its own official data.'

However, Kejriwal did not turn up for the debate, he claimed.

In a statement, Dikshit pointed out that Keiriwal had promised permanent housing for slum dwellers and said thousands of houses built under the Congress government in 2013 still remain unallocated, lying in ruins in areas like Narela.

The Congress government, under then chief minister Sheila Dikshit, had set up 30 water treatment plants, but the AAP government has not built a single new plant in the last decade, he said.

The son of the former chief minister claimed that during her mother's rule. Delhi had 14,000 kilometres of water pipelines which has only increased to 15,300 kilometres

Poonch encounter:

From page 1 According to official sources, terrorist handlers operating from across the line of control were desperately trying to push more and more Pakistani infiltrators inside the Indian territory ahead of the summer months. A team of NIA

Pakistani infiltrators. The drone movement was

BJP Dalit candidates slam Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Dalit candidates of BJP for the upcoming Delhi assembly elections on Friday condemned the attack on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's statue in Amritsar in Punjab, and criticized the silence of Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann, questioning their dedication to the Dalit

Dushyant BJP candidates Kumar Gautam, Rajkumar Anand, Advocate Priyanka Rinku Gautam. Kumari, Khushi Ram Chunar, Deepak Valmiki, Deepti Indora, and Kamal Bagri addressed a joint press conference accusing Kejriwal's silence of exposing

"If Kejriwal cannot speak up for Baba Saheb today, he will remain silent tomorrow if an MLA from the Dalit community faces injustice?' they asked. They also pointed out that Kejriwal has never given Rajya representation to a Dalit or appointed a Dalit Deputy Chief Minister in the past decade.

optimised supply chains.

Despite these reforms, access

to institutional capital

two terrorist killed

personnel had also searched houses of PoK-based terrorist operatives in the Rajouri district to expose their network of Over Ground Workers, providing logistics support to these

also detected along the line of control in the Mendhar sector of Poonch in the runup to the Republic Day celebrations. The Indian rmy had opened the Pakistani drones after it attempted to breach the

pot shot at the Opposition

Modi takes a

From page 1

"Ours is a young country... The youth of 20-25 years of age today, when they will be 45-50 years-old, they will be the biggest beneficiaries of a developed India. At that stage of their age, they will be sitting in that place in the policy making system... They will proudly move forward with a developed India," said the PM.

"Those who had joined the freedom struggle in 1930, 1942... The entire youth generation of the country was engrossed in the freedom struggle, and the fruits of that were reaped by the generation that came after 25 years," Modi said.

Similarly, these 25 years would be marked by the intention of people to achieve prosperous and developed India through their resolve and reach the pinnacle through their achievements,

a party like Aam Aadmi Party

starts sinking, then a situation

of stampede is created in the

party. "The same is happening

Madan Lal, the outgoing

MLA from Kasturba Nagar,

claimed on Friday that he and

six other party MLAs had

resigned from AAP's primary

membership. Lal said they

resignation letters to Delhi

Palam's Bhavna Goud in her

resignation letter directed her

disappointment at party chief

Arvind Kejriwal. "I have lost faith in you," the MLA said.

Naresh Yadav was earlier the

Mehrauli candidate. He was

convicted by a Punjab court

in a Quran desecration case in

December and sentenced to

two-year jail. When the AAP

released its fifth list of

candidates for the Delhi

election, to be held on While

sent their

Speaker Ram

with AAP," he said

had also

Assembly

Niwas Goel.

He said that when the ship of Chaudhary as

1.56 Crore voters to participate in Delhi polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI crèche services, themed

voters are set to exercise their electoral franchise in the Delhi Assembly election on February 5 as voter-friendly measures have been put in place for the smooth polling To facilitate voting, 13,766

polling stations have been set up across 2,969 polling premises. Of these, 733 stations designated for persons with disabilities, Vaz said. Around 1.56 crore voters, including 83.76 lakh men, 72.36 lakh women, and 1,267 individuals from the third gender will cast their ballot on February

The Delhi Election Office has introduced several voterfriendly measures to ensure a smooth polling process. These include ramps, will be operated entirely by wheelchairs, medical teams, persons with disabilities to

candidate, replacing Naresh

In a letter addressed to party

convenor Arvind Kejriwal,

Yaday said, "I dedicated my

entire life to politics and worked under your leadership

with utmost honesty and

dedication. I made every

effort to realize your vision

and also contributed 100% to

fulfilling the responsibilities

given to me. However, today,

the party has drifted from its

core ideology, and good people who want to work

honestly are being sidelined,

while those involved in

corrupt practices are being

organization." He represented south Delhi's Mehrauli

constituency for 10 years.

convicted and sentenced to a

two-year term in November

by a Punjab court in the 2016

Quran

a place in the

was convicted

desecration case.

announced

Yadav.

Seven AAP MLAs resign before polls

polling stations, a queue $D_{\text{Officer R Alice Vaz on}}^{\text{elhi's Chief Electoral}} \stackrel{\text{Follow}}{\text{management}} \stackrel{\text{mobile}}{\text{application and a home}}$ Friday said around 1.56 crore voting option for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, she said.

Vaz emphasised that over 1 lakh polling personnel have been deployed, and all polling stations will have essential amenities under the Assured Minimum Facility (AMF) policy. These include waiting areas, drinking water, toilets, ramps, and wheelchairs. Paramedical staff with basic medical kits will also be stationed at polling centres. To enhance voter experience,

210 polling stations will be set up as Theme-Based Model Polling Stations additional facilities, she said. Moreover, 70 polling stations -- one in each assembly constituency -- will be fully managed by women staff. Another 70 polling stations

February 5, the party announced him as its absorbed permanently.

workers

Bhupinder Singh Joon, who

was replaced from Bijwasan,

said, "The voices of sincere

and

representatives are often

sidelined, and critical

decisions are made without

consultation or consensus.

Moreover, the focus on self-

promotion rather than

addressing core public issues

Rohit Kumar Mehraulia, the

Trilokpuri MLA who resigned

today, in a post on X said he

joined AAP during the Anna

Hazare-led movement against

corruption, with the hope of

securing social justice for the

Mehraulia said the AAP promised to uplift these

communities, but failed to

address crucial issues such as

scrapping contract-based

and ensuring

and

become

disheartening."

Dalit

labour

the AAP had temporary workers are

communities.

Mahender candidate despite the Janakpuri's Rajesh Rishi also

public

deeply

Valmiki

promote inclusivity and an equal number of youthcentric polling stations will be set up to encourage young voters, the CEO said.

The "Vote From Home' initiative will allow 6,488 senior citizens aged 85 and above, along with 1,051 persons with disabilities, to cast their votes from home ensuring accessibility for all eligible voters, she stated.

"To help voters locate their polling stations, a colourcoded system will be used, with details mentioned on the Voter Information Slip. Additionally, wheelchairs will be made available for easy mobility,'

said Vaz. Addressing Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violations, Vaz stated that the cVIGIL app has received 5,244 complaints, with the highest number from North District (1,049) and the lowest from

disenchantment with what he

called the AAP's departure

from its core values. In his

resignation letter, he criticised

the AAP for betraying the

principles of corruption-free

governance and transparency

it was founded on. Rishi

another former supporter of

Hazare's

alleged the party has become

a "cesspit of nepotism and

The ÂAP's candidate list for

the upcoming Delhi elections

shows that the party has

fielded new candidates,

including Mukesh Goel from

Adarsh Nagar, Pravin Kumar

from Janakpuri, Surendra

Bhardwai from Bijwasan, and

Joginder Solanki from Palam,

replacing the resigning

Elections to the 70-member

Delhi Assembly will be held

on February 5 and the votes

counted on February 8.

movement,

Anna

MLAs.

corruption

corruption."

AAP's anti-Dalit stance.

Indian economy defies global slowdown From page 1

labor market transformation is evident in a decline unemployment from 6per cent in 2017-18 to 3.2 per cent 2023-24. Formal employment has seen rapid expansion, with EPFO subscriptions surging from 61 lahks in FY19 to 131 lahks in FY24. Encouragingly, 47 per cent of new payroll additions are in the 18-25 age group, highlighting a youth-driven workforce expansion. The integration of AI-driven employment solutions will be pivotal in shaping India's labour market future dynamics.

India's financial sector is experiencing an unprecedented boom. The nation's share in global IPO listings rose from 17per cent reflecting growing investor confidence. has participation

accounts increasing by 33 per cent YoY to 18.5 crore. However, India's corporate bond market remains underdeveloped, with bond market capitalisation at 18 per cent of GDP, significantly lower than Korea (80 per cent) and China (36 per cent). Strengthening policy measures to deepen bond market participation remains a crucial area for financial sector reform. The MSME sector is the backbone of India's economy,

playing a critical role in

employment generation and GDP growth. To support this vital sector, the government has introduced several key r is reforms, including the Self-an Reliant India (SRI) Fund, providing ?50,000 Crore in equity funding for highpotential MSMEs. Digital also compliance, while the Trade Management, XLRI

challenge, remains a challenge, underscoring the need for further deregulation and enhanced credit availability. The Economic Survey 2024-25 reaffirms India's position as an economic powerhouse, driven by robust GDP growth, expanding investments, and a resilient infrastructure framework. With unwavering policy commitment, foresight, and an innovationdriven agenda, India is not just navigating global uncertainties-it is shaping the future of the global economy. The journey towards a \$5 Trillion economy is not a distant dream but an inevitable reality propelled by Reform, Perform, and

Transforn Samadhan and CHAMPIONS The writer is a professor of Retail Portal have streamlined finance at Xavier School of

Rashtrapati Bhavan slams the Congress

skyrocketed, with demat Connect e-Platform has

While the ruling BJP also launched an all-out attack on the grand old party saying they were "deeply disrespectful" and underscored the opposition's "continued disregard" for the dignity of the highest constitutional office, Congress hit back and said every person in India has respect and empathy for President Murmu but the BJP leaders cannot digest Sonia Gandhi's "empathy" for her health. Modi alleged that the

Congress members belittled

her speech. "The Congress royal family does not accept anyone from the Dalit, and Adivasi, OBC communities who rise above their circumstances. They insult them at every step," he

BJP national president J P Nadda said the former Congress president of the phrase 'poor thing' to refer to the President is deeply disrespectful and underscores the opposition's continued disregard for the dignity of the highest constitutional office. Amid the row Congress Lok

Sonia, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, said her mother has the utmost respect for the President and that it is very unfortunate that her remarks have been "twisted by the media". She also hit out at the BJP's

demand for an apology over the issue, saying it should first apologise for "ruining the country".

"My mother is a 78-year-old lady. She simply said that 'the President must have been tired reading such a long speech, poor thing. She fully respects, in fact she has the utmost respect for her (the unfortunate that this kind of a thing is twisted by the media," Priyanka Gandhi said talking

to media. Hitting back, Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi said in Sonia Gandhi's empathy for President Droupadi Murmu Gandhi's health cannot be digested by the men in BJP. "Will the BJP answer for the disrespect shown to President Murmu when she was not invited to the inauguration of the Parliament or the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya?" the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha

Kejriwal accuses CM Saini of conspiracy to poison Yamuna

Delhi. He knew very well that

From page 1

"Whatever illegal punishment you may wish to impose on me under the instruction of the BJP is a small price to pay for it, and I welcome it with open arms." he added. Accompanied by Delhi and Punjab chief ministers Atishi and Bhagwant Mann, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor went to the EC's office and submitted his reply personally. The AAP leaders also carried three bottles of ammonia-mixed water for the election commissioners to drive home their point. Kejriwal also claimed that the water being supplied from Haryana to Delhi has high levels of ammonia. AAP national convenor alleged that the ammonia levels started increasing very sharply from 15 Jan onwards (around 3.2 ppm on 15 Jan) and reached 7

ppm a few days later. Kejriwal alleged that Delhi CM Atishi contacted Saini to resolve the crises, but despite several attempts, the issues remained unresolved. "The chief minister of Delhi called up the chief minister of Harvana in the last week of December and requested him to either take steps to reduce ammonia or provide additional water to dilute it. Though CM Haryana assured me that he would take the necessary steps, however, he did not. Subsequently, CM Delhi again called him several times. After a few calls, Chief Minister of Haryana stopped taking CM Delhi's calls," as said in the letter.

"There was a deliberate conspiracy on the part of Haryana CM, who happens to be from BJP, to influence Delhi elections by sending highly polluted waters to refusal to direct Haryana to

this would create artificial water scarcity in Delhi, whose blame would lie on the AAP government in Delhi. This would have rendered almost half of Delhi without water and would have created huge public misery for almost 10 million people of Delhi who would have gone without water," he said in the letter. The AAP supremo also accused the CEC of "complete

silence and inaction" over "blatant violations" of the Model Code of Conduct allegedly by BJP leaders in Delhi. Kejriwal also "baffling questioned the alacrity" of the CEC to act against him, even though he was "merely" raising an issue "very high public importance" and had averted a huge public crisis in Delhi. "Equally baffling is the CEC's

stop polluting Delhi's waters," he said. "If the CEC continues

ignoring the widespread practice of purchase of votes with cash and goods by the BJP, you will end up normalising this corrupt practice as well," he said, while claiming that evidence in the form of videos and people's statements were acknowledged.

India is known worldwide as the bedrock of democracy, he said, adding, "The CEC, with its clear act of omission and corrupt negligence practices by the BJP, looks set to tarnish this image of India globally."

If no action is taken against the Haryana government and the BIP leaders involved in corrupt practices it will be amply clear to everyone that Chief Election Commissioner keeps the

interest of the ruling party public Unfortunately, I can't be expected to be silent on this and tow this line out of fear or expectations of favour. My only concern is the health and safety of the people of Delhi and I will fight for the protection of our democratic principles," he added. Before visiting the Election

Commission's office, Kejriwal told media that the language of second notice hints that the poll body has already decided their action. He alleged that the poll body is "shooting the messenger" by targeting the AAP for raising its voice. The Yamuna water issue has emerged as a crucial political matter ahead of the Delhi election, with assembly Kejriwal pointing fingers at the BJP-led Haryana government for deliberately contaminating the water.

Ahead of polls and lucrative offers, Delhi students split on AAP and BJP

From page 1

Echoing similar sentiments, Aksh, a B Pharmacy student and a resident of Vijay Nagar Single Storey in North Campus, said, "I will probably support BJP, because that is the mood of Delhi I feel right now. There are only two major parties-AAP and BJP. There is least mention of Congress in Delhi."

Asserting that the middle class is really troubled under the AAP, he said, "The middle class is really troubled under the AAP. They feel their money is not properly used." Stating that the condition of Delhi overall has deteriorated, Aksh said, "There are traffic problems, and a poor drainage system. AAP had

promised about better schools there should be a change after etc, but these things have not really happened. Kejriwal has increased the trend of freebies. But the thing is freebies won't help in the development of the country. "There is no chance to give votes to AAP. We had already given them a chance, trusted them, and thought they would do something different, but they did

time and I feel this time the BIP will form government." Stating that in democracy,

nothing," he said. Expressing a similar opinion, Prajwal, a law graduate, said, "If we look into the last two decade, there was not very good governance in Delhi. There should be a change this

every five years, he said, "There should be a replacement of AAP in Delhi. AAP is in power in Delhi because of the freebies. The BJP has been in power at the Centre since 2014, and India has emerged as a global player." Raees, a student of the Delhi University, however, opined that AAP will retain the

power in Delhi, "Right now, we can notice that it is AAP versus BJP right now in Delhi. It will be a close contest this time. But I feel AAP will only come back to power. Asserting that AAP's basic

vote bank is women voters, he said, "The way they are giving freebies to women, it will help them to gain votes."



DELHI DECIDES

PM Modi targets AAP in Delhi rally for corruption and mismanagement

NEW DELHI

The atmosphere was reverberating with loud chants of 'Ab nahi sahege, Badal k rahenge' (we will not tolerate, we will change) and 'Modi ji ko Jai Shree Ram' when Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday came down heavily on the ruling party accusing it of turning Delhi into its ATM for political gains and promising to clean Yamuna river and starting an underwater metro at a public meeting in Dwarka ahead of the Delhi assembly elections. "I am giving you my guarantee that the BJP government will not leave any stone unturned to develop Delhi. In the past 10 years, 'AAP-da' has fought with everyone-centre, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh. They do not let us implement central government schemes. If they remain here, Delhi will be left behind in development," he said.

Stating that the national Capital needs a double-engine government, Modi asserted, "Delhi me takrar wali nahi, talmel wali sarkar chahiye. (Delhi needs a government of coordination, not

He added that Delhi needs to be free from the 'AAP-da' (disaster) of 'loot' and 'jhoot' (lies). He claimed, "Aap-da has made Delhi an ATM for shining their politics. When they have to contest elections in other states, they rob the

As soon as we form the government, we will hit harder on AAP's corruption. Those who have looted Delhi will have to pay back. In the first session of assembly, we will table the CAG report which has accounts of 'AAP-da' government's corruption," he claimed.

Scores of party workers and supporters gathered to listen to Modi while waving party flags and wearing saffron turbans and caps. The crowd frequently broke out in a clamour, shouting 'Jai Shree Ram' and 'Modi, Modi'.

He alleged that in the fear of defeat, AAP can go to any lengths to win the elections while stating that people are questioning them on water wherever they are going to seek votes. Accusing the AAP of lying to the people because of their anger, he said, "The AAP has made a disgusting allegation against the people of the land which preaches Geeta to the people. They do not have shame or ĥesitation. Please be warned they will go to any lengths to prove they are right before elections." Calling Yamuna River a symbol of 'spiritual' and 'economic' power is not just a river, he put the blame of it being in danger because of AAP. He mentioned that as a Chief Minister of Gujarat he made a world class riverfront in Ahmedabad.

"I have experience of working and I will personally give time to the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting for Delhi Assembly elections, at Dwarka, in New Delhi on Friday

Delhi government. We will clean Yamuna and change the future of Delhi-NCR. We have a step by step process for it. We will clean the water of Yamuna, second we will make a modern river front and in the corners of Yamuna we will make a corridor to promote tourism. Further, we will also start an underwater metro," he

He assured the people of Delhi to give Yamuna recognition from all over the world. "When we clean a river, we make India's future

more prosperous. For centuries people will remember those who voted for BJP on February 5," Modi added.

He highlighted the recently inaugurated Yashobhoomi convention centre as a testament to the BJP's vision for a modern Delhi. 'The BJP wants to make Delhi modern, and a glimpse of that can be seen in Dwarka after the Centre constructed the majestic Yashobhoomi here," he said.

Recalling AAP's promises during Anna Hazare's anti-corruption

movement, he remarked, "During Anna Andolan, they promised to change the country's politics. The country is seeing how they betrayed Anna Hazare and the

Modi accused AAP of spending only 20 per cent of Delhi's budget on development while neglecting its infrastructure. "AAP is not spending Delhi's money on the people but on their own publicity. Those who live in 'sheesh mahal' don't care about the houses of the poor;

AAP is anti-middle class," he charged. Reaffirming his commitment to Delhi's development, he declared, "I guarantee that the BJP government will not leave any stone unturned in Delhi's progress. It's my dream to provide pucca houses to all in Delhi, but AAPda is working with full strength to ensure this is not ful-filled." The prime minister accused AAP of blocking the

allocation of fully constructed

houses to the poor while focus-

ing on luxurious accommoda-

tions for themselves. "Modi will help construct pucca houses for all poor in Delhi. This is my guar-

antee," he asserted. Modi also announced that in the first Cabinet meeting of a BJP-led government, a decision would be taken to transfer Rs 2,500 into the accounts of Delhi's women and

described it as "Modi's guaran-

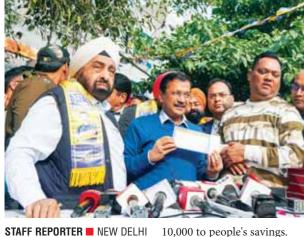
Continuing his criticism of AAP, Modi said, "They have made grand promises, but where is the infrastructure? Where are the jobs they claimed they would create? Delhi deserves better than broken promises and political gimmicks." He accused AAP leaders of misleading the people. "They talk about development, but all they have done is build a model of corruption. The people of Delhi are paying the price for

Highlighting the BJP's contributions, Modi noted, "The Centre has allocated thousands of crores for Delhi's infrastructure, yet nothing changes on the ground. AAP's only achievement is empty rhetoric." He assured that if the BJP came to power, Delhi's civic issues would be swiftly addressed. "From better roads to improved water supply, we will bring real transformation.

their deceit," he claimed.

No more excuses, only solutions," he declared, urging voters to prioritise voting on February 5, stating 'phle matdan fir jalpan' (first vote then eat).

Kejriwal launches Aam Aadmi Bachat Patra Campaign



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major announcement ahead of the upcoming elections, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Friday launched the 'Aam Aadmi Bachat Patra' (Savings Certificate), campaign highlighting the substantial financial relief that AAP's governance provides to Delhi's families.

According to Kejriwal, every household in Delhi saves an due to the AAP government's welfare schemes and if the party returns to power, its new initiatives will add another Rs

bol), then its new schemes will add another Rs 10,000 to this. 'Our volunteers will reach out to people and get them to fill the 'Bachat Patra', in which they will note how much they are saving through our free welfare initiatives," Kejriwal said. Under the AAP government's

policies, a Delhi family saves an average of Rs 25,000 per month and if people bring the party back to power by pressing the button against the 'jhadhu' (broom - AAP's election symbol), then its new schemes will add another Rs 10,000 to this, he said. He said schemes like free bus travel for students, Mahila Samman Yojana and Sanjeevani Yojana, all proposed in the AAP's manifesto, are among such initiatives. With the Union Budget set to

be presented on February 1, Kejriwal contrasted the AAP's policies with the BJP's approach. "Budgets usually bring inflation and impact household finances. But in Delhi, our government ensures savings for every family. On the Under the AAP government's other hand, the BJP has repeatedly said it will discontinue

> Under the AAP government, every rupee collected from taxpayers is spent on public

welfare, which includes mohal-la clinics, schools, hospitals, free electricity, roads and metro expansion, he said. Kejriwal also accused the BJP of diverting public funds to benefit its corporate allies.

We use the budget for the welfare of people while the BJP directs it towards its businessman friends. In Mumbai, they handed over Dharavi land to one of their associates. In Delhi their goal is to grab land and not to serve people," he said. Later in the day, the AAP supremo presented a 'Bachat Patra' to a family in Chandni Chowk assembly constituency, a party statement said.

"I handed over 'AAP ka Bachat Patra' to the family and calculated that they would save Rs 50.200 per month," he said. Kejriwal urged people not to make the "mistake" of voting for the BJP and losing these savings, he said. The 70-member Delhi assembly goes to polls on February 5 and the results will be announced on February 8.

In the 2015 and 2020 Delhi Assembly polls, the AAP won 2015 and eight in 2020 while the Congress drew a blank in

Union Minister Gadkari vows to transform Delhi, promises pollution-free city in five years

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday vowed to transform Delhi's landscape if the BJP assumed power in the national capital after the February 5 polls. Addressing a public meeting in Shalimar Bagh, Gadkari claimed that his party did not seek to merely change the government but to transform the national cap-

"We do not just want to change the government ... We want to change the picture of Delhi ... Only the BJP can do this," he asserted. Gadkari compared BJPled governance to high-speed progress, asserting that Delhi's development would accelerate like a bullet train if the saffron party assumed power. "If the BJP's engine is installed in Delhi, development will happen at bullet-train speeds," he remarked. Addressing the issue of pollution, Gadkari pledged to make the city free from toxic air in five years. "Delhi is not just the country's people. This heart has developed an infection," he said, referring to the national capital's severe air pollution problem. Citing glob-



al rankings, he noted that 42 of the world's 50 most polluted cities were in India, with Delhi being

the worst hit. Gadkari -- the Union minister of road transport and highways -acknowledged transportation as a significant contributor to the problem, with fossil fuels accounting for about 40 per cent of the city's pollution. "I accept that 40 per cent of the pollution happens because of my department." He also highlighted the Centre's waste management efforts, claiming that 20 lakh tons landfill had been used for road construction, reducing the height of the garbage pile by seven metres. "Can this situation not be

the Centre had been actively working on addressing these challenges. Discussing infra-structure development, Gadkari noted that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, road projects worth Rs 65,000 crore had been approved for Delhi. "We have completed work worth Rs 33,000 crore and, by December, work worth Rs 1 lakh crore will be done in NCR,' he said.

The Union minister said key expressways, including the Delhiexpressed confidence that the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway would be completed before

on the former Delhi chief

Republic Day next year. Gadkari also emphasised efforts to clean the Yamuna, revealing that the Centre had provided Rs 6,000 crore to the Delhi government for the river's rejuvenation. However, the city government

did not contribute its 15 per cent share, delaying the project, he claimed. "Cleaning the Yamuna is difficult but not impossible." Outlining his vision for sustainable development, Gadkari stressed the need to shift farmers from being merely food providers to energy contributors, advocating for bio-CNG production from agricultural waste. 'My vision is to make Delhi free from waste. Bio-CNG is being prepared from stubble and you will not see any buses running on diesel within five years," he said. Gadkari reiterated the BJP's commitment to ethics, economy, ecology and the environment, asserting that an honest and efficient administration could drive change. "This country needs people who work with honesty. finding the right people to get the work done," he said, promising a cleaner and more developed Delhi if the BJP took office.

Priyanka Gandhi launches scathing attack on PM Modi, Kejriwal, calls coward and corrupt

STAFF REPORTER ■

A head of the Delhi assembly elections, Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday jumped in the election fray holding rallies and roadshows in different parts of the national Capital, calling AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi 'coward' and 'corrupt' while her brother and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi accused the AAP convenor of lying. Following her roadshow in Nangloi Jat, Gandhi, who has first time in campaigning for the Congress for the state polls later she held a public meeting in Mustafabad.

Kejriwal launched the 'AAP ka

Bachat Patra' campaign on

Friday in the Chandni Chowk

Assembly constituency. He vis-

ited a family in Chandni

Chowk constituency and sat

with them to assess their sav-

ings under the schemes run by

the AAP government, as well as

the benefits they would receive

after the implementation of

policies, an average Delhi fam-

and if people bring the party

back to power by pressing the

button against the 'jhadhu'

(broom -- AAP's election sym-

newly announced schemes.

Addressing a poll rally in Mustafabad, Vadra said, "The Constitution gave you (people of India) the right to vote. You, the prime minister, politician and everyone else have this right. This vote gives you the right to choose the government. Through this vote, you can strengthen the country and the Constitution.

She said that there is no difference between PM Modi and Arvind Kejriwal, calling them both cowards and cormade her appearance for the rupt. "PM Modi blames for-



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal blames Modi. Both of them do not take any responsibility," Priyanka said, while addressing a public gathering. The party is hoping that Priyanka 's campaign will attract more women and young voters to the party.

Meanwhile, Gandhi hit out at AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of lying and making false promises and said that the man who came in a small car promising to change politics ended up in the "sheesh mahal" parking lot. Launching a stinging attack

EC's CVigil app receives 5,920 complaints ahead of Delhi Assembly election

minister, Gandhi alleged that he did nothing for the people of the national capital in the past 10 years. The former Congress chief also slammed the BJP, accusing it of spreading hatred and violence in society and said it is only the Congress that talks of giving "bhaagidaari" (share) and

equal rights to all irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Gandhi showed a picture of 'Team Kejriwal', saying none of his 'Navratans' (nine gems) are from the OBCs, minorities, Dalits and tribals. "All belong to the upper castes," he said.

"Kejriwal had claimed to

bring a change in Delhi politics. But the biggest ever corruption -- liquor scam -was done by Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia.

Five years ago, he said that he would take a dip in Yamuna and drink its water. Forget about Yamuna water, you should drink the water made available to jhuggis here," he said.

'Your (Kejriwal's) words are hollow.

He said he will protect the Dalits and minorities but I want to ask you who is standing with you. The Congress or Kejriwal?" the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha asked at the rally.

JDU leader Shravan Kumar slams AAP. accuses of failing to provide basic amenities

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior JDU leader and Bihar Rural Development Minister Shravan Kumar on Friday alleged that Aam Admi Party (AAP) government has failed to provide basic amenities like potable water in last 10 years of rule.

Addressing an election meeting in Burari constituency in north Delhi area, Shravan Kumar, a Janata Dal United leader and Minister for Rural Development in in Bihar Government, said former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has given "birth to a culture of loot" in Delhi and cheated the voters.

Seeking votes for NDA supported JD(Ŭ) candidate Shailendra Kumar in Burari constituency,



Shravan Kumar said people have decided to form a "double engine" government in Delhi. The minister asked people to vote for JDU candidate to solve the problems of drinking water crisis, lack of facilities and neglect in the localities of Delhi. "In 12 years, Kejriwal has given

birth to a culture of loot and has only cheated people and created a lot of problems. The people of Vashisht Nagar Colony do not even get clean drinking water and there is no sign of employment and jobs. This time it is believed that BJP will form the government in Delhi," he said.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission's (EC) CVigil app received a total of 5,920 complaints since January 7 were received through the CVigil app from across 11 districts of Delhi ahead of the Delhi assembly election, slated to be held on February 5.

In a statement by the EC, it said, "A total of 5,920 complaints were received through the CVigil app from across 11 districts of Delhi and out of these 5920 complaints, 5216 complaints were found correct and resolved by the Flying Squad Team (FST) as per ECI guidelines and remaining 696 complaints were found not true.

These complaints have been attended within an impressive response time of just 36.16 minutes, far surpassing the target response time of 100 minutes," it added, stating that with a remarkable 98 per cent accu-



racy rate in addressing complaints, the ECI's rapid response underscores the effectiveness of the CVigil app in maintaining a fair and transparent electoral process.

A total of 691 teams, consisting of 1338 members, were deployed across all 70 Assembly Constituencies of

"Under the leadership of Chief Electoral Officer Delhi, all the teams achieved the satisfactory disposal of complaints. This seamless coordination with DEOs and their FST and SST (Static Surveillance Team) have played a pivotal role in ensuring a transparent and efficient election process," it said.

Among the districts, North District recorded the highest number of complaints, with 1243 cases, followed by New Delhi District, which

reported 971 complaints. 'This indicates active participation by the citizens in utilizing the CVigil app for reporting violations in real-time, further reinforcing public trust in the electoral process," the state-

ment said. The successful deployment of CVigil reflects the Election Commission's vision to integrate

technology in safeguarding the

democratic process.

report violations, the CVigil app has become a key tool in enhancing accountability, fostering transparency, and ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in upholding the rule of law," it said. As for the Delhi Legislative Elections

By empowering citizens to directly

2025, CEO Delhi has instructed all the deployed FST and SST Teams to be more vigilant of all the probable MCC violations during the next four days including the silence peri-

CVigil is a mobile application developed by the Election Commission of India, designed to enable citizens to report electoral malpractices such as bribery, illegal campaigning, and other violations in real-time. The app captures and uploads evi-

dence, which is then addressed promptly by election authorities, ensuring a transparent and fair elec-

President highlights government's success in social and economical reforms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday here said the pace of work has tripled in the third term of her government which has worked with strong determination to lift the economy out of the state of "policy paralysis". Addressing both the Houses of

Parliament assembled together in the Lok Sabha chamber. she said the nation was witnessing major decisions and policies being implemented at an extraordinary speed, with the highest priority given to the poor, the middle class, the youth, women, and farmers.

"My government is infusing new energy through unprecedented achievements in this Amrit Kaal of India's development journey. The pace of work has tripled in this third term," President Murmu said in her 60-minute speech, peppered with occasional protests from the opposition benches. In an address to the two Houses at the beginning of the first session of Parliament every year, the president outlines the vision of the government and this is considered a policy statement.

The address also outlines the

views of the government on key issues and also gives out a broad roadmap for the future. At the outset, President Murmu condoled the deaths of pilgrims at the Kumbh congregation at Prayagraj on Mauni Amavasya on Wednesday when millions of faithful had gathered from all over the country to bathe at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. She also paid tributes to former prime minister Manmohan Singh, who passed away recently.

President Murmu listed out the achievements of the government including building houses for three crore additional families, welfare of tribals, issuing property cards for the rural folks, building rural roads and extending the health insurance scheme to six crore citizens above the age of 70 years. "The government has also made swift progress on critical issues like 'One Nation-One Election' and the 'Waqf Act

Amendment'," she said. The President said India was setting an example for the world by emerging as a pillar of economic, social, and political stability in an environment of

India's "strength, policy, and intent". In this context, President Murmu especially mentioned key groupings such as Quad, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and

The President said the government has taken "historic" iniglobal instability. She said the world has placed its "trust" in India's borders and internal

security and "highly encouraging results" were seen in achieving self-reliance, especially in the defence sector. She lauded the Indian Space Research Organisation for launching 100 missions from the spaceport at Sriharikota and asserted that

the day was not far when an

Indian citizen will travel to

space aboard the indigenously

developed Gaganyaan space-

"My government has worked with strong determination to lift the economy out of a state of policy paralysis. Despite global concerns such as the COVID-19 pandemic, its aftermath, and war-related uncertainties, the Indian economy has demonstrated remarkable

stability and resilience, proving its strength," she said. The President said the government has also implemented several significant measures to promote Ease of Doing Business and introduced the GST system with the spirit of 'One Nation, One Tax' which has been benefiting all states across the country.

Noting that development is truly meaningful when its benefits reach the person standing at the last rung of society, the President said initiatives like the construction of 12 crore toilets under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, 10 crore free LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, ration for 80 crore needy citizens, the Saubhagya Yojana, and the Jal Jeevan Mission have given poor the confidence that they can live with dignity.

When poor people are provided with a dignified life, it instills a sense of empowerment that helps them fight poverty. Due to such efforts, 25 crore people have overcome poverty and are moving forward in life. They have formed a Neo Middle Class, a group that is infusing new energy into India's growth journey," she said. President Murmu said digital fraud, cybercrime and emerging technologies such as deep fakes pose challenges to India's social, economic, and national security.

She asserted that the government has consistently worked on policies of multi-dimensional and inclusive develop-

Therefore, while emphasising on physical infrastructure, equal efforts have also been made by my government for a social infrastructure revolution," she said. Noting that the government in the past ten years has written new chapters of progress, one of which is the golden milestone of India's digital revolution, the President said today, India has emerged as a major global player in the field of digital technology. "The launch of 5G services in

India, alongside other leading nations, stands as a significant milestone in this journey. India's UPI technology has also impressed many developed countries. More than 50 per cent of the world's real-time digital transactions now take place in India. "My government has utilised digital technology as a tool for social justice and equality. Digital payments are no longer confined to select individuals or classes. Today, even the smallest shopkeeper in India benefits from this facility," the President said.

She said there is conducive environment for development in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370. The President noted that the Lok Sabha and assembly elections were conducted in a peaceful manner in Jammu and Kashmir and the people deserve commendation for this achievement. The President said the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project has been completed, connecting the nation from Kashmir to Kanyakumari through railway

"Under this ambitious project, the Chenab Bridge has been constructed, which is the highest railway bridge in the world," she said.

Murmu said India's first rail cable-stayed bridge, the Anji Bridge, has been completed and the work on the Shinkun La tunnel was also progressing successfully.

"Upon completion in the near future, it will be the world's highest tunnel, ensuring yearround connectivity between Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh," she said.

Economic Survey moots easing of regulations in health, education sectors



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Economic Survey 2024-▲ 25 on Friday mooted withdrawal of regulations or making compliance voluntary with disclosure where the market can do an effective job in the areas of health and education. Pitching for "trust-based regulation", the survey said that tight regulations increase compliance and supervision burden on the already

stretched state capacity. Trust-based regulation backed up by transparency and disclosure on the part of the regulated deserves a chance, said the pre-Budget document while noting that regulatory institutions need to evolve to focus on allowing outcomes to happen without being fixated on inputs.

rural infrastructure, housing, and livelihoods reflects a comprehensive 'welfare for all' approach," it noted.

By improving rural connectivity, sanitation, housing, access to drinking water, and

social inclusion, alongside chance.' supporting microfinance, Regulator SHGs (self-help groups), and localisation of SDGs (sustainable development goals), these initiatives ensure inclu-

sive development. Together, they uplift rural communities, bridging gaps in equity and quality of life, the survey said.

It pointed out that regulatory institutions in the areas of health and education must constantly balance the needs of the society and that of the ease of provision of such services by the providers.

'Where the market can do an effective job, regulations can either be withdrawn or compliance made voluntary with disclosure. Tight regulations increase the compliance and supervision burden on state capacity that is already stretched. This gives rise to unfulfilled expectations on the part of the public," the survev said.

Therefore, it added, "For India to receive the demographic dividend in full in the coming years, regulatory institutions need to evolve to focus on for everyone, enabling them to pen without being fixated on

The survey further said, Trust-based regulation backed up by transparency and disclosure on the part of the regulated deserves a

Regulators must develop their assessment parameters and report on their own effectiveness transparently, it said, adding, "There is no better way to demand right behaviour than to set an example." While the education and health system has made significant progress through various initiatives aimed at achieving national goals, the survey said, "There is a critical need to enhance the delivery mechanisms".

By rethinking and improving these systems and integrating innovation and technologies, one can ensure that benefits effectively reach the last mile and are fully realised by those who need them most, it added.

The survey noted that the Indian economy's growth story emphasises a welfareenhancement approach by the government, focusing on empowering all citizens and ensuring the efficient delivery of welfare measures.

The government's initiatives aim to provide opportunities personal goals, it said, adding that "with the focus on edu cation, health, skilling, and innovation, with improved social and economic infrastructure, the aim is to achieve welfare for all".

BJP spent ₹1,737.68 Crore | VP calls for constructive for 2024 Lok Sabha polls



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

¬he Bharatiya Janata Party **I** spent ₹1,737.68 crore for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, according to the expenditure report submitted by the party to the Election Commission of India.

Of the total amount, ₹884.45 crore was spent on general party propaganda, while ₹853.23 crore was allocated for candidate-related expenses. Around ₹611.50 crore was spent on media advertisements that included advertisements in print and electronic media, bulk SMS campaigns, and prowebsites, and TV channels. The party also spent ₹55.75 crore on publicity materials such as posters, banners, hoardings, and flags to bolster its election outreach

Additionally, the BJP's expen-

diture on public meetings, processions, and rallies - including arrangements for stages, audio setups, barricades, and vehicles

expenses formed another significant portion of the party's budget.

party's central headquarters amounted to ₹168.92 crore, while ₹2.53 crore was spent on the travel of other party leaders. The BJP, which secured a third consecutive term in the general elections, heavily relied on mass outreach and publicity campaigns, as evident from its Additionally, the gross receipts from the date of announcement

crore, Sikkim ₹5,552.41 crore

and Odisha ₹5,555.65 crore.

- stood at ₹19.84 crore. Campaign-related travel

The travel expenditure of star campaigners authorised by the

of state elections to the date of their completion were Arunachal Pradesh ₹5,552.57

debate in Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday underscored the need for constructive debate and dialogue in Parliament, saying the era of disruption should end and make way for meaningful discussions. His remarks came ahead of the Budget session of Parliament.

While addressing the 33rd Foundation Day of the National Commission for Women (NCW), he said what the country truly needs is an opposition that is both constructive and cooperative. There will now be more debate,

dialogue, discussion, deliberation, and not disturbance or disruption in this Parliament," the Rajya Sabha chairman said, highlighting the importance of a cooperative opposition.

Reflecting on women's empowerment, he lauded the recent reservation for women in legislatures, calling it a landmark achievement. "Now we have reservation for women to the adding the country is witnessing an affirmative ecosystem that supports women's aspirations. However, he cautioned that with increased aspirations come greater challenges, requiring regulation of energy and



direction.

The vice president stressed that India's progress is incomplete without the active contribution of women. "I have no doubt that without the contribution of half of humanity, neither the planet can be happy nor the nation can progress," he asserted.

On the role of the NCW, Dhankhar urged the Commission to focus on information dissemination and constructive persuasion rather than sensationalism. "Strength is never in the exercise of power but in the realisation of limitations. Your limitations define the Commission to set a new trend where creating headlines through coercive mechanisms should be the last priority. He also called on the media to

exercise sensitivity, cautioning that it is easy for journalists to

PM Modi's US visit on

the horizon to strengthen

create sensational narratives. Dhankhar praised Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for setting a record in budget presentations and serving as a beacon for aspiring women

"From development of women, we are marching into womenled development," he said, adding this concept is not new to India but deeply embedded in its civilisation.

The vice president acknowledged that subtle discrimination against women, especially in work places and politics, remains a significant challenge. He urged the NCW to draft a national plan to address these issues, emphasising that men's inclination to dominate women must come to an end.

This dominance is psychologically depressing for women, and we must create a system where fiscal rewards compensate them adequately," he said. Stressing the need for authentic gender equality, Dhankhar remarked that policy-making requires a thought process shaped by experience.

towards becoming a developed nation will be powered by its women adding India's rapid growth has made it the most aspirational nation in the world. "When you are aspirational, 'ye dil maange' more," he said.

SC orders EC to preserve video clips of polling



NFW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Election Commission of India to preserve video clips of the polling during the pendency of the pleas against the decision to increase the maximum number of voters per polling station from 1,200 to

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar passed the order the counsel for the Election Commission of India (ECI) sought time to respond to the PIL filed by one Indu Prakash Singh. Singh has challenged the panel's communications in August 2024 for increasing the number of voters per polling stations in each constituency.

"The counsel appearing for respondent number 1 prays for further time to file affidavit. Let the affidavit be filed within three weeks from today. We deem it appropriate to direct respondent no 1 to maintain the CCTV recordings as they were doing

earlier," the bench said. The top court on January 15 sought responses from the Centre

and the poll panel on Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh's plea against the recent amendments, including no public access to CCTV, to the 1961 election rules. Singh said the decision to increase the number of voters per polling booth was arbitrary and not based on any data. On October 24, the top court refused to issue any notice to the poll panel but allowed the petitioner to serve the copy to the standing counsel of the ECI so that its stand on the issue is The petitioner contended the poll

panel's decision would impact the voters during the ensuing assembly elections in Maharashtra, Bihar and Delhi.

Singh said elections were normally held for 11 hours and it took about 60 to 90 seconds to cast a vote, and therefore 660 to 490 persons could cast their vote in a day at one polling station with one EVM.

Considering the average voting percentage to be 65.70 per cent, it was perceivable that a polling station prepared to accept 1,000 electors saw around 650 turn up. Singh's petition said there were booths where the elector turnout was in the range of 85-90 per

"In such a situation, about 20 per cent of voters will either end up standing in the queue beyond the voting hours or due to long waiting times, will abandon exercising their right to vote. Neither is acceptable in a progressive republic or a democracy," it

SC refuses to entertain PIL against special treatment for VIPs in temples

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $T^{\text{he Supreme Court on}}_{\text{Friday refused to entertain}}$ a PIL against the practice of charging an additional fee for "VIP darshan" and according of "preferential, selective and special treatment" to a certain class of people in temples.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar said it was for the society and temple management to decide the issue and the court cannot pass any direction.

While we may be of the opinion that no special treatment should be given but this court cannot issue directions. We do not think it is a fit case to exercise jurisdiction under Article 32 of the Constitution.



However, we clarify that dismissal of the petition will not bar the appropriate authorities from taking appropriate action as required," the bench said. Advocate Akash Vashishtha, representing the petitioner, argued there is some Standard Operating Procedure required as there are 12 Jyotirlingas and this completely arbitrary practice of "VIP darshan". The top court was hearing a plea filed by Vijay Kishor Goswami, 'sevait' at Shri Radha Madan Mohan Temple in

Vrindavan, on the issue. The plea said the practice violated the principles of equality enshrined in Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, as it discriminated against devotees unable to afford the fee.

The petition also raised several concerns about the additional fee charged for an expedited access to temple deities. The plea said charging fee ranging between Rs 400 and Rs 500 for the special darshan privileges created a divide between the affluent devotees and those who were unable to afford such charges, particularly disadvantaged women, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens.

It said that despite representations made to the home ministry, only a directive was issued to Andhra Pradesh, while other states like Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh remained unaddressed.

The plea, therefore, sought a direction to declare the levying of the additional fee violative of the constitutional rights of equality and religious free-

It sought directions to ensure equal treatment for all devotees in temple premises and framing of standard operating procedures by the Centre to ensure equitable access to temples. The plea further sought setting up of a national board to oversee the management and administration of temples

strategic partnership PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

India and the US are working Lon an early visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Friday. Modi and US President Donald Trump held a telephonic conversation on January 27. This was their first phone conversation since the American leader's inauguration last week.

The two sides are working on an early visit of Prime Minister Modi to the US to further deepen India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership," MEA Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "Specific dates for the visit

would be announced at the appropriate time," he said. He also said India is working with US authorities for early extradition of Mumbai terror accused Tahawwur Rana, On January 21, the US supreme court rejected Rana's review petition paving way for his extradition to India. "We are now working with the US side on procedural issues for

early extradition to India of the

accused in the Mumbai terror

attack," Jaiswal said.

He said three Indian nationals have gone missing in Iran and India has taken the issue with Tehran strongly. "The matter has been raised with the Iranian embassy in Delhi and with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran," Jaiswal said.

Guiarat authorities for allegedly

SC rejects plea for 'Urs' at razed shrine over Gir Somnath demolitions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a plea seeking to hold 'Urs" festival between February 1 and February 3 at a dargah (Muslim shrine) razed in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district during a demolition drive.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih observed the submissions of solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Gujarat authorities that unauthorised constructions, including temples on the land belonging to the government, were demolished. Mehta said no activities, includ-

ing Hindu religious rituals, were allowed on the land in question which was encroached upon earlier. The bench observed Mehta's contention that the land belonged to the government and unauthorised constructions, including the temples, were demolished. The applicant's counsel said "Urs" festival was

held at the site of the razed dargah for many years but authorities on January 30 denied per-

"If at all they (authorities) are saying they are having an apprehension that there will be some law and order problem, I will suggest one thing... 20 people will go for some time, they will perform the rituals and come out," the applicant's counsel said.

It was a structure made before

"Is there a structure now?" asked

1299 AD, added the counsel.

the bench. The counsel said it was demolished and argued it was a protected monument. Mehta said the demolition drive applied to all religions.

Whatever was unauthorised, is demolished. This is undisputedly a government land," he said. While the bench told the applicant's counsel that authorities had demolished temples too, it told Mehta no religious functions at the site should be allowed by the authorities. While rejecting the application, the bench said the prayer couldn't be granted without hearing the main matter. When the bench told Mehta that it had recorded his statement that

no religious rituals would be permitted there, the law officer referred to an order passed by the top court in the main matter. He said his statement was recorded that the land would remain under the control of the government. On January 27, the top court said it would hear after three weeks the pleas, including a contempt petition against the

demolishing residential and religious structures in Gir Somnath district without its prior nod. On September 28 last year, a demolition drive was carried out to reportedly clear encroachments on public lands near Gujarat's Somnath temple. In its affidavit filed in the apex court, the Gujarat government justified its demolition action, saying it was an ongoing drive for removing encroachments on

Ganga Aarti suspended in Varanasi till February 5 amid huge devotee surge

¬he Ganga Seva Nidhi man-1 agement has announced that the daily Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat will remain closed to the general public until February 5 due to an overwhelming influx of devo-

The move comes as lakhs of pilgrims continue to pour into the holy city, causing logistical and safety concerns.

"In the past few days, the footfall has been extraordinary, making it difficult to manage the crowd at Dashashwamedh Ghat during Aarti. To ensure the safety of devotees and maintain order, we have decided to restrict public entry temporarily," said Vishwajeet Tripathi, an official of Ganga Seva Nidhi.

Similar appeals have been committees organising Ganga Aarti at Sheetla Ghat and Assi Ghat, urging people to cooperate with authorities

The massive influx of visitors has created challenges for local residents, many of whom are with traffic overcrowded



markets, and restricted movement in the ghats area. "We understand the religious sentiments, but the sheer number of people has made it difficult for us to even step out of our homes. Roads are choked, public transport is unreliable, and prices of essentials have gone up due to high demand," said Anil resident

Local shopkeepers, however, have reported a surge in sales, especially in shops selling religious items, food, and souvenirs. "This is the busiest we have seen the city in recent years. While it brings business. it also creates challenges," said Ramesh Gupta, a shop owner near Kashi Vishwanath temple. Many pilgrims, who traveled long distances to experience Ganga Aarti, have

expressed disappointment at the closure."I came all the way from Maharashtra with my family just to witness the Aarti. It's unfortunate that we won't be able to see it this time. Watching the Ganga Aarti on TV is nothing compared to being here in person," said Sunita Patil, a devotee from Mumbai.Another pilgrim, Rajesh Kumar from Bihar, who had planned his visit months aware of the closure before arriving. This is a once-in-aexperience, and missing it is heartbreaking. Authorities have assured that online streaming of the Ganga

devotees worldwide to witness the spiritual spectacle.

Record-breaking footfall at

Aarti will continue, allowing

Vindhyachal and Ayodhya The impact of the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj has been felt across major religious sites in Uttar Pradesh, with pilgrim numbers surging Vindhyachal Dham Ayodhya. On the first day of Gupt Navratri, more than 10 lakh devotees thronged Maa Vindhyavasini breaking all previous records.

'We have never seen such a crowd before, and managing such a large number of devotees is a challenge," said a senior temple official.

Similarly, Ayodhya, which has been witnessing unprecedented rush devotees since the Pran Pratistha of Ram Lalla at the built Janmabhoomi temple, saw over 25 lakh visitors in a single

Kinnar Akhada row: Mamta Kulkarni, Laxmi Narayan Tripathi expelled

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

A fresh controversy has erupt-ed within the Kinnar Akhada, as its founder, Rishi Ajay Das, has expelled Bollywood actress Mamta Kulkarni and Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Laxmi Narayan Tripathi.

The decision, announced on January 30, 2025, comes in response controversial appointment as Mahamandaleshwar, a move that has sparked dissent within the religious order. Das, in an official statement, accused Tripathi of overstepping his authority by inducting Kulkarni without approval.

'As the founder of Kinnar Akhada, I am relieving Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Laxmi Narayan Tripathi from his position, effective immediately. His appointment was intended to promote religious activities and uplift the transgender community, but he has strayed from these responsibilities," the statement read. The rift appears to stem from a 2019 agreement between Tripathi and Juna Akhada, which Ajay Das claims was made without his knowledge consent, rendering it legally invalid. He further criticised Tripathi for granting Kulkarni the

prestigious Mahamandaleshwar despite her alleged criminal history, questioning the ethical implications of the decision. Amrit Snan. "This is a matter of religious integrity. By appointing

someone with a controversial past, what kind of guru are we presenting to Sanatan Dharma?" Ajay Das asked, emphasising that the move was both unethical and a violation of the Akhada's principles.

The expulsions have triggered a backlash, with Mahant with Ravindra Puri, president of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad, challenging the legitimacy of Ajay Das's authority. "Who is he to expel Laxmi Narayan Tripathi?" Puri

questioned, asserting that both Tripathi and Kulkarni remain integral to the Akhada and will participate in the upcoming

controversy initially surfaced during the Maha Kumbh, when Tripathi publicly announced Kulkarni's elevation to Mahamandaleshwar.

The actress, once a prominent face in Bollywood during the 1990s, had distanced herself from the industry for years before resurfacing in a spiritual role. However, her appointment has drawn criticism from several Kathavachak Jagatguru Himangi Sakhi Maa previously raised objections, citing Kulkarni's

alleged criminal background.

Government should provide medical care to affected: Akhilesh Yadav



PTI LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday asked the Uttar Pradesh gov ernment to provide medical care, food and clothes to devotees affected at the Maha Kumbh.

The former Uttar Pradesh as at least 30 people were killed and 60 injured in a predawn stampede at the Sangam area of the Maha Kumbh early Wednesday as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on the occasion of one of the most auspicious days of 'Mauni Amayasya'.

Giving suggestions to the state government regarding the arrangements at the Maha Kumbh, Yadav in a post on X said, "Appeal should be made to open dhabas at various places day and night for food

and water and organise bhandaras.

"Arrangements should be made to transport medical and paramedical staff from across the state to the people trapped in remote areas through two-wheelers of volunteers," he added in the same post.

and diesel should be ensured to the vehicles trapped for miles around the Maha Kumbh and across the state. Medicine shops should be allowed to remain open day and night." The former chief minister demanded that "people should be given clothes and blankets".

"Where thousands of crores of rupees are being spent on publicity and to suppress the news of the accident, why is the government shying away from spending a few crores for the victims?" he asked.

Two more people from West Bengal have died in the stam-pede at the Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, their family members said, taking the toll of fatalities from the eastern state to four.

Amiya Saha (28) Baisnabnagar area of Malda district and 35-year-old Binod Ruidas from Jamuria in Paschim Bardhaman were also among the 30 pilgrims who died in the pre-dawn stampede in Sangam area of the Maha Kumbh, their family members On Thursday, the family of two

women - Basanti Poddar from the city's Golf Green area and



Two more pilgrims from Bengal died in Kumbh stampede

Urmila Bhuniya from Salboni in Paschim Medinipur district claimed that they succumbed to injuries suffered during the rush for taking a holy dip at the mega religious gathering on the occasion of

Amavasya' Wednesday.

Talking to reporters on Friday, Saha's father alleged that his son, a primary school teacher, was injured in the stampede and left untreated at a Uttar Pradesh hospital for some time. He later died, but the Uttar Pradesh administration "did not issue a death certificate" while releasing the body, which delayed the post-mortem examination, his father claimed. Ruidas' brother said he died after suffering injuries while waiting for his turn for a holy dip on Wednesday. His body was brought back on

Friday morning. Ruidas' brother also alleged that

the Uttar Pradesh government did not issue a "proper" death certificate. the family

Meanwhile. members of nine pilgrims from the state claimed that they were still missing after the stampede, which also injured 60 people.

Judicial probe panel reaches Prayagraj spot later in the day," an

 $A^{\text{three-member judicial}}_{\text{commission set up by the}}$ Uttar Pradesh government to probe the Maha Kumbh stampede reached Prayagraj on Friday, an official said.

The panel is headed by Harsh Kumar, a retired judge of the Allahabad High Court, and comprises former director general of police (DGP) V K Gupta and retired IAS officer D K Singh."The commission is holding meetings with officials concerned here. We may also visit the incident

official said. The panel was formed in the wake of an early Wednesday stampede that killed 30 devotees at Sangam Nose where they had gone for a

dip on the occasion of

Mauni Amavasya.

The commission has month to wrap up its investigation but will try to expedite it, Kumar, the panel head, said on Thursday. According to police, the stampede broke out as the crowd jumped barricades, crushing those waiting for

Prayagraj locals provide meals, shelter for pilgrims

PTI PRAYAGRAJ

 $R^{
m esidents}$ of Prayagraj have thrown their doors open to the hundreds of stranded and hungry after a massive surge in number of pilgrims arriving city infra groaning under its

While the administration grapples with the crowd after the deadly stampede on Mauni Amavasya, the city's residents, businesses, and students have risen to the occasion, providing food, shelter, and transport help to the countless devotees arriving for a holy dip at the

Triveni Sangam.
Dr Anjali Kesari, a local, summed up the sentiment:
"In Allahabad, we don't see the Maha Kumbh pilgrims as

outsiders, we are hosts and they are our guests. shared how her

neighbourhood in Chowk, close to the railway station, banded together to serve food to weary pilgrims.

distributed tea that took 80 litres of milk into its preparation along with snacks, while others prepared meals like tehri and dalchawal for the pilgrims," she

Many locals have cleared up spaces outside their homes for visitors to rest at night. "For us, Kumbh is not just a religious fair; it is a confluence of humanity," Dr Kesari said.

City hotels are not far behind in lending a pro bono hand to the weary.

Alok Singh, who runs Hotel Vitthal in Civil Lines, has converted his 100-bed dormitory into a free rest

stop for pilgrims. "After taking a holy dip, many devotees are exhausted Lines and head towards the railway station. It is a part of Prayagraj's culture to help others, and this is our way of

contributing," he said. Singh said he otherwise charges ₹12,000 to ₹25,000 per night for a room. Dr Mrityunjay Parmar, an

english department assistant professor, said that in the aftermath of the stampede, Allahabad University opened its campus and hostels to returning pilgrims before undertook

"We have several hostels like Shatabdi Boys' Hostel, KPUC, PC Banerjee, and Sir Sundarlal Hostel, where students are actively assisting pilgrims," he said.

Women students Kalpana Chawla Hostel are also contributing, either individually or in groups, Parmar added.

Apart from accommodation, the university campus has been designated as a holding area for Kumbh, where officials and students are working together to arrange

meals for pilgrims.
Students from Allahabad
University's law faculty have also been actively assisting the pilgrims.

Abhinav Mishra, a final-year BA LLB student, said he and

his classmates have been distributing tea, biscuits, and snacks to devotees. Some have even been offering free motorbike rides to reduce the burden of long walks.

"Our faculty is near Bank pass through on their way to Prayagraj station. Seeing their struggles, we felt compelled to help," Mishra

Mishra, who is also the National Executive member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, said that the student organisation has been running medical camps for the pilgrims free of cost. In the old city area, Yadgar-e-Husaini Inter College, a Muslim Minority Institution established in 1942 near GT

Road, opened its doors for

the pilgrims to take a rest. The college is close to the bus stand and the Civil Lines Railway Station.

"It was an emergency after the stampede. including management, Raza lecturer took immediately decision. We arranged for the stay, snacks, water for pilgrims with access to washrooms also," Hasan Naqvi, whose grandfather was among the founders of the college, said. He said the college was gearing up for a sprucing up of facilities in the coming days, particularly on special bathing days when the influx is massive, like providing 'khichdi' along with snacks.

Public outrage as cop caught mixing ash in food for feast

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

 $A^{\text{video showing a police}}_{\text{officer allegedly mixing ash into food at a bhandara}}$ (community feast) during the Maha Kumbh Mela has sparked outrage, leading to The clip, which surfaced on social media, shows the officer adding ash to food authorities
Soraon being prepared over a stove. suspended Station (SHO) House Soraon Brijesh Officer Kumar Tiwari.

"This is unacceptable. We come here for faith and devotion, and such actions are a betrayal of trust," said Ramprasad Gupta, a pilgrim from Madhya Pradesh who witnessed the incident.

The video was widely shared, with one user tagging the DCP Ganga Nagar's account on social media platform X and demanding strict action.
The official handle of DCP

Ganga Nagar responded: "Taking cognizance of the Deputy matter, the Commissioner of Police (Ganga Nagar) has suspended the Soraon SHO based on a report from ACP Soraon. Departmental



proceedings are underway." Political leaders also weighed in, with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav sharing the video and condemning the act.

"It is unfortunate that the good efforts of those arranging food and water for devotees at the Maha Kumbh are being sabotaged due to political animosity. The public should take notice!" he posted.

Many devotees expressed their anger, calling for stricter measures to prevent such incidents. 'We are here to seek

blessings, not to be humiliated like this. The police should be protecting us, not disrespecting our faith," said Anita Verma, a visitor from Varanasi. With millions of pilgrims gathering in Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh, several

organisations have set up bhandaras to provide free meals to devotees. "Such incidents shake our faith, but we won't let them ruin the spirit of service," said Rahul Tiwari, a volunteer at one of the community

kitchens. The incident has ignited a debate over discipline in the police force and the need for greater vigilance during the religious congregation.

Naxalites carrying ₹32 lakh bounty surrender

Seven Naxalites, including three women, involved in several attacks on security forces and carrying collective cash rewards of ₹32 Lakh surrendered in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh on Friday, a police official said.

Triday, a police official said.

The cadres turned themselves in before senior police and Border Security Force (BSF) officials here citing disappointment with the "hollow" and "inhuman" Maoist ideology and tribals' exploitation by senior Naxalites, Kanker Senior Superintendent of Police Indira Kalyan Elesela said.

Of those surrendered, Mamta alias

Of those surrendered, Mamta alias Shanta alias Vasanna Battulai (60), Dinesh Matttami (20) and Aaytu Ram Potai (27) were carrying a reward of ₹8

Potai (27) were carrying a reward of ₹8 lakh each for their capture, he said. Mamta, a resident of Karimnagar district in neighbouring Telangana, was active as a divisional committee member and headed the 'Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangthan' (KAMS), a frontal wing of the outlawed organisation, in the north Bastar division of Maoists, he said. Between 1996 and 2024, she was involved in 26 Naxal incidents,

involved in 26 Naxal incidents, including the 2015 IED (improvised explosive device) blast in the Koyalibeda area in Kanker district during panchayat polls wherein two jawans were killed and the 2018 Mahla ambush that killed two BSF personnel,

While Mattami was active as a member of the military company number 10 of Three others, Itwarin Padda (25), a Maoists, Potai was a member of member of Partapur LGS (local



military company number five, he said. Another surrendered cadre, Jamuna alias Neera Netam (50), was active as a member of the Partapur area

committee. Jamuna was also involved in many Naxal attacks, including the ambush in Bhuski-Michgaon village in 2007 in which five policemen were killed and 18 others injured, Elesela said, adding that she carried a reward of ₹5 lakh.

guerilla squad), Sanjay Nareti (23) of the Panidobir/Rowghat LOS (local organisation squad), and Sagnu Ram Anchla (24) Panidobir LOS member, carried a reward of ₹1 Lakh each, the SSP added. All the surrendered Naxalites were provided assistance of ₹25,000 each and will be further rehabilitated as per the government's policy, he added. Last year, 792 Naxalites had surrendered in the Bastar region, comprising seven districts including Kanker.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

The Chinese challenge

China's rapid advancements—evident in breakthroughs like DeepSeek—are challenging US superiority like never before

or decades, the United States has been the undisputed global leader in cuttingedge technology, from artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing to defence innovations and space exploration. However, China's rapid advancements in these fields, fueled by a mix of state-driven initiatives, talent acquisition, and aggressive R&D investments, are now posing a serious challenge to the US supremacy. The emergence of DeepSeek, a Chinese Al model rivaling OpenAl's GPT-4, is just one example of how Beijing is closing the technological gap. China's ambitions extend far beyond Al. It has made remarkable strides in many areas. It is a direct result of China's 'vision 2025' which is translating into reality. China has developed the Jiuzhang quantum computer, which demonstrated computational speeds exponentially faster than classical supercomputers. Meanwhile, the US remains engaged in its own quantum pursuit through companies like Google and IBM, but China's government-backed approach provides



an edge in long-term planning. From hypersonic missiles that can evade US missile defence systems to Al-driven warfare capabilities, China's military modernisation is shifting global power dynamics.

Despite US sanctions aimed at crippling China's semiconductor industry, Beijing has made breakthroughs, notably with Huawei's 7nm Kirin chip, defying expectations. The US remains dependent on Taiwan's TSMC, but China's relentless pursuit of self-reliance is narrowing this gap. Even in space tech, China is surging ahread. China's Tiangong space station, its Mars and lunar exploration programs, and its ambitions in satellite-based internet rival those of NASA

and SpaceX. This places China on an equal footing with the US in space dominance. However, Washington is not sitting idle in the face of this challenge. The US has adopted a multi-pronged strategy. It has stepped up its effort to contain China. The Biden administration had imposed restrictions on Chinese firms like Huawei and Al chip exports to limit their technological growth. The US is deepening ties with the European Union, Japan, and India to counterbalance China's rise in emerging tech. Initiatives like the CHIPS Act and QUAD alliances are designed to limit Beijing's access to critical tech. Besides, companies like OpenAI, Google, and IBM are receiving government backing to maintain an edge over Chinese Al firms. In this tech war India, though lagging, is trying to cope albeit at a slow pace. While it has growing ties with the US, it also maintains strategic independence. India too is investing heavily in Al startups and quantum computing research. With the government's Semicon India initiative, India aims to become a global semiconductor hub, attracting investments from Intel, TSMC, and others. Indeed, India is emerging as a significant player in the global tech landscape. As this race unfolds, the global order in technology will be reshaped in ways that will define the 21st century.



A folk artist at the 'Jaipur Literature Festival' (JLF), in Jaipur

India's aviation sector needs a take off



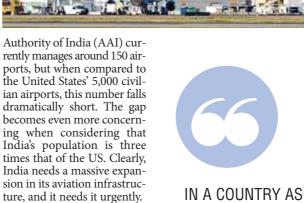
India's aviation sector is at a crossroads, grappling with an acute shortage of airports despite its vast population and growing economy

ave you ever wondered just how many airports exist in the United States? ■Take a wild guess. The number is staggering—nearly 19,000! That's right. With a population of around 330 million, America has built an extensive network of airports, ensuring seamless connectivity across the country. Now, compare this to India, a nation with three times the population, yet managing with only around 500 airports. Even more striking, out of these, just 29 are classified as international airports. This glaring dis-parity is more than just a number—it is a reflection of India's challenges in aviation infrastructure and the pressing need for expansion.

Let's take an even closer look by comparing West Bengal to the United Kingdom. Both regions have a similar population, yet their aviation networks couldn't be more different. The UK boasts around 150 airports, while West Bengal has just three passenger airports—Kolkata, Bagdogra, and Andal. This difference is not just a matter of convenience; it highlights lost economic opportunities and underscores the urgent requirement for infrastructure development. In nations like the US and the UK, air travel is an everyday convenience—affordable, efficient, and integral to daily

It allows people to skip traffic, save time, and stimulate economic growth. Meanwhile, in India, air travel is still seen as a luxury, accessible only to a privileged few.India's aviation network is wholly insufficient for its growing demand. With only 29 international airports and about 500 total airports, the infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with the needs of domestic and international travelers. Airports in major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are perpetually overcrowded, leading to delays, congestion, and inefficiency.

In contrast, vast portions of the country, especially smaller towns and rural areas, remain disconnected, relying on outdated modes of transportation like railways and highways. The Airports also immense. A surge in the



The consequences of this lim-

ited aviation network are sig-

nificant-reduced regional POPULOUS AS INDIA, connectivity, hindered tourism, and slower econom-AIR TRAVEL MUST ic growth. India must take decisive steps to address this issue. A bold vision for the **FUNDAMENTAL** future should include con-NECESSITY, structing at least 1,500 new airports in the coming years. **AVAILABLE TO** By ensuring that an airport is within 100 kilometers of every PEOPLE ACROSS ALL major population center, India can unlock the economic potential of its smaller towns BACKGROUNDS. and rural areas. The advantages of a well-developed air travel **EXPANDING THE** network are crystal clear. Air AVIATION NETWORK travel is not just the fastest mode of transportation; it is **WOULD MAKE** also the safest and most efficient. In a country where FLIGHTS MORE roads and railways are often AFFORDABLE AND congested and prone to delays, a robust aviation network can PRACTICAL FOR A alleviate pressure on existing

number of airports would create thousands of jobs, attract investment, and boost regional economies. Improved air connectivity would enhance business operations, enable easier travel for tourists, and offer the general population a practical alternative to timeconsuming road and rail journeys. Of course, developing new airports requires significant investment and time, but India has the potential to explore innovative solutions. One such approach is the conversion of highways into emergency runways—a model successfully implemented in the United States. This concept could be adapted for India, where strategically modifying highways to accommodate small aircraft could provide crucial air connectivity to remote regions without the high costs associated with building entirely new airports. Implementing such a strategy in states like West Bengal, could be a game-changer. These adapted road-runways could serve as cost-effective

alternatives for enhancing air connectivity, benefiting both everyday commuters and emergency responders in times of crisis, such as natural disasters. Across the Western world, air

travel has evolved into an OF THE POPULATION traver has evolved find an indispensable part of daily life. It is widely accessible, efficient, and affordable. (The writer is an associate pro-In India, however, flying is still

perceived as a luxury, something beyond the reach of the average citizen.

This perception needs to change. In a country as vast and populous as India, air travel must become a fundamental necessity, available to peo-ple across all economic backgrounds. Expanding the aviation network would make flights more affordable and practical for a larger segment of the population.

India stands at a crucial juncture in its aviation journey. The country's rapid economic growth and massive population necessitate an equally rapid expansion of its air travel infrastructure. Government initiatives such as the UDAN scheme, which aims to enhance regional air connectivity, are a step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done. The goal should be to develop at least 1,500 new airports in the near future, ensuring that every region, particularly underserved areas like West Bengal, is well-connected.

Exploring innovative ideas like highway-runways, making air travel more affordable, and significantly increasing the number of airstrips are all essential steps toward closing India's aviation gap. The need for a robust aviation infrastruc

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

A 90-hour workweek: Path to success or recipe for burnout



S N Subrahmanyan CMD Larsen and Toubro, has sparked intense debate with his proposal for a 90-hour workweek, drawing sharp criticism

N Subrahmanyan, CMD of Larsen and Toubro, recently ignited a heated debate while expressing his regret over not being able to call employees to work even on Sundays. He also suggested a 90-hour work week—a figure that surpasses even the 70-hour work week advocated by Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy. His comment assumes added significance when there is already a renewed debate in India on work pressure after the death of 26-year-old Ernst & Young employee, Anna Sebastian Perayil. And call it a quirk of fate, or merely incidental, L&T has now eaten a humble pie after its bid for a tender to build six submarines was shot down by the Ministry of Defence. Subrahmanyan's comment has been singularly dismissed by several corporate chiefs, including Anand Mahindra, Chairman, of Mahindra Group; Sanjiv Puri, CMD, ITC Limited; Harsh Vardhan Goenka, the current chairman of RPG Enterprises; Nalin Negi, BharatPe CEO; Rajiv Bajaj, Managing Director of Bajaj

Auto; and even Sanjeev across 10 of the world's Sanyal, Economist Member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Economic Advisory Council. The circular issued by the Ministry of Labour and Employment of India, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, strictly says that no worker shall be required or allowed to work, in any establishment or class of establishments for more than eight hours in a day or fortyeight hours in a week.

As per the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as of January 11, 2024, the average weekly working hours per employed person

largest economies is in: the United States, 38 hours per week; in China, 46.1 hours per week; Germany, 34.2 hours per week; Japan 36.6 hours per week; India 46.7 hours per week; United Kingdom, 35.9 hours per week; France, 35.9 hours per week; Brazil, 39 hours per week; Italy, 36.3 hours per week; Canada, 32.1 hours per week. However, India ranks 13th among the world's most overworked countries. With 46.7 average working hours per week, India faces a persistent culture of extended work sched-

ules. The World Health

Organisation also highlights

public health concern linked to occupational diseases. According to the International Labour Organisation's data, Luxembourg enjoys the highest productivity with \$166.1k in terms of GDP per hour worked, with an average working week schedule of 35.6 hours. Ireland stands second with \$139.1k GDP per hour worked with an average work-week schedule of 35.6 hours.

excessive work as a major

Whereas India has a labour productivity of \$10.7k GDP per hour worked with an average work-week schedule of 46.7 hours. The latest report, by Mc Kinsey Health Institute says that investing in employee health can substantially increase economic returns.

Research by the Institute in collaboration with the World Economic Forum indicates that enhanced employee health and well-being could generate up to \$11.7 trillion in global economic value. The writer is a journalist

and news anchor and writes oncorporate affairs, finance; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LARGER SEGMENT

VAST AND

BECOME A

ECONOMIC

INDIA'S AI MISSION

Madam — This refers to the news report, "India prepares to take on ChatGPT, Deepseek" (January 31). The sensational launch of the Chinese startup DeepSeek's AI system known as R1 has left the West dumbstruck. DeepSeek's claim that it developed R1 at 50 times the cheaper cost than OpenAl's ChatGPT with matching performance created mayhem in financial markets on January 30 as the Nasdaq witnessed its biggest wipeout in histo-

Ńvidia, the leading AI chip maker, was hit the worst as its stock price plunged 17 per cent. After American President Donald Trump termed DeepSeek a "wake-up call" for the US and urged US companies to stay competitive, fierce competition in the AI market is imminent. Amid these eye-opening developments, India has planned to build its world-class foundational models within less than one year under its ambitious India AI Mission. This shows India's global aspirations to become a frontrunner in the AI industry. In the last few years, India has resolved to develop advanced technologies indigenously and shed its dependency on other countries. India is aggressively developing its semiconductor industry to boost self-reliance, economic growth, and technological leadership under initiatives like the India Semiconductor Mission and PLI scheme.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

FOCUS ON ECONOMIC REVIVAL

Madam— Apropos, "Indian economy on fast lane," The Pioneer, January 30. With signs of a slowdown in the economy getting more pronounced, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who will be presenting the Union Budget today. The budget must not only address the weary private investment scenario in the country but also address the consumption slowdown. The economic growth is slowing, with GDP it achieves these goals would depend on

ISRO'S 100th rocket launch: Yet another milestone



SRO has added yet another feather to its cap with its 100th launch of GSLV, its most trusted workhorse rocket, from Sriharikota in 46 years and is planning to launch another hun-

dred of them in the next five years. GSLV is capable of launching satellites for both geosynchronous orbit (when it appears motionless from a point on the equator-primarily used for weather and communication and is placed at a very high altitude of about 42,000 km) and sun-synchronous orbit (when the satellite is passing over the same location at the same local time-used for imaging, weather forecasting, spying, and global observation at low altitudes of about 700 km, capable of capturing high-resolution images as a result).

This launch has put India in a much better situation to be self-reliant in its technology, giving a boost to its economy, defence, and spatial dominance in the near future. The ISRO scientists need to be applauded for their timebound achievements and speed through their hard work and dedication

R S Narula | Patiala

at least the next three years, including the current one. The anaemic growth of the economy has already led to moderation in consumption a trend that has been on the show for a couple of years. The central bank has consciously put a

leash on consumption-related lending as it sees it as an area of concern. With inflation continuing to remain high, the RBI has been holding interest rates at higher levels, further discouraging borrowers from taking loans for discre-

All these factors have weighed down on corporate India, which has been slow in

tionary consumption.

announcing new projects and investments. This shows in lower private investment numbers. As a result, the economy is now facing a vicious cycle, which the budget can break. In this backdrop, the government will have to loosen its purse strings a bit, let the people have more money in their hands, and give some more sops to corporations to prod them into investing. How

likely to grow at less than 7 per cent for how the government sees the current

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

MIDAIR CRASH IN AMERICA KILLS 67

Madam —An American Airlines flight with 67 people aboard, including 4 crew members, collided with an Army helicopter while landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington DC in the nearby Potomac River. The US has the safest airspace in the world. The diversion of the air jet to land on a smaller runway just before landing may be a cause.

Also, the Army helicopter did not go up and down in the air over the river. The midair collision of the flight and the Army helicopter is more surprising in this digital age. The accident was preventable, and Trump blaming Obama and Biden's policies for the mishap is unacceptable.

N R Ramachandran | Chennai

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FIRST COLUMN

A DIVINE CONVERGENCE OF LOVE AND LIBERATION

The Kumbh Mela has been a beacon for seekers, drawing masters and devotees alike



JAGATGURU SAI MAA LAKSHMI DEVI

or centuries, great masters have been drawn to the Kumbh Mela, captivated by its spiritual magnetism. What is it that pulls us here? It is the profound energy of devotion, the irresistible force of divine love. Love itself is a magnet, and those who live in devotion radiate this magnetic power, naturally attracting others to them. Nowhere else on Earth do millions—crores upon crores—gather in unwavering dedication, chanting the name of the Divine, immersed in sadhana day and night. They come to bathe in this sacred energy and carry it forth into their lives, spreading its radiance wherever they go.

This Maha Kumbh is unlike any before it, offering an unprecedented caliber of cosmic energy. It is a spiritual phenomenon of global significance, where the highest frequencies of Source energy descend upon humanity. The grace of enlightenment is being bestowed, and the awakening of souls is unfolding.

Here, the sublime state of Soruba Samadhi will begin—a transformation that elevates both consciousness and matter itself. Cellular structures are being regenerated, linking human DNA to the divine imprint, connecting us to the immortal essence within. There is nothing quite like the experience of Kumbh. Imagine millions of souls gathering in one place, each radiating spiritual energy, creating an immense vortex of power. In this sacred space, we transcend our identities and recognise ourselves as Atmas—pure souls



united in a grand cosmic dance. This collective energy is a force of love, light, and enlightenment, dissolving karmic burdens and opening the path to a majestic, divine life.

Though the present age presents its challenges, those who remain steadfast on the spiritual path will undergo profound transformation. The portals of the cosmos are open, offering liberation and awakening. The world we see is but an illusion—a play of maya where all is transient except our love for the Divine. This love is our dharma, our ultimate purpose. The body, the mind, and the material world constantly change, but the eternal truth, Sathya, remains unchanged. We are that truth—Sat-Chit-Ananda, Tat Twam Asi and our sadhana is to awaken to and embody this realization.

At the Kumbh, in the embrace of Mata Ganga, we surrender and transform. The sacred waters purify us, activating the divine blueprint within. In this powerful vortex, we align with the highest expressions of Sanatana Dharma, experiencing profound spiritual elevation. This year, the influx of divine light is immense, inviting us to merge with its boundless brilliance and bliss. The ancient traditions of Moksha and enlightenment are more alive than ever. This is a time for purification, for letting go of attachments and the illusion of mortality. Sanatana Dharma, founded on selfless service, was exemplified by Adi Shankaracharya, who taught the wisdom of one-

Dharma—the eternal law—sustains creation itself. Regardless of the many religious paths, all stem from this universal truth. We have lived Dharma through countless lifetimes, whether we remember it or not. Kumbh Mela is a powerful catalyst for spiritual growth, drawing seekers from all over the world. Even those from lands where devotion is rare undergo profound shifts, their minds finding peace and their hearts blossoming. Here, millions chant together, and divine forces work to elevate collective consciousness. This is a time of great spiritual revolution, heralding the dawn of Sathya Yuga. Open your heart. Receive the blessings of your soul. Step into your truth and embrace the new age that is upon us.

(The writer is a spiritual guru; views are personal)

From OpenAI to DeepSeek: The fight for supremacy



With China rapidly closing the AI gap and geopolitical tensions shifting from military might to algorithmic dominance, the world is entering a digital cold war



magine a computer's hard drive containing a replica of your brain, connected to a high-speed internet. Your biological brain may become irrelevant when the machine not only possesses your mind but also gains control over everything you identify as 'who you are'. This is what General Artificial Intelligence (AGI) truly represents - the vast, unexplored frontier we are hurtling towards. The year begins not only with the most unpredictable politician in America reclaiming the Oval Office but also with an AI race that, once dominated by American startups, is now being swiftly overtaken by China at a significantly lower cost. We have crossed the Rubicon, heading towards an unknown destination; the consequences remain uncertain, and no one can predict what lies ahead.

The AI arms race, gaining unprecedented velocity, is propelling us into an era where the very foundations of intelligence, humanity, and civilisation are being deconstructed at an astonishing pace. Humanity, having long contended with the challenge of technology reshaping its self-perception, is now facing an existential dilemma unlike any before. The revolutions of Copernicus, which dethroned Earth from presumed centrality in the cosmos, and Darwin, whose theory questioned humanity's divine distinction from the animal kingdom, fundamentally redefined our place in the universe. But neither of these paradigm shifts eroded the core of what it meant to be human. Artificial intelligence, however, threatens to do precisely that. AGI poses a question so starkly profound that it demands our full intellectual engagement: What happens when the very attribute we have long considered uniquely human—the capacity to reason, to create, to understand—becomes replicable, scalable, and infinitely more efficient, to the point where machines not only rival but surpass our cognitive limitations? What becomes of the human essence when faced with entities capable of thinking faster, learning more swiftly, and ultimately transcending us in once inconceivable

ways? This week, the new race in AI has

surged ahead, with China unveiling the

results of its years of intensive experimen-

tation. The release of Qwen 2.5, followed

by DeepSeek—an inexpensive yet formi-

REFLECTION INTELLECTUAL FRAMEWORK— YET ONE THAT **OPERATES** FASTER, MORE EFFICIENTLY, AND WITH AN ABILITY TO LEARN THAT FAR **EXCEEDS**

HUMAN

POTENTIAL

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FORMS,

dable competitor to models like GPT-4 from OpenAI—has upended the established order. This shift is not merely a matter of technological rivalry; it signifies a profound realignment in global power, where the currency of influence is no longer military might or economic clout, but data control, computational resources, and technological ingenuity.

The new cold war is not one of armaments but of algorithms and information—an intellectual race whose stakes extend far beyond economic primacy to the very survival of human civilisation itself.As AI advances, it forces us to confront deeply uncomfortable truths about our nature. For millennia, humanity has positioned itself at the apex of intelligence on Earth, a secret of being a superspecies. Yet what occurs when our very creations—machines—begin to outshine us in those same domains? When we no longer retain exclusive dominion over intelligence, how does this fundamentally alter **OF OUR** our sense of identity?

Are we, like the alchemists of antiquity, on the verge of realising that we no longer control our fate, but have given birth to entities that might one day supplant us? The very nature of intelligence itself is now irreversibly in question. Cognitive architectures, once the exclusive province of the human brain, are now being mirrored and surpassed by machines. AI, in its most advanced forms, becomes a reflection of our intellectual framework—yet one that operates faster, more efficiently, and with an ability to learn that far exceeds human potential. This is not merely an augmentation of human capabilities; it heralds the dawn of a new epoch, where human and machine cognition converge, indistinguishable and perhaps inseparable. As we approach this unnerving future, we must ask ourselves whether we are philosophically, politically, and

entities that may one day rival or eclipse us.

Will we, as a species, embrace coevolution, finding a new equilibrium in our relationship with machines, or will we cling to the false myth of human exceptionalism, attempting to subjugate or destroy the very creations we have birthed?

The decisions we make now will echo far beyond our survival, influencing the very nature of intelligence and the future trajectory of all life on Earth. The geopolitical ramifications of this technological revolution are as profound as its existential implications. Powerful nations with vast resources for research, development, and energy will continue to dominate the future, while smaller countries may face unprecedented crises, including crises concerning their own identity.

As AI becomes embedded in the infrastructure of global politics, we are entering an era of digital empires—systems of control as potent as any traditional nationstate, commanding not only infor-mation but the very nature of human interaction. In this new digital cold war, the battle is not merely for technological supremacy, but for control over the global political system itself. Is the rise of AI an essential leap forward in humanity's evolution, or does it signal the twilight of human rele-

Some may argue that AI is a necessary tool, a portal that helps protect us from the danger of total annihilation. Others, however, may see it as a harbinger of obsolescence, a point of no return when our creations ascend to power and render us irrelevant. However, there is a subtler, more philosophical interpretation of this transformative shift: Perhaps the advent of AGI is not our fall from grace, but the birth of a new chapter in human evolution—one where we socially prepared to co-exist with transcend the biological con-

straints that have long defined us. Like our ancestors who tamed fire and invented the wheel, we may soon wield AI as a tool that propels us to new heights. The fusion of human and artificial intelligence could lead to a post-human condition—not one of extinction, but of surpassing the boundaries of our biological form and entering a phase of hybridised existence. This, of course, depends on our ability to confront the ethical and political structures that accompany the rise of AGI.

The true challenge is not whether we will create machines that surpass us in intelligence, but whether we have the wisdom to ensure they remain our allies rather than adversaries. We must learn to coexist with these new intelligences, integrating them into our societies in ways that enhance, rather than diminish, our humanity. This is the existential challenge of our time one that will determine whether the era of artificial intelligence will culminate in annihilation or transcendence.

∪itimately, the measure of our humanity will not lie in our ability to create machines that rival us in intelligence, but in our capacity to retain those qualities that define us: empathy, creativity, and the willingness to evolve in response to monumental change. If we can meet this challenge, the future—however uncertain—will hold at least the promise of our fragile humanity. If not, we may find ourselves consigned to the dustbin of history, supplanted by the very entities we have created. Are we prepared to face the unknown abyss, or will we cower in fear, clinging to the comforting illusions of the past? The future, it seems, is no longer entirely within our grasp—but perhaps this is precisely the kind of leap forward we need to ensure our survival.

(The writer is a journalist and policy analyst. Views expressed

Elevating CSR in India: From compliance to impact-driven transformation

While many corporations are genuinely committed to social welfare, issues like fund misallocation, tokenism and unethical practices threaten the integrity of CSR

Social Responsibility (CSR) in India has significantly progressed over the past decade. Introduced as a legal mandate in 2013, CSR has evolved from a mere compliance obligation to a fundamental requirement, with organisations across various industries incorporating social welfare into their core operations. However, as we continue into 2025 and beyond, there is an urgent need to elevate the current CSR practicesensuring they are effective, accountable, and transparent. While many companies have shown a sincere commitment to social impact, others have unfortunately fallen into the vicious traps of misallocation of funds, tokenism, and questionable practices like kick-

backs and paybacks. Additionally, the emergence of corporations establishing their NGOs presents a mixed picture; while some are genuinely committed to their missions, many operate as "skeleton NGÓs," where staff often demand kickbacks and the intended social welfare purpose gets lost.

A New and Enhanced Era for CSR Compliance

Compliance remains an important aspect of effective CSR. However, it is not just about meeting the mandatory spending requirement but also about ensuring that every rupee spent reaches where it was originally intended directly benefiting those in need. While many corporations have dutifully allocated

the mandated 2 per cent of



GEETANJALI CHOPRA

their profits towards social welfare, there is still a need for a more robust system to ensure regular oversight and realtime monitoring of fund utilisation and project outcomes. With stronger and more transparent laws, we can ensure that funds reach the intended beneficiaries, fostering trust between the government, corporations, and communities

Ensuring Integrity in CSR: Addressing Kickbacks and Paybacks One of the biggest challenges facing CSR today is the lack of trust caused by unethical practices. Often, when intermediaries or implementing agencies misappropriate resources for personal gain, the integrity of CSR initiatives is compromised. To address this issue, it is vital to introduce strict anti-corruption policies and establish independent monitoring

When corporations know they are being monitored or supervised, they will think twice before engaging in malprac-

Ensuring integrity is not just about preventing financial losses; it is about preserving the

trust of communities that often



Impact-Driven CSR

CSR should move beyond compliance; it needs to be impact-driven. The focus should shift from merely fulfilling legal obligations to measuring the difference being made on the ground. Strengthening accountability will ensure CSR is not reduced

to a token gesture but becomes

a genuine agent of transformation. Moreover, corporations should also embrace innovation in their CSR approaches. Whether it is by using technology to improve healthcare access in rural areas, providing quality education through digital platforms, or addressing climate change with green initiatives, one must think beyond traditional models and adopt solutions that leave a lasting impact.

The Role of Stakeholders Accountability is not just the sole responsibility of corporations; other stakeholdersgovernments, NGOs, and civil society—also have an essential role to play in shaping the future of CSR. The government must act as an active regulator, ensuring companies

incentivising innovation and collaboration. On the other hand, NGOs, as implementation partners, must continue to bring grassroots expertise and ensure that every rupee spent makes a difference. Communities must also be empowered to hold corporations accountable. By involving local stakeholders in the planning and execution of projects, we can create a feedback loop that enhances transparency and boosts the on-the-

ground impact of CSR initia-The Way Forward

The ongoing changes to the CSR framework present a golden opportunity to usher in a new era of accountability and impact. This calls for a change that ensures CSR initiatives are adhere to guidelines while not only executed with integri-

The government, too, must play its part by introducing reforms that incentivise genuine efforts while penalising any kind of malpractice. If implemented correctly, this

ty but with genuine purpose.

strengthened CSR framework can ensure that social welfare is not merely a checkbox for corporations but a collective mission to uplift the under-served. As stakeholders in this ecosystem—corporates, nonprofits, government, and the public—we must all push for a transparent and impactful CSR environment. Only then will CSR in India live up to its promise of creating a better world for all.

(The writer is founder an d president, Wishes and Blessings NGO; views expressed are

Lithuanian prez backs Trump's NATO defence spending goal

PTI VILNIUS

 $S_{ing}^{ecuring}$ an end to the fighting in Ukraine must take place with Kyiv's full involvement and come with more defense spending by regional countries to avoid any future Russian aggression, according to Lithuania's president.

Gitanas Nauseda, the president of the Baltic coastal nation, told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday that a settlement negotiated without proper deterrent measures would allow Russia to consolidate its forces and prepare for further aggression in the region. Nauseda said that even when a ceasefire is reached in Ukraine, "you cannot believe that the intentions of Russia will be just to stop and do nothing".

'They will use this break in order to consolidate, to strengthen the military capabilities and to strike again in the future," he told the AP in Vilnius. "And then the main question is, what will be the next target of Russia? Ukraine, maybe. Baltic countries,

Lithuania, which was occupied by the Soviet Union until 1990, is increasingly worried about the ongoing brutal war in Ukraine and the aggression of its neighbour Russia

Its geographical position bordering Russia's Kaliningrad exclave to the west and Moscow's proxy Belarus to the east — make it vulnerable to a potential broader conflict launched from the Kremlin even after an eventual end to the war, Nauseda said.

'You can never feel safe living in this part of the world, because we have this neighbor, and we will still have it after one hundred or two hundred years," Nauseda said of Russia. "You always have the threat from the East, and you must be aware and take all the necessary precautionary measures in order not to be attacked."

'This is not individual countryby-country conflict," he added. "This is a challenge of Putin towards NATO.

Unacceptable' if ceasefire plans exclude Kyiv The country recently became the first member of the NATO military alliance to commit to raising its defence spending to at least 5 per cent of its overall national economic output, as called for

by US President Donald Trump.

A longtime critic of NATO countries that do not spend more on defence, Trump has threatened he would not defend alliance members that fail to meet defense spending goals. While some European countries have signalled upping their spending to Trump's desired 5 per cent of GDP would be an economic burden, other nations on the alliance's eastern flank, including Lithuania, have greeted the proposal as a necessity.

Before Trump took office earlier this month, questions over how he would engage with the war in Ukraine loomed over European countries as some speculated he would roll back the crucial military aid provided by the administration of President Joe Biden.

But after his inauguration, Trump threatened to impose sanctions and tariffs on Moscow, and urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to 'settle now and stop this ridiculous war". Nauseda said the new US

administration must ensure that Kyiv is fully involved in negotiations to end the fighting, and that a resolution to the conflict should not be drawn up bilaterally between Moscow and Washington.

"It would be unacceptable if the peace would be set behind the doors and without the involvement of Ukraine," he said. "Ukraine paid a very high price

in this war. Ukraine lost many human lives. Infrastructure facilities and houses are destroyed. The Ukrainian people deserve the right to set the conditions of this peace."

"I think that President Donald Trump understands that: no peace negotiations without Ukraine," he added.

Another security concern facing Lithuania and the region is a series of events that have damaged undersea cables and gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea. At least 11 Baltic cables have been damaged since October 2023. Most recently, a fibre optic cable connecting Latvia and the Swedish island of Gotland reportedly ruptured on Sunday. NATO launched a new mission dubbed "Baltic Sentry" earlier this month to protect the underwater infrastructure vital to the economic well-being of

the region. Although cable operators note that sub-sea cable damage is commonplace, the frequency and concentration of incidents in the Baltic have heightened suspicions that damage might have been delib-

To address those concerns, Nauseda said, "It is time for us to show some muscle. "NATO and the EU should take

more responsibility in surveying the Baltic Sea, bringing additional maritime capabilities to prevent such incidents in the future," he said. Some politicians in Lithuania have objected to the country raising its military expenditures, already among the highest relative to GDP in the 32-member NATO alliance. But Nauseda said Lithuania must show that it can be responsible for its own defence. "This is an absolutely clear priority for this country, as a frontline country, that we have to spend more," he said. "Of course, we can rely on the support of our allies in NATO. But it would be naive to expect that somebody will care about our security if there will be clear indications that we are not able to defend ourselves.

US Prez mum on pulling out troops from Syria

President Donald Trump is declining to say whether he intends to maintain current US troop levels in Syria. We'll make a deter-mination on that," Trump told reporters on Thursday when asked if he intends to withdraw US troops deployed to Syria to fight the Islamic State group. "We're not involved in Syria. Syria's its own mess. They got enough messes over there. They don't need us involved with everything.

The US had said for years that there were about 900 troops in Syria, but the Pentagon acknowledged in December that US troop levels had surged to about

There has long been friction between the US and Syria's neighbours - Turkive and

Iraq - about the ongoing presence of American forces in Syria and the need to keep them at a particular level. Israel meanwhile has urged the US to maintain a presence in the country.
Trump said just before

rebels ousted Syrian leader Bashar Assad in December in that the US military should stay out of Syria. Trump is also not giving up on the idea of Egypt and Jordan taking in Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, even as the leaders of both countries have flatly rejected the idea. "They're going to do it," Trump said in exchange with reporters on Thursday, when asked whether he could force Egypt and Jordan to take in Palestinians from the wartorn territory. "We do a lot for them and they're going

to do it."Trump does have

Jordan and Egypt, two strategically important US allies that are heavily dependent on US aid.

Trump first floated the idea last week, saying he would urge the leaders of the two Arab countries to take in Gaza's now largely homeless population, so that "we just clean out that whole thing.' He added that resettling most of war-torn Gaza's population of 2.3 million could be temporary or long

Human rights groups have already accused Israel of ethnic cleansing, which United Nations experts define as a policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove the civilian population of another group from certain areas "by violent and terror-inspiring

US aid agency in upheaval during foreign assistance freeze

Washington (PTI): Trump administration changes have upended the US agency charged with providing humanitarian aid to countries overseas, with dozens of senior officials put on leave, thousands of contractors laid off, and a sweeping freeze imposed on billions of dollars in foreign assistance. Secretary of State Marco Rubio defended the pause on foreign assistance Thursday, saying "the US government is not a charity.

Aid organisations say the funding freeze — and deep confusion over what US-funded programmes must stop work as a result — has left them agonizing over whether they could continue operating programmes such as those providing round-the-clock nutritional support to extremely malnourished infants and children, knowing that closing the doors means that many of those children would die

Current and former officials at the State Department and the US Agency for International Development say staffers were invited to submit requests to exempt certain programs from the foreign aid freeze, which President Donald Trump imposed Jan. 20 and

the State Department detailed how to execute on Jan. 24. Three days later, at least 56 senior career USAID staffers were abruptly placed on admin-

istrative leave.

Three officials said many of those put on leave were lawyers involved in determining what programmes might qualify for waivers, helping write proposals and submitting those waiver requests as they believed they had been invited to do. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal. A Trump administration directive that aid organizations interpret as a gag order has left them unwilling to speak publicly for fear of permanently losing US funding. In an internal memo Monday about the staffing changes, new acting USAID administrator Jason Gray said the agency had identified "several actions within USAID that appear to be designed to circumvent the President's Executive Orders and the mandate from the American peoble.""As a result, we have placed a number of USAID employees on administrative leave with full pay and benefits until further notice while we complete our analysis of these actions," Gray wrote. A former senior USAID official said those put on leave had been helping aid organizations navigate the "confusing process" to seek waivers from the aid pause for specific life-saving projects, such as continuing clean water supplies for displaced peo-

BRICS nations warned against replacing US dollar

PTI WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump Phas once again warned that he will impose 100 per cent tariffs against BRICS nations if they attempt to replace the US dollar in international trade, telling them to go and find "another sucker nation.

BRICS is an intergovernmental organisation of ten countries —Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates.

"The idea that the BRICS countries are trying to move away from the dollar, while we stand by and watch, is OVER," Trump said on Thursday in a post on Truth Social, a social media platform owned by him.

Trump said he wanted a commitment from these 'seemingly hostile" coun-



President Donald Trump signs a document in the Oval Office at the White House

create a new BRICS currency nor back any other currency to replace the "mighty" US dollar. "Or they will face 100 per cent tariffs, and should

expect to say goodbye to selling into the wonderful US economy," Trump said.
"They can go find another

sucker nation.

There is no chance that BRICS will replace the US dollar in international trade, or anywhere else, and any country that tries should say hello to tariffs, and goodbye to America!" Trump threat-

Although Trump has repeatedly criticised BRICS nations against any move to float their own currency, this is his strongest opposition to it

In December too, Trump

BRICS is an intergovernmental organisation of ten countries —Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates.

BRICS, formed in 2009, is the only major international group of which the US is not a part.

Over the past few years, a few of its member coun-tries, in particular Russia and China, are seeking to have an alternative to the US dollar or create BRICS cur-

India, an important pillar of BRICS, has said it was against de-dollarisation. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in December said India had never been for de-dollarisation and there was no proposal to have a

BRICS currency.

Palestinians walk past a mosque destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in Nuseirat, Gaza Strip, Friday days after a ceasefire deal between

Serbian student protesters march ahead of major blockade of Danube bridges

Aranmed a car into a silent protest in the Serbian capital on Friday, slightly injuring one woman, the third such incident in weeks. The incident happened in downtown Belgrade during 15 minutes of silence observed daily throughout Serbia at noon when a canopy collapsed at a railway station in the northern town of Novi Sad on November 1. Video footage showed the woman, wearing a doctor's white coat, being thrown to the pavement. Progovernment thugs have repeatedly attacked the protesters. many of them students, twice ramming cars into demonstrations. Two people were seriously injured in the previous attacks. After spending a freezing night out in the open, hundreds of striking students on Friday resumed their 2-day

where they plan to blockade three bridges over the River Danube this weekend. The bridge blockade is planned for Saturday to mark three months since the huge concrete construction at the railway station collapsed in Novi said on November 1, leaving 15 people dead. What started two months ago as a protest against suspected corruption in construction contracts has developed into the most serious challenge in years to the country's powerful populist leader, President Aleksandar

Along the way to Novi Sad, the students were greeted by cheering citizens, honking their car horns or coming out of their homes with offers of refreshments and food.

When they reached the town of Indjija on Thursday, rough-

anti-graft protest march from ly halfway along their 80-kilo-collapse of the overhang at the the capital, Belgrade, to the meter (50-mile) route, they train station was essentially and cheers from residents.

> Although most of them spent the night out in the open in a

> soccer field, the freezing temperatures did not dampen their desire for major changes in the corruption-ridden Balkan state. Nevena Vecerinac, a student,

> said she hoped the protesters' demands that include the punishment of all those responsible for the rail station tragedy will be fulfilled.

"We will make it to Novi Sad," she said. "Yesterday's walk was easy. It's cold now, but we can make it. We all have the same goal." We need support from all people. With this energy and mood I hope we can do it, otherwise there will be no brighter future," said Luka Arsenovic, another student marcher.

Many in Serbia believe that the

tion in a large infrastructure project with Chinese state companies. Critics believe graft led to a sloppy job during the reconstruction of the Novi Sad train station, poor oversight and disrespect of existing safety regulations.

Monthslong demonstrations have already forced the resignation of Serbia's prime minister Milos Vucevic this week, along with various concessions from authorities which were ignored by the protesters who say that is not enough. Vucic and other officials have shifted from accusing the students of working with foreign powers to oust him, to offering concessions or issuing veiled threats.

Pro-government thugs have repeatedly attacked the students, twice ramming cars into protests

Istanbul mayor testifies over legal probes against him

Friday fired tear gas to disperse a group of protesters who clashed with officers outside an Istanbul courthouse while rallying in support of the city's mayor, who was called to give testimony in two new legal

probes against him. Ekrem Imamoglu, a potential future leader of Turkiye's main opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP, and a possible challenger to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, testified before

prosecutors for two hours. The testimony was in connection with comments he made about a chief prosecutor and a court expert. Critics argue that these probes are part of an effort to remove Imamoglu from the political scene.

The politician has already been convicted of charges of insulting members of Turkey's Supreme Electoral Council and faces a political ban if his conviction in 2022 is upheld by a high court. He is also on trial on charges that he was involved in the alleged rigging of bids in a tender dating back to 2015. Thousands of supporters gathered outside the Caglayan courthouse to protest the legal actions against Imamoglu. Tensions escalated when riot police blocked a CHP bus, which serves as a podium for politicians, from approaching the courthouse. The move led

to clashes between the protest-

ers and the police, who responded with tear gas. It

was not clear if any arrests were

Imamoglu later addressed the crowds from the top of the bus at another location. "Today's issue is an issue of justice, an

His win was a historic blow to Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, which had controlled Istanbul for a quar-

Sunita Williams sets record for total spacewalking time by woman

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams has broken the record for total spacewalking time by a woman by logging 62 hours and 6 minutes of spacewalk.

Williams and her colleague Butch Wilmore, who have been stranded on the International Space Station (ISS) since June 2024, conducted a spacewalk on Thursday.

The duo ventured outside the ISS to remove degraded radio communications hardware and collect samples that may show whether microorganisms exist on the exterior of the orbiting laboratory.

The spacewalk began at 7:43 am Eastern Time (ET) and concluded at 1:09 pm ET, lasting 5 hours and 26 minutes. It was the ninth spacewalk for Williams and the fifth for



Wilmore. "NASA astronaut Suni WIlliams just surpassed former astronaut Peggy Whitson's total spacewalking time of 60 hours and 21 minutes," NASA said in

She surpassed Whitson's record for total spacewalking time by a female astronaut. Williams now has 62 hours and 6 minutes of total spacewalk time, fourth on NASA's all-time list, according to NASA.

In 2012, during a trip to the ISS Williams became the first person to finish a triathlon in space, during which she simulated swimming using a weight-lifting machine and ran on a treadmill while strapped in by a harness so she would-

n't float away. Williams, 59, and Wilmore went on what was meant to be an eight-day mission to the ISS aboard Boeing's Starliner in June 2024.

However, technical issues including helium leaks and thruster malfunctions meant that the Starliner was unsafe for their return.

NASA plans to bring them back to Earth in late March aboard a spaceship built by SpaceX, a rival company of Boeing. Despite these setbacks, the astronauts have continued their work aboard the ISS while awaiting a safe journey home.

Myanmar's military govt extends state of emergency by 6 months government body, but in practice is controlled by the mili-

PTI BANGKOK

Myanmar's military government on Friday announced another six-month extension of its mandate to rule in preparation for elections it has said will be held this year, as the country enters its fifth vear of crisis.

However, it did not announce an exact date for the polls. The military declared a state of

emergency on February 1, 2021, when it arrested the country's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and top officials from her government in an army takeover which reversed years of progress toward democracy after five decades of earlier military rule.

The takeover sparked an armed resistance movement, with powerful ethnic minority militias and people's defense forces constitutional administrative

that support Myanmar's main opposition now controlling large parts of the country. The military government is currently facing its greatest

challenge since taking power and is on the defensive in much of the country. However, it is still able to hold onto much of central Myanmar and big cities including the capital, Naypyidaw.

State-run MRTV television reported on Friday that the National Defence and Security Council decided unanimously to grant an extension of emergency rule after Senior Gen. Ming Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, argued that more time was needed to restore stability to the country to hold national elec-

The council is nominally a

tary.\ Under the army-drafted 2008 Constitution, the military was able to rule the country under a state of emergency for one year, followed by two possible six-month extensions before holding elections. However, the extension on Friday is the seventh. Tom Andrews, a special rap-porteur with the UN Human

Rights Office, said in a statement on Thursday that four years of military oppression, violence and incompetence have cast Myanmar into an abvss. The United Nations has estimated that more than 3.5 million people have been displaced by the conflict.

Junta forces have slaughtered thousands of civilians, bombed and burned villages, and displaced millions of people. More

issue of seeking rights and justice," the mayor said. "Unfortunately, today's issue stems from a conspiracy that is being set up against Istanbul." Imamoglu, 53, was first elected to lead Istanbul in March

ter-century.

Russia claims capture of Ukraine village, advances on key city

Kyiv (PTI): Russia on Friday claimed it had captured another village in its relentless offensive in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region and as it closes in on the critical Ukrainian logistics hub of Pokrovsk after almost three years of war. The Russian claim that its forces took Novovasylivka could not be independently confirmed, and Ukrainian officials made no immediate comment.

However, battlefield maps published early Friday by the . Ukrainian General Staff suggested the village was at least partly under Russian control A comparison with other maps of the area by The Associated Press indicated Novovasylivka is largely under Russian control.

Russian forces have been trying for months to capture the key Donetsk strongholds of Pokrovsk and nearby Chasiv Yar, fighting their way across farm fields and woodland and engulfing small rural settlements.The fall of Pokrovsk and Chasiv Yar could enable the Russian army to complete its hold on Donetsk and even set the stage for it to continue on into the neighbouring Dnipro region. The recent Russian push in the area has coincided with US President Donald Trump taking office and repeating his pledge to end the war soon. That has prompted both Moscow and Kyiv to pursue battlefield gains that might give them an edge at the bargaining table.

The village of Novovasylivka is located around 11 kilometers (7 miles) southwest of Pokrovsk. Ukrainian officials have said Russia is attempting a pincer movement to surround Pokrovsk

NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER

SUPPLY OF HOSIERY GOODS (UNIFORMS/PLAYING KIT)

NAME OF

GURU JAMBHESHWA

UNIVERSITY HISAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

Imran Khan's PTI rejects govt's offer to resume talks

PTI ISLAMABAD

¬he Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf The Pakistan remere more (PTI) leadership rejected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer to resume stalled talks with the government through a parliamentary panel to lower the country's political temperature. Shehbaz addressed a cabinet

meeting on Thursday and said the government was ready to form a parliamentary com-mittee to advance talks with PTI after the Imran Khanfounded party quit negotiations over the non-formation of a judicial commission to probe the events of May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024, according to Geo News.

The offer came after the PTI abruptly quit the talks after holding three meetings with the ruling parties' negotiation committee, maintaining the government failed to constitute judicial commissions within the seven-day deadline in line with its "charter of demands". Speaking on the Geo News programme Capital Talk, PTI top leader and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan said: "We reject Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer [to resume dialogue]".

Reiterating the party's demands, Ayub said the PTI

formed a negotiation committee with sincerity to hold dialogue with the government. "Our demands were clear," he said, calling for the release of PTI's all "political prisoners". In a statement, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, the government's negotiation committee spokesperson, said the PTI exhibited a non-democratic and non-political mentality by unilaterally withdrawing from

"PTI lost a good opportunity towards [fulfilment] of their demands," he added

the talks.

Although the opposition party "missed this train", they should benefit from the PM's latest offer, Siddiqui said.

Slamming the PTI for its agitational politics, the PML-N senator said that neither the opposition party achieved its objective via sit-ins and long marches in the past nor will it this time. Stressing the need for dialogue to defuse political tensions in the country, Siddiqui said the solution to every problem was serious and meaningful negotiations.

The sooner PTI understands this, the better it will be for them," he added.

The much-hyped negotiations between the government and Imran Khan's PTI hit a snag last week after the opposition walked out of negotiations following instructions from the

PUBLIC NOTICE

Kailash Nursing Home Pvt. Ltd., 49, South Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008 hereby brings to the kind attention of all concerned that it is being planned to destroy old inpatient records pertaining to the period before 31st March 2015. In case any person/patient relative thereof wants is see their treatment records, please contact Medical Records Department vithin 30 days from the date of notice.

Director Medical Services KAILASH NURSING HOME PVT. LTD. 49, South Patel Nagar, New Delhi-11008

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

CLOSING

DATE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

AMOUNT / EMD

RUPEES

WEBSITE OF THE BOARD

In The Pioneer Newspaper our publication was published on dated 31-01-2025 in Page No. 9/5 that the Objection was raised was mentioned as 7 Days Instead of 15 Days. Please read Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 15 days from the date of this public notice Borrower Name as Ashish Verma who is purchasing and Mortgaging the Plot no. 198, area measuring 98 sq. yards. i.e. 8, 19.3 sq. meters., (Two Floors Covered area 163.86 sq. ft.) out of Khasra no.511K, situated at Mohalla Nearby Shivnagari, Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg Railway Road in the village Dadri, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. with Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited.

Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. 4-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-3101683 / 4562809; e-mail: accounts@Ivnorth.in

NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT

01662-263156

dosqiust@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

client, Dr. Prateek Kumar Gupta S/o Mi

Subodh Kumar Gupta & Dr. (Mrs.) An-

eleena Kumar Gupta W/o Dr. Prateek Ku-

mar Gupta R/O Property No.C-2/5, Block

C-2, Situated at Safdariang Development

ea. New Delhi are sole & absolute ow

er/s of Property No.C-2/5, Block C-2, Sit-

uated at Safdarjang Development Area,

New Delhi. That, Original Regd. Release

Deed executed by Mr. Subodh Kumar

Gupta in the name of (1) Dr. Prateek Ku

mar Gupta (2) Dr. (Mrs.) Anjeleena Kumar

Gupta on 29/03/2016, duly Regd, as Doc-

ument No. 1642, entered in Addl. Book

No.1, Volume No.1354, on Pages 133/139

& Regd. on 29/03/2016, with the Office of

Sub-Registrar V-A, Delhi, have been lost

Burnt, Which are Chain documents of the

said property and my clients have als

Report for missing the said documents

at Crime Branch, Police Station, New

Delhi vide LR No.1617932/2019, dated

23/09/2019. The general public is hereb

informed that PNR Civil Lines Roorkee

Uttarakhand, intending to create Equita-

ole Mortgage on the above-mentioned

property. If any person(s) or Authority

having any claim against into or upon the

said property by virtue of Sale, Agree-

ment, contract, mortgage, lien, charge o

otherwise, whatsoever nature is hereby

required to notify the same within Sever

days to bank, from the date of publication

of this notice for any claim and/or object

tion, otherwise shall be considered as

waived and abandoned and shall not be

Sh. Sanjeev Gupt

Phone No.9811154597

binding upon my client.

Branch: Punjab National Bank Civil Lines, Roorkee, Uttarakhand.

EU warns Pak: Duty-free status tied to human rights progress Islamabad (PTI): The European Union on Friday tives for developing countries. However, the EU state-

warned Pakistan that its status as a duty-free exporter to the bloc will continue to depend on the progress the country makes in addressing concerns about civil and labour rights, and freedom of speech. The warning came as Olof Skoog, the EU's special representative for human rights, wrapped up a weeklong visit to Islamabad. The visit was aimed at engaging "Pakistan on the most press-ing human rights and labour rights issues and discussing Pakistan's plans to address them, including in view of the ongoing assessment under the+ trade scheme," the EU said in a statement. Pakistan's exports to Europe have doubled since 2014 when it was awarded the status of duty-free exporter under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus, or+, incen-

ment warned Pakistan that the trade benefits enjoyed by it "under+ depend on the progress made on addressing a list of issues, including on human rights, and tangible reforms remain essential." It said that the "EU welcomes the fact that Pakistan has become the largest beneficiary of+, with Pakistani businesses increasing their exports to the EU market by 108 per cent since the launch of the trade scheme in 2014." But, the statement said that "as we approach the midterm of the current monitoring cycle, we encourage Pakistan to continue on its reform path as it prepares for reapplication under the upcoming new+ regulation."The statement said that Skoog, during his meeting with Pakistani authorities, "highlighted areas of concern such as the application

of blasphemy laws, women's rights, forced marriages and conversions, enforced disappearances, freedoms of expression, religion or belief, independence of the media, impunity for rights violations, due process and the right to a fair trial, civic space, and the death penalty." Though international community and human rights groups often express their concern over increasing gov ernment curbs on media, violation of human rights, the latest development came days after Pakistan's parliament passed a bill that critics argue is designed to suppress freedom of speech. The bill, which now has become a law after President Asif Ali Zardari's approval, grants the government extensive powers to impose heavy fines and incarcerate social media users for spreading disinformation.

PUBLIC NOTICE General Public is hereby informed that my

client Sh. Suraj Bhan S/o Lt. Sh Mothania R/o 63, Main Border Road, Bakargarh, Delhi 110073, Do hereby affirm and declare that he has evicted his son Sawan Kumar S/o Suraj Bhan from all his movable and immovable properties and disowned, dis-inherited, debarred and served all relations from his son amely Sh. Sawan Kumar, anyone dealing with them be doing so at their own risk and cost and Suraj Bhan will not be liable for the same.

Advocate : Rohit Kumar Ch. No 637, WW Tis Hazari Court Delhi-54



Name of the work - Management of Power Distribution System of Paradip Port Authority. Estimated Cost: Rs.22.20.30.322/- only excluding GST. Last date & time of submission of bid: dt.19/02/2025 up to 18:00 Hrs.

Refer our Website for details https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app Sd/- Executive Engineer (E), PED-II PPA/PR/60/2024-2025 dtd.31.01.2025



LOST & FOUND

Lost F Mec International Financial Services Ltd. share certificates with Folio No. 567, Certificate No. 00011250 and 00030578, Distinctive Numbers 1174901- 1175000 and 2058701-2081300, No. of Securities 22700 in the name of Tarang Goyal. Finder may

contact: 8860027269.

PD(1362)A Lost F Mec International Financial Services Ltd. share certificates with Folio No. 566 Certificate No. 00011245 and 00030566. Distinctive Numbers 1174401-1174500 and 2033301-2058700, No. of Securities 25500 in the name of Charu Goyal. Finder may

contact: 8700346408. PD(1363)A Lost F Mec International Financial Services Ltd. share certificates with Folio No. 565, Certificate No. 00011235 and 00030577, Distinctive Numbers 1173401- 1173500 and 2008801- 2033300. No. of Securities 24600 in the name of Rajiv Kumar Goyal. Finder

may contact: 9927242937. PD(1364)A Lost F Mec International Financial Services Ltd. share certificates with Folio No. 568, Certificate No. 00011260 and 00030576, Distinctive Numbers 1175901- 1176000 and 2081301-2106300, No. of Securities 25100 in the name of Saial Kumar Goel. Finder

may contact: 9953294983. PD(1365)A

CHANGE OF NAME I, Naiman Lakra S/o- Jiwan Lakra, R/o- Vill- Kamati, PO-Tala, PS- Chanho, Dist-Ranchi, Jharkhand- 835214, declare that in my service document's my daughter's name & DOB is wrongly written as Ansheka Lakra -DOB 13/10/2018, whereas her correct name & DOB is -Anshika L**akra** 13/07/2019.

- DOB PD(1366)C in It is for general information that I, NARESH KUMAR S/o MANGE RAM, R/o H No. 458 Jat Chowk, Nangloi, Delhi -110041, do hereby declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as NARESH SHOKEEN, in my younger son's HEMANSH SHOKEEN education document and in any other document. The actual name of mine is NARESH KUMAR, which may be amended according. location in PD(1367)C It is for general information

that I, RENU W/o NARESH KUMAR, R/o H, No. 458 Jat Chowk, Nangloi, Delhi -110041, do hereby declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as RENU SHOKEEN, in my younger son's HEMANSH SHOKEEN education document and in any other document. The actual name of mine is RENU, which may be amended

PD(1368)C

L&DO for substitution of the property No. 6/50-A. Moti Nagar, New Delhi-15 in my name, on the rounds of inheritance by virtue of a Will. If there are any objections/claims from the general public on this application, the same shall be ommunicated to L&DO with supporting documents through registered post or by visiting L&DO at Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi or through an email at Ido@nic.in, within 30 days of Name: Gulshan Kumar Arora

Address: The Sri Durga CGHS, (Plot No. 6A), Flat No. 3-601, Sector-11, Dwarka, N Delhi. Phone: 9968302749

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the general public that Mrs. Neelam Verma, W/o Sh. Narayan Verma, R/o 49, Belle Meade Street, Grosse Pointe Shores, Mi 48236-1552 (USA), through her sister-in-law and General Power of Attorney (GPA) holder Mrs. Gita Johri, appointed vide GPA executed or 13th January 2025 in the USA and duly stampe by AIG Stamps, Gautam Buddha Nagar (U.P.) on 18.01.2025, has sold and is in the process of ransferring Dwelling Unit No. 108, 1st Floor ower F Amranali Princely Estate Sector-76 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P., having a super area of 1455 sq. ft. along with one covered car parking, to Mr. Manish Mathur and Mrs. Kokila Mathur, both residents of Flat No. A-507, Amrapali Princely Estate, Sector-76, Noida (U.P.) - 201301. It is further clarified that Mrs Gita Johri is only acting as the GPA holder o Mrs. Neelam Verma, and there is no Agreeme

to Sell between Mrs. Neelam Verma and Mrs. Gita Johri. Since Mrs. Neelam Verma is elderly and unable to travel to India and hence she has authorized Mrs. Gita Johri to act in capacity of her GPA holder to Transfer and sell the propert Mathur. If any person has any claim, objection or interest in the said property, they are usested to submit their objections along with documentary proof to the Group Housing Department of the Noida Authority within 30

days from the date of publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby notified or

behalf of my client Shri K.L Sabharwal s/o

Late H.R. Sabharwal resident of 702,

Woodbury Towers, Eros Garden

Charmwood Village, Sector 39,

Faridabad, Haryana that my client do hereby disown and disinherit his elder son

Shri Sudhir Sabharwal resident of L1/15-A,

DDA Flats, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019 and

younger son Shri Rajiv Sabharwal resident of Flat No.6 (S.F.S), South Park Apartment,

Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019 and their legal

heirs for their misconduct. They shall not

inherit any of the properties of my client nor

ntitled to the probate of any will of my client.

person dealing or transacting with aforesaid

LAKHSHANA OBEROL (Advocate)

F. No. D/132/2004

M.: 9968972412

Form No. INC-26

[Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014] BEFORE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NORTHERN

Il as the undersigned at the email addre janjha318@gmail.com within 15 days from the e of publication of this notice failing which such claim shall be deemed null and void, and the

le to the property shall be considered cle arketable, free from defects or encumbrances, a

PUBLIC NOTICE

s to inform the general public that As as is the absolute owner of the Fre Itural Land Measuring 1 Bigha And 4 B g Khasra No.444/2 Min, Situated In

Sharma is the absolute owner of the Freébag Agricultural Land Measuring 1 Bigha And 4 Biswas Bearing Khasra No.444/2 Min, Situated In The Revenue Estate Of Village Gadaipur, Tehsil Mehraul New Delhi. (hereinafter referred to as the "sai property"). Ownership was acquired through a Sal Deed Dated 02.08.2018, which was duly registere with the office of Sub Registrar-VADELHI, as doc no 5326. Book 1, Vol No. 2416, Page 14 to 22 o 02.08.2018, as per the Owner's BonaFride Versior the original documents for the entire built-up property including the 1. Original Regd. Sale Deed Date 02.08.2018 Executed By Shri. Vishnu Kuma Aggarwal In Favour M/S Ajuni Developrs Privat Limited, in Respect Of Agricultural Land Measuring Bigha And 4 Biswas, Bearing Khasra No.444/2 Mir Situated In The Revenue Estate Of Village Gadaipu Tehsil Mehrauli, New Delhi, Vide Registratio No.5326 In Addl. Book No.1 Volume No.2416 On Pag 14 To 22 Dated 02.08.2018, With The Office Su Registrar-Va Delhi. 2. Original Regd. Sale Dee Dated 09.08.2022 Executed By M/S Ajuni Developr Private Limited in Favour Of 1. Mrs. Rukhsan Bilgrami (2.5% Undivided Share) 2. Shri. Nazz Luqman Bilgrami (48.75% Undivided Share) And Respect Of Agricultural Land Measuring 1 Bigha An Hos Sharalis Refael (48.75% Undivided Share) And Respect Of Agricultural Land Measuring 1 Bigha An Hos Ghazultural Land Measuring 1 Bigha An Hos Hos Markan Sharalis Registration No.5592 I Addl. Book No.1 Volume No.4702, On Page 120 T 132 Dated 90.08.2022, With The Office Su Registrar-Va Delhi, as they have been lost/misplace A lost report regarding these documents has bee filled with the Delhi Police Online Portal, vide L.R. NG Respect Office Su dated 23.01.2025. the owner ha asserted that the said property is free from a encumbrances. and the owner intends to create objection regarding the said property based on the aforementioned lost documents is hereby requeste to contact the afore mentioned Chamber 231, Western Wing Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054, a Reliam Addle Sourch States of Chamber 231,

MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS, DELHI In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of subrule (5) of rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014 AND

In the matter of Intouch Trading Private **Limited** having its registered office at **95**, New Lajpat Rai Market, 1st Floor Chandni Chowk, North Delhi - 110006 Petitione

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under be entitled to any share in the moveable/ immovable properties or any other assets of my client and they shall further not be ection 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum Now my client would have no concern with of Association of the Company in terms of the his two sons Shri Sudhir Sabharwal and special resolution passed at the Extra ordinary Shri Rajiv Sabharwal in any manner. Any general meeting held on January 24, 2025 to enable the company to change its Registered ffice from "National Capital Territory doing that at his/ her/their own risks, general (NCT) of Delhi" to "State of Uttar Pradesh" Any nerson whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may delive either on the MCA-21 porta (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/he interest and grounds of opposition to the gional Director Northern Region at the address B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi 110003, within fourteen days of the date of ublication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company with a copy of the applicant ompany at its registered office at 95, New Lajpat Rai Market, 1st Floor, Chandni Chowk, North Delhi, Delhi, India 110006

INTOUCH TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED

For and on behalf of

Naveen Modi Date: 31.01.2025 Director DIN: 02245942 Place: Delhi

ENGINEERING WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION

Tender Notice No. : LMG/Engg/

10 of 2025 (Item No. 1 & 2); Dated: 23-01-2025; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; SN-1; Brief Description of Item : Emergency traffic Restoration works such as land slide, sinkage, slope failure Bank settlement during monsoor & other related works during prepost monsoon, construction 8 repairing/cleaning of catch water/ side drain & waterways & Track maintenance work at vulnerable Lumding-Chandranathpur Hill under the urisdiction of ADEN/HGS for one Tender Value ₹4.82.57.845.90/-: Earnest Money: ₹3,91,300/-; SN-2; Brief Description of Item: Emergency traffic Restoration works such as land slide, sinkage, slope failure, Bank settlement during monsoon & other related works during prepost monsoon, construction 8 repairing/cleaning of catch water/ side drain & waterways & Track maintenance work at vulnerable Lumding-Chandranathpur Hill under the jurisdiction of ADEN/III/Lumding for one year. Tender Value: ₹4,53,39,373.60/-; Earnest Money: ₹3,76,700/-; Date & time of closing of above tenders a 15:00 hrs. on 20-02-2025 and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 21-02-2025. For complete information with the tender document of above

DRM (W), Lumding NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR SALE OF RAILWAY SCRAP MATERIAL

E-Auction programme for sale of Railway Scrap materials under jurisdiction of Lumding Division, for the month of February/2025 is hereby scheduled as under

February/2025 05-02-2025, 12-02-2025, 19-02-2025, 26-02-2025 Interested bidders can participate in E-Auction programme through IREPS

Sr. Divisional Material Manager, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S SARE Gurugram Private Limite (CIN: U70109DL2006PTC152635)

Registered Office: 5th Fir, Wing A, Statesman House, 148, Barakhamba Road Connaught Place New Delhi, India 110001 Email: roc@eka-dhoot.com

ereas M/s SARE Gurugram Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing a phase known as "Arise" over an area measuring 78250,380 sq. mtr. in the Group Housing Colony situated at village Wazirpur & Mewka, Sector-92, Gurugram under License No 44 of 2009 and 68 of 2011 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and iving RERA Registration No. 270 of 2017 dated 09.10.2017

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from Yes Bank Limited to SBI Bank Limited and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank accounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram, Accordingly vide this public tice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accou

Particulars	Previous Bank Accounts	New Bank Accounts	
Bank Name	Yes Bank Limited	SBI Bank Limited	
IFSC Code	YESB0000420	SBIN0050933	
Master Collection Account No.(100%)	042072500000022	43601474764	
RERA Account No. (70%)	042072400000022	43549792854	
Promoter Free Account No. (30%)	042063400001821	43601420162	
M/s SARE Gurugram Private Limited			

Manish Mathur and Kokila Mathur Date: 29.01.2025

Place: Gurugram

PUBLIC NOTICE

(CIN: U70109DL2006PTC152635)

Registered Office: 5th FIr, Wing A, Statesman House, 148, Barakhamba Road Connaught Pla Email: roc@eka-dhoot.com

hereas M/s SARE Gurugram Private Limited (hereinafter referred as "Company") is in the process of developing a phase known as "Altura" over an area measuring 39211.42 sq. mtr. in the Group Housing Colony situated at village Wazirpur & Mewka, Sector-92, Gurugram under License No 44 of 2009 and 68 of 2011 granted by Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana and ring RERA Registration No. 262 of 2017 dated 03.10.2017.

And Whereas the Company has applied for change in Bank Account from Yes Bank Limited to SB Bank Limited and accordingly the company has obtained In-principal approval for change of bank ccounts from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram. Accordingly vide this public otice, the general public is hereby notified/informed that the following changes in bank accounts:

Particulars	Previous Bank Accounts	New Bank Accounts	
Bank Name	Yes Bank Limited	SBI Bank Limited	
IFSC Code	YESB0000420	SBIN0050933	
Master Collection Account No.(100%)	042072500000042	43599521238	
RERA Account No. (70%)	042072400000032	43549553939	
Promoter Free Account No. (30%)	042063400001891	43599555905	
Mis CARE Communication Delivate Limited			

M/s SARE Gurugram Private L

Place: Gurugram

5 Lac

20 Lac

20 Lac

50000 No's

50000 No's

50000 No's

50000 No's

50000 No's

20000 No's

verka

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD. SCO 153-155. SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66 **Notice Inviting Tender** www.verka.coop

e/Sealed tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items: Period/Tentative Qtv Sr.No. Name of Work/Item For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh
a) Trace Minerals for CFP Vitamin AD3 04 MT Vitamin E-50 b) Drilling and installation of 1 No. new tubewell at Verka Patiala Dairy For Verka Bathinda Dairy
a) 80 ML paper cone sleeve with sugar rolled 5 Lac Black current 5 Lac b) Lids for 80 ML ice cream cone. Strawberry 5 Lac Black cu

Caramel c) Ice cream cones 40 ML for ice cream d) Lids for 40 ML for ice cream cones e) 125 ML IML cups for Ice cream Cookies and Crumb Muddy Chocolate Almond Camival American Nut Afghan Dry Fruit Kaju Anjir Mango Strawberry Pink Guava Litchi Polyfilm for 60 ML bar and ice candy

e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 20-02-2025 in website http://www.ireps.gov.in

20000 No's 20000 No's 2500 kg Choco delight 1000 kg 500 kg Rabri kulfi Mango bar Cola bar 500 kg Orange bar Mango duet 1000 kg 1000 kg Black current 500 kg viii. Rajbhog 2000 kg No Added Sugar 2000 kg Job work for pest contro One year with extension b) e- Tender for hiring of vehicles for supply of Milk and Milk Products upto 1 year. c) Hiring of can route vehicles for lifting of milk from DCS to MCC capacity 1 ton to 2 01.03.2025 /46 No's Supply of indonesian Steam Coal. 1500 MT For Verka Ludhiana Dairy Hiring of vehicles (Tampoo/Trucks) for supply of Verka Products/ Ghee/SMP etc. between One year with extension Verka Ludhiana Dairy and other stations upto 1 year For Verka Faridkot Dairy Hiring of :a) Insulated road milk tanker for transportation of milk from MCC's to various milk plants Cap.10000 kg-2 Cap.15000 kg-1 in Punjab etc. on rate contract. b) Pick up or its equivalent vehicle for lifiting the milk from MPCS/DF to MCC at route 5 02 No's

the state of Punjab NOTE 1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.

For Cattle Feed Plant Ghaina-ke-Banger
Transportation of Verka Cattle Feed and mineral feed supplement to various stations in

NA/12/27843/2023/41301 Dated CHD :- 1/31/2025

c) Ice factory at sadiq (Cap.20000 ltr per day)

2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

01 No.

My client **Smt. Manju** W/o Sh. Sanjay Nagar owner of a Residential House area measuring 322.52 sq. yards, i.e. 269.66 sq. mtrs. out of Khasra no.215, Situated at Village Saini Paragana And Tehsii Dadri District Gautam Budh Nagar Through Registered Gift Deed Dated 27.01.2025 executed by Sh. Sanjay Nagar Syo Sh. Veer Singh Nagar Vide Reg. no. 4859 at SR-DADRI U.P. the above-mentioned property is project to be mortage, with End Rank Engagerial ge with Fed Banl Services Limited If any person/bank/financia institution having any claim/right, lien, Any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication registered within 1 adys holm the date of pointaction of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092; Mobile Number 9811215181 PUBLIC NOTICE मैं साधना कमारी पति श्री आश्तोष कुमार, पता- I

Tawer Flat No. 369, 16th Park View, Gaus Yanuna City, Greaters Noida, Gautar Budh Nagar, U.P.-203201, सार्वजनिक सूचन दे रही हूं कि दिनांक 30/01/25 को ये अपने रिस्तेदार श्री नीरज कमार झा Kh. No. 125/19 H.No. 3598, Gali No. 96, B-Block, Near Apex Public School, Sant Nagar, Burari Delhi-110084 के यहाँ सपरिवार आई थी। यहाँ र मेरी गाड़ी कार Hyundai Crata SxTech जिसका रजिस्टेशन न. U.P. 16EN7828 है. घर वे बाहर से चोरी हो गई है। इस बाबत मैंने FIR Burari थाने में आज दिनाँक 31/01/2025 को दर्ज करा दिया है. जिसका FIR No 003057/2025, U/S BNS 305 (b) है। Daily Diary Entry No. 10A है।

PUBLIC NOTICE

nad acquired Plot No. 148, measuring 420 sq. mts it Sector-39, Urban Estate, Gurugram, Haryana vide Sale Deed dt. 11.06.2019 executed by Mrs. Krishna Cohli and a Re-Allotment Letter dt. 26.06.2019 also ssued by USVP in faver of Mrs. issued by HSVP in favour of Mrs. Sunita Dalal, Mr. Naresh Dalal, Mrs. Raj Rani & Mrs. Anita Dalal are the undisputed owners of the said property.

OR

Any percent firm (institution (company basins and

Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howscever or otherwise is hereby in writing to the undersignet. equired to intimate in writing to the undersign vithin 07 days from the date of publication of this otice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with a supporting documents at below mentioned addres After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any of such person shall be treated null and void an also treated as waived and not binding on our clier Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate) H.No. 26/161, Basement Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi-110024 Public Notice

Public Notice
This is to inform the general public that Satish Kumar and Kant Kumar are the acquired the Property Bearing No. XVIII/436, area measuring 120 Sq. Yds., Situated at Kashmiri Bagh, Kishan Ganj Dehli. They are in possession through Will dated 09.01.2009 executed by Mrs. Kamla Devi in favour of Mr. Satish Kumar and Kant Kumar in respectof said Property. Satish Kumar and Kant Kumar intends to transfe

the ownership of said property by way of Sale Deer to Mrs. Nisha and Mrs. Shakuntla. Subsequently Mrs. Nisha and Mrs. Shakuntla are in the India Home Finance Co. Ltd.). Any objections oncerns regarding this transaction should be aised within a period of 07 days from the date of raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Personal-2013/301.

Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-

g: Entire First floor, without roof rights, (the d floor), built on Eastern portion area asuring 110 sq. yds. (the said portion), Par Property bearing No. C-93-A, total area neasuring 220 sq, yds, out of Khasra Nos 2047 & 2062, Situated in the area of Village Thar Colony Known as Harl Nagar, Block-C New Delhi.: Hereinafter referred to as "the

PUBLIC NOTICE

broperly it known to all that our clients, M/s Astute siness Solutions (hereinafter called the urchaser") intend to purchase the said floom Mr. Sumit Bhatia (hereininafter callet "Seller"). In this connection, the seller has middle the purchaser that he is the sole and solute owner of the said floor. The selle further informed the purchaser that the id floor was owned by Mr. Kamal Bhatia a r. Sumit Bhatia vide Sale Deed registered a ocument No. 7490, Book No. I, Volume No Document No. 7490, Book No. I, Volume No. 1, 8586, Page No. 126-131, on 25.03.2011, SRO-II). Mr.Kamal Bhatia expired and his half undivided share in the said floor was herited by his legal heirs viz., Mrs. Sushma Shatia, Mrs. Ekta Bhatia and Mr Sumit Bhatia, ater on, Mrs. Sushma Bhatia and Mrs. Ekta Shatia relinquished their share in the said floor n favour of Mr. Sumit Bhatia. The said Relinquishment Deed is registered as bocument No. No. 4585, Book No. I, Volume to. 2923, Page No. 190-194, on 21.02.2018. hus, Mr.Sumit Bhatia became the sole and bosolute owner of the said floor. The seller absolute owner of the said floor. The sellenas also informed the purchaser that the sai oor is not mortgaged anywhere and there

no charge or dispute or any litigation pendin regarding the said floor. egarding the said noor. Any person including Bank/s, Financia nstitution/s. relative/s having any claim, right itle or any interest of any nature whatsoeve nto or upon the aforesaid floor is hereby nto or upon the aforesaid floor is hereby alled upon to make the same known, in vriting, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the didress mentioned herein below within 07 lays of publication of this notice and in the yent of no response having been received to he notice, the title of the seller to the said floor shall be deemed to be clear of any charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our clients/Purchaser, in any manner whatsoever. SHIVKANT ARORA. Advocate SHIVKANT ARORA, Advocate

M/s Intellective Law Offices A-74, LGF,Defence Colony, New Delhi -110024

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA COMMERCE & TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT Expression of Interest (Reference No. 922 Dt. 30.01.2025)

Expression of Interest from Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) operators to operate and maintain the hangar and associated facilities for MRO services at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), Bhubaneswar (Odisha)

Government of Odisha, Commerce & Transport Department wites Expression of Interest (EOI) for Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) operators to operate and maintain the hangar and associated facilities for MRO services at Biju Patnaik Internationa

Eligible and interested Bidders may download the Expression of Interest (EOI) document which contains the details of the requirement from the following website of Commerce and Transpor Department and submit their offer,

https://ct.odisha.gov.in/tenders

The EOI should be submitted by email at ctsec.or@nic.in by 1500 hours on 17 February 2025.

OIPR-38001/11/0018/2425

Airport (BPIA), Bhubaneswar (Odisha)

Principal Secretary to Government,

Commerce & Transport Department Government of Odisha

GDP to grow at 6.3 per cent to Need to scale up infra investment 6.8 per cent: Economic Survey

 $I_{
m grow}^{
m ndia's}$ economy is likely to grow at 6.3-6.8 per cent in 2025-26 on the back of strong m a c r o e c o n o m i o fundamentals, strategic and prudent policy management will be required to navigate global headwinds, said the Economic Survey on Friday.

The GDP growth rate is estimated to slip to 4-year low of 6.4 per cent in the current financial year ending March 2025, close to its decadal

pre-Budget The document also emphasised that the country needs to grow at 8 per cent for up to two decades to become a developed nation or Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Also, to achieve this growth, the investment rate must rise to 35 per cent of GDP, up from the current 31 per cent, develop manufacturing sector further and invest in emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, and biotechnology. "The fundamentals of the domestic economy remain robust, with a strong external



account, calibrated fiscal consolidation and stable private consumption. On these balance considerations, we expect that the growth in FY26 would be between 6.3 and 6.8 per cent," said the survey authored by a team lead by Chief Economic Advisor Anantha

Nageswaran. Navigating global headwinds will require strategic and prudent policy management and reinforcing the domestic fundamentals, it added.

The survey noted that a steady growth trajectory shapes the global economic outlook for 2024, though regional patterns vary. The near-term global growth

is expected to be a shade lower than the trend level. The services sector continues to drive global expansion, with notable resilience in

Meanwhile, manufacturing is struggling in Europe, where structural weaknesses persist. Trade outlook also remains clouded in the next year, the survey added.

It further said inflationary pressures have been easing globally, though risks of synchronised price pressures

geopolitical disruptions, such as tensions in the Middle East and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

"In brief, there are many domestic investment, output growth and disinflation in FY26. There are equally strong, prominently extraneous downsides too," it said.

To realise the aspirations of Viksit Bharat by 2047, the survey stressed that it is important that the mediumterm growth outlook of India be assessed in the context of emerging global realities of Geo-Economic Fragmentation manufacturing Chinese prowess, and global dependency on China for energy transition efforts. It also puts forth a way

forward to reinvigorate the internal engines and domestic levers of growth by focusing on one central element of systemic deregulation, which will enable a paradigm of economic freedom businesses of individuals and organisations to pursue legitimate economic activity

Investment in **⊥**infrastructure sector needs to be continuously scaled up over the next two decades to sustain a high growth rate while the government needs to come up with ways to private increase sector financing and tap new avenues to mobilise resources, the Economic Survey said on

"India needs a continued step-up of infrastructure investment over the next two decades to sustain a high rate of growth," said the Economic Survey 2024-25 tabled in Parliament.

In the first quarter of FY25, the constraints on new approvals and spending during the general elections, coupled with heavy monsoon in many regions, affected the progress of the infrastructure spending, said the latest survey.

However, the speed of capex picked up between July and November last year.

The capex in infrastructure sectors is likely to gain further momentum in the remaining months of the current fiscal On an average, ministries related to infrastructure sectors utilised 60 per cent of the budgeted capex during April to November 2024. The capacity addition

physical connectivity sectors stayed on course during

The capital expenditure of the Centre for the current fiscal has been budgeted at about 3.3 times the capex for FY20, the document said.

It further said that disasterresilient urbanisation, public transport, preservation and upkeep of heritage sites, monuments and tourist destinations, as well as rural public infrastructure, including connectivity, call for greater attention.

"Our net zero commitments entail added stress on creating renewable energy capacities, it added.

Stating that there are binding budget constraints to the different tiers of government, said private participation should speed up in many

critical infrastructure sectors in many ways like programme project planning, financing, construction, maintenance, monetisation

and impact assessment.

infrastructure programme supports a variety of PPP models like buildoperate-transfer (toll and annuity), design-buildfinance-operate-transfer, hybrid annuity model and toll-operate-transfer," it said. The government instituted has many

debottlenecking and facilitatory mechanisms like the National Infrastructure Pipeline, National Monetisation Pipeline and PM-Gati Sakti that have made progress.

Financial market regulators have introduced reforms to participation, it said, adding that still the uptake of private enterprise is limited in many core sectors.

The strategy to step up private participation coordinated action of all stakeholders involved like governments at different tiers, financial market players, project management experts

and planners, and the private

"Capacities to conceptualise projects, develop sector-specific innovative strategies for execution, and, develop high-expertise areas such as risk and revenue sharing, contract management, resolution and project closure need to improve substantially," it said. The efforts of the Centre need to be supplemented with wholehearted acceptance of the need for public-private partnerships in infrastructure across the country.

The survey further said that during the current fiscal so far, the progress in the expansion of the railway network stayed at levels comparable to the previous year, while the addition of rolling stock increased considerably. Between April and October last year, 17 new pairs of Vande Bharat trains were introduced to the network, and 228 coaches were produced.

Lack of climate finance may prompt developing countries to rework their climate targets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The lack of financial support I from developed countries to mitigate climate change in the Global South may prompt developing countries to "rework" their climate targets, Chief Economic India's Advisor Anantha Nageswaran has said. In the Economic Survey 2024-

25 tabled in Parliament on Friday, Nageswaran said the new financial package agreed at the 2024 UN climate (COP29) conference Azerbaijan to support climate action in the developing world "presents little optimism". Countries are now required to

submit their Nationally Determined Contributions or climate plans for the period between 2031 and 2035 by February 10 and Nageswaran said the "funding shortfall may lead to a reworking of the climate targets".

According to the United Nations Framework Change (UNFCCC), adopted 1992, high-income industrialised nations, which historically been responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, are required to provide finance, technology and capacity building support to developing and low-income economies to help them cope with a

warming world. These countries include the United States, the UK, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and European Union member states such as Germany and



France. The chief economic advisor said that domestic resources will be the key to climate action amid the lack of developed support from countries.

resources for Therefore, meeting development challenges may be affected, undermining progress toward sustainable development objectives and "compromising the integrity of international climate partnerships", he said. Nageswaran said the small mobilisation target of USD 300 billion annually by 2035 is just requirement of USD 5.1-6.8 trillion by 2030.

The new climate finance package is "out of sync" with the needs of the critical decade when action is required to keep the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement within reach, Nageswaran said.

underscores unwillingness of affluent developed nations to assume their equitable share of the responsibility to address reduction and emission climate change mitigate vulnerable impacts on populations in developing

regions, he said.

With the developed countries also falling short of their NDCs by about 38 per cent, Nageswaran said their actions do not reflect the historical responsibility or the leadership in meeting their obligations. In 2015, countries came

together to limit global warming to "well below 2 degrees Celsius", aiming for 1.5 degrees Celsius. Fast forward, the world has

already heated up by 1.3 degrees Celsius since the preindustrial era, largely due to

To limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the UN's climate science body, IPCC, says emissions must peak by 2025 and drop 43 per cent by 2030 and 57 per cent by 2035. But current policies point to a hotter future -- around 3 degrees Celsius warming by 2100. Even if every country fulfils its climate promises or NDCs, emissions would only shrink by a weak 5.9 per cent by 2030. Developed nations, the biggest historical polluters, are pushing developing countries to do more to meet the Paris Agreement goals.

Market correction in 2025: Economic Survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sounding a note of caution on the elevated stock market valuation, the Economic Survey on Friday said any correction in the US markets could have a cascading effect in India, which has witnessed increased participation from young investors post-Covid. Over the past few years, retail participation, especially from investors, significantly increased in the equity markets. Investor participation has grown from 4.9 crore in FY20 to 13.2 crore

as of December 31, 2024. Elevated valuations and optimistic market sentiments in the US raise the likelihood of a meaningful market correction in 2025. Should such a correction occur, it could have a cascading effect on India, especially given the increased participation of young, relatively new retail investors.

"Many of these investors that pandemic have witnessed a significant and prolonged market correction. Hence, if one were to occur, its impact on sentiment and spending may be non-trivial," the Survey noted.

According to the survey, the rise in retail participation aligns with a steady decline in the five-year rolling beta between the Nifty 50 and the S&P 500 in the last four years, suggesting reduced sensitivity of Indian markets to US market movements.

This decoupling is further evidenced by the increasing

Eco Survey pitches for policy shift to cut

cereal output, boost pulses, edible oils



resilience of Indian markets during periods of FPI (Foreign Portfolio Investors) outflows. For instance, in October 2024, despite FPI outflows of USD 11 billion, the Nifty 50 index was corrected by only 6.2 per cent, thanks to strong downside support provided by domestic institutional and individual investors.

In contrast, during the March 2020 pandemic-driven market sell-off, FPI outflows of USD 8 billion triggered a steep 23 per cent market decline. "Even as the resilience

demonstrated by the Indian

market, supported by growing participation, promising, the risks associated with a potential US market overlooked, given historical trends," the Economic Survey 2024-25 said.

Historical data suggests that the Indian equity market has been notably sensitive to movements in the US market. The Nifty 50 has historically shown a strong correlation with the S&P 500, with analysis of daily index returns between 2000 and 2024, revealing that in 22 instances when the S&P 500 corrected by more than 10 per cent, the Nifty 50 posted a negative return in all but one case, averaging a 10.7 per cent

New strategic trade roadmap needed to enhance export

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Survey on Friday called for a new strategic trade roadmap for India, along with measures to cut trade costs and enhance export competitiveness amid growing protectionism globally.

It said that much remains to be done to enhance trade competitiveness

'Global trade dynamics have changed significantly in recent years, shifting from globalisation to rising trade protectionism, accompanied by increased uncertainty. This calls for a new strategic trade roadmap for India," the survey said. It added that to remain

competitive and enhance its participation in global supply chains, India must continue reducing trade costs and improving facilitation to boost export competitiveness. "The good news is that doing its part, the industry must continue to invest in quality, it said adding the country's external sector continued to resilience amidst display global headwinds economic and trade policy uncertainties.

It emphasised the need to assess the global situation and develop a forward-looking strategic trade roadmap to deal with the evolving global trade dynamics, marked by gradual shifts towards greater protectionism.

strengthen competitiveness and further



integrate into global supply chains, the country can focus on reducing trade-related costs and enhancing export facilitation to create a more vibrant export sector. This proactive approach will help India continue to thrive in an ever-changing global market," the survey said.

As per estimates, India's share of global trade was over 2 per cent in 2023.

During the April-December period of this fiscal year, exports recorded a growth of billion and imports by 5.15 per cent to USD 532.48 billion. Trade deficit -- the difference

between imports and exports -- during April-December widened to USD 210.77 billion from USD 189.74 billion during the same period of the previous fiscal vear.

It noted that disruptions in global trade due to the Red Sea crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war and the recent drought in the Panama Canal, allied with protectionist increased tendencies shown by many

countries, have uncertainties. The number of non-tariff

measures in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and natural resources, that restrict international trade have also increased over the last few years. The Economic Survey 2024-

25 was tabled in the Parliament Finance Minister Sitharaman.

On the steps being taken to increase exports, it said, India negotiating a number of free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries and trading blocks. India is actively working towards negotiating trade deals with top importers such as the EU and the UK.

Services exports from India too have shown a multisectoral presence in global exports, with notable contributions across several sectors.

The country's share in global services exports has more than doubled, reaching around 4.3 per cent in 2023 from 1.9 per cent in 2005.

Kerala has replicable model for localisation of SDG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ocalisation of Sustainable Localisation (SDGs) ensures that rural development is in harmony with international goals, the Economic Survey released on Friday said, lauding Kerala for having a robust, communitybased model that leverages its strong local governance institutions, and called it a "replicable model".

"The localisation of SDGs ensures that development is in harmony with international goals, focusing on essential services like housing, sanitation, water supply, and electrification. strategy promotes growth and inclusive enhances the quality of life at the grassroots level," the Economic Survey said.

Kerala uses a "robust, community-based model that leverages its strong local governance institutions", the survey said.

"Awareness and community engagement efforts focus on educating local officials on the relevance of poverty alleviation and environmental resilience, which are led by

state and national leaders," it said, adding that it is a replicable model for SDG localisation.

The report said Local Self Government Department, with technical support from the Kerala Institute for Local Administration (KILA), have developed comprehensive guidelines and processes to incorporate SDGs into local planning. They also train stakeholders in SDG-aligned development and data collection.

The state has a real-time SDG dashboard to monitor the panchayats and is able to use such localised data for decision-making and to provide insights on development indicators, the Survey highlighted. SDG Coordination Centres

(SDGCCs), which drive localisation efforts in states and UTs by governments in partnership implementing agencies, are currently operational in 10 states/UTs -- Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Nagaland, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh,

and Uttarakhand.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The pre-budget document for the 2024-25 fiscal has suggested policy reforms to discourage overproduction of cereals while boosting output of pulses and edible oils. which the country currently imports to meet domestic shortages.

The Economic Survey 2024-25, tabled in Parliament on Friday, stressed that India's agriculture sector has "significant untapped growth potential" despite various growth initiatives. Farmers must be allowed to

receive unimpeded price signals from the market, with separate mechanisms to protect vulnerable households, it added. The document outlined three

key policy shifts needed establishing market mechanisms for price risk hedging, preventing excessive fertiliser use, and discouraging production of water and power-intensive crops that are already in surplus. "These policy shifts will help

lift agricultural productivity

land and labour productivity in the sector," the survey said. Stating that India faces a persistent deficit in the production of pulses and oilseeds, the document said

in the economy by boosting

the slower growth rate of oilseeds at 1.9 per cent raises concerns, especially considering India's heavy reliance on imports to satisfy domestic edible oil demands. To address this, the document suggested focused research to develop climate-resilient crop varieties, enhancing yield and reducing crop damage. Efforts to expand the area under pulses in rice-fallow regions are likely to help.

It also called for the promotion of extension activities and training for farmers on the best practices, the use of high-yield and disease-resistant targeted varieties, and interventions to improve agricultural practices in the major growing regions for pulses and oilseeds.

It stressed the judicious use of fertilisers considering soil degradation, particularly the decline in organic carbon content, poses a significant challenge to Indian agriculture.

The agriculture sector growth

averaged 5 per cent annually during FY17-FY23, showing resilience despite challenges. In Q2 FY25, the sector grew 3.5 per cent, recovering from growth rates of 0.4-2.0 per cent in the previous four quarters. sector contributes

approximately 16 per cent to GDP and supports about 46.1 per cent of the population, as FY24 provisional estimates at current prices. The document stated that a crucial factor influencing agricultural performance is the impact of weather conditions.

"Climate variability can present significant challenges; however, farmers with diverse income streams are better positioned to navigate these uncertainties," it said. Allied activities like animal

husbandry, fisheries or agroforestry, can enable the farmers to mitigate the risks effectively. The document emphasised

the growing importance of allied sectors like animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries for diversification.

INBRIEF

ICICI OFFERED JOBS TO 13 GNDU MBA STUDENTS

AMRITSAR: Under the able leadership of Vice Chancellor Dr Karamjeet Singh, Directorate of Placement & Career Enhancement of Guru Nanak Dev University organised Campus Placement drive by ICICI Prudential

Life Insurance company for MBA - Batch 2025 students of GNDU Amritsar. A team of 2 senior members visited Guru Nanak Dev University to conduct the interviews of MBA students. The company selected 13 students at a pay package of Rs. 4.50 Lakhs per annum. These students will join their jobs after passing out their respective courses in June 2025.

WORKSHOP ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS HELD IN GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY

AMRITSAR: A workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Technology Transfer was organised by Intellectual Property Rights Cell and office of Dean Student's Welfare in which Dr Amaresh Panda, a seasoned Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Professional from the Government of India participated as speaker.



SPECIAL LECTURE ON DIGITAL ARREST AND CYBER CRIMES

AMRITSAR: Senior Advocate Sh.Sandeep Gorsi, (Supreme Court of India, Punjab and Haryana High Court) delivered a special lecture on "DIGITAL ARREST AND CYBER CRIMES" organised by the Department of Laws, Guru Nanak Dev University on the current and relevant topic of immense value.

NEW DELHI | SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 1, 2025 the pioneer

vivacity 11



hen art and cinema meet, they don't just coexist, they create a vibrant and immersive experience that

connects with audiences on a deep emotional level. The Bond to Bachchan exhibition, presented by Masha Art and curated by Georgina Maddox, is an exemplary showcase of this powerful union. Featuring 21 works by 15 artists, the exhibition explores the profound cultural impact of two cinematic legends, James Bond and Amitabh Bachchan.

The exhibition is a tribute to the enduring influence of these cinematic icons. It celebrates how Bond and Bachchan not only shaped the landscape of global pop culture but also continue to inspire artists, going beyond generations and inspiring fresh perspectives in modern-day art.

The exhibition, which serves as a preview to Masha Art's upcoming India



Art Fair showcase, features a captivating collection of paintings, sculptures and digital installations. Each artwork Probes into the personas and cinematic journeys of Bond and Bachchan, offering viewers a fresh and creative lens through which they can reimagine these iconic figures. Samarth Mathur, Founder and Managing Director of Masha Art, explains that the exhibition is a monumental celebration of cinema's enduring influence on contemporary art. Each piece is a unique interpretation of the legacy of these figures, reflecting not just their roles on screen but also their emotional depth and the larger-than-life

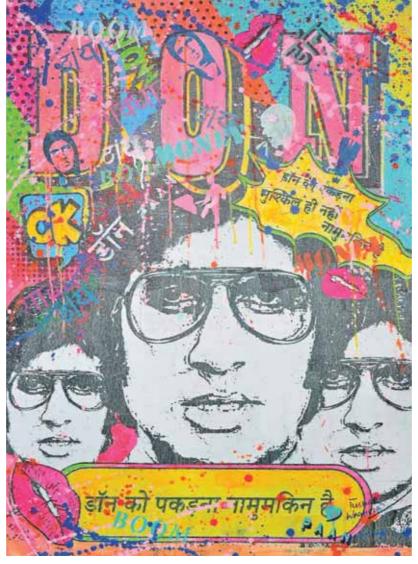
One of the standout pieces of the exhibition is Golden Era in Cinema by Shri Kumar Adhikari. This stunning work merges Mughal miniature painting with the golden age of Indian cinema, particularly the 1960s and 1970s. Featuring iconic scenes from films like Sholay and Mera Naam Joker, the piece is a nostalgic tribute to Indian film history. Adhikari's signature technique, which incorporates intricate Mughal detailing, is brought to life with contemporary touches using acrylics, giving the piece a

personas they have cultivated over

fresh, modern twist. Ankur Rana's Smoke Up Bolly is another compelling painting featured in the exhibition. This piece is a tribute to the iconic Bollywood actress Zeenat Aman, widely regarded as one of the most powerful and enigmatic figures in the Indian film industry. Rana's artwork captures Zeenat Aman in all her glory, combining softness with boldness. The rising smoke in the painting symbolises the duality of her persona, embodying her magnetic presence and mysterious allure. Rana's depiction of Aman is a fitting homage to her legacy, highlighting her unique contribution to the world of



Art and cinema connect deeply as Bond to Bachchan by Masha Art celebrates Bollywood's enduring legacy, SAKSHI PRIYA





cinema and fashion during the 1970s and 1980s. The fluidity of the smoke creates a visual link between the stark contrasts in her on-screen roles, from the femme fatale to the heartthrob.

Another thought-provoking piece in the exhibition is *Bridging Realms* by *Shovin Bhattacharjee*. This mixed media sculpture incorporates stainless steel, fibre, light, acrylic and aluminium that represents the confluence of art, cinema and spirituality. Bhattacharjee explores the power of cinema to outdoes cultural boundaries and act as a unifying force. The spherical shape of the sculpture symbolises the intersection of multiple worlds, representing the smooth connection between the entertainment industry and the transformative power of storytelling. The piece also honours the resilience of individual voices and celebrates the roles of women in cinema, particularly within the context of the Bond and Bachchan legacies. Bhattacharjee's work adds a layer of depth to the exhibition, drawing attention to how art, cinema and meditation all serve as vehicles for personal and societal change.

This exhibition truly remarkable is how deeply it engages viewers. People aren't just walking past the art, they are stopping, reflecting and appreciating each piece with immense care and attention. Some viewers stand in front of particular works for several minutes, lost in the intricate details and rich symbolism. The works are so powerful that they almost seem to leap off the canvas, evoking emotions that mirror the feelings one experiences while watching a film. The connection between art and cinema becomes almost tangible, as each piece encapsulates a moment from cinematic history, inviting viewers to reflect on how these moments have influenced their own lives.



The collection of artworks immerses the viewer in a conversation between art and cinema, offering fresh perspectives on iconic figures from Indian cinema. The artists' creative interpretations challenge traditional boundaries, making the exhibition a dynamic exploration of how cinema continues to inspire the visual

In addition to the paintings and sculptures, Bond to Bachchan includes digital installations that merge visual storytelling with cutting-edge technology. These installations add another dimension to the exhibition, encouraging visitors to think critically about the role of technology in both cinema and contemporary art. The combination of traditional and digital mediums creates a layered experience, one that deepens our understanding of both art forms.

Bond to Bachchan a tribute to two cinematic icons and a celebration of the power of storytelling.Bond to Bachchan is an exhibition that should not be missed. It is a fascinating exploration of cinema's cultural impact and its enduring influence on contemporary art, offering fresh and thought-provoking perspective on two of the world's most iconic cinematic figures.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Moulding Ideas into

By SAKSHI PRIYA

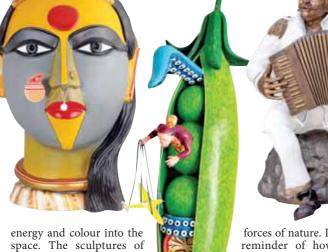
rt has a way of saying things that words sometimes can't, it touches something deep inside, beaking directly to our emotions and thoughts. Each piece tells a story and those stories invite us to connect, whether it's a feeling, a memory or a thought that stays with us long after we've walked away.

Saffronart presents Alchemies of Form, a showcase of monumental sculptures by Krishen Khanna, Himmat Shah, Thota Vaikuntam, Dhananjay Singh, Phaneendra Nath Chaturvedi and Yashika Sugandh, curated by Uma Nair. The exhibit transforms Bikaner House into a space where the sculptures don't just energy and colour into the sit still, they engage with you, making you pause and reflect.

Krishen Khanna's Retired Captain is an invitation to look closer. Crafted with resinated fibreglass and automotive paint, this piece gives life to a retired accordion player, frozen in a moment that feels both personal and intimate. It's not just a sculpture, it's a story, one you want to hear.

Himmat Shah's work offers a different Dhananjay Singh's Jungle kind of invitation. The calm, serene forms of Rajnagar white marble and Bheslana black marble are an exploration in stillness. They invite quiet reflection, drawing the viewer in complex and full of life. It with their delicate simplicity, revealing the power of subtlety in art. Thota Vaikuntam's pieces bring bold form and the unpredictable

women from Telangana radiate strength and With their beauty. colours and vibrant powerful postures, they pull you into their world, culture that they represent. takes on the wild, untamed beauty of nature. The stainless steel wire feels fragile, yet



urging you to appreciate the richness of identity and draws a direct connection between human-made

forces of nature. It's a visual reminder of how chaotic and beautiful life can be. Phaneendra Nath Chaturvedi's Chaturayatan-3 captures the essence of change. Made of highgloss stainless steel, it reflects everything around it, shifting as the viewer moves. It's a commentary transformation and

perception, nothing stays the same and the world constantly reshapes itself. Yashika Sugandh's Matar offers a moment of calm

amidst the dynamic energy

of the other pieces. Crafted

from acrylic on fibre resin

and nylon, it evokes a sense of softness and tranquillity. The gentle curves and subtle colours encourage you to pause, breathe and reflect, showing how even the quietest moments can leave a lasting impression. These monumental sculptures do more than just fill space. They tell stories, provoke thoughts and challenge how we see the world around us. Each piece carries its own rhythm and message, pulling

us into a conversation between the artist and the viewer. Alchemies of Form is a chance to engage with art in a way that feels immediate, visceral and real.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Dhamar composition, set to

Rupak tala, added a lively

pulse to the performance. With Pandit Durjay Bhaumik

on tabla, the exchange

between melody and rhythm was deeply engaging. The evening ended with Raga

Chakrabarty's musical roots,

bringing a sense of warmth

As the final notes faded, there

Gara,

and nostalgia.

tribute

to







ld Painted in Blue

That is it about the colour blue that captivates the imagination? From serene skies to vast oceans, blue has long been associated with peace, hope and endless possibilities. This evocative colour takes centre stage at Harvest 2024, presented by Payal Kapoor of Arushi Arts, under the theme Blue Horizons.

The exhibition offers visitors a chance to explore art inspired by the symbolism of blue across cultures and history. Blue has held a significant place in human civilisation, cherished in Indian art and far-eastern traditions and revered in Western masterpieces. Artists like Monet, Van Gogh and Picasso have embraced its depth to convey emotions and ideas and this exhibition continues that legacy.

The artworks on display evoke tranquillity while stirring deep emotions. K.G. Subramanyan's pieces, with their playful narratives, draw viewers into a world of vivid storytelling. Shobha Broota's minimalist approach creates a meditative experience, while Satish Gupta's works are admired for their intricate details and spiritual undertones. Lado Bai's vibrant depictions of tribal life and traditions stand out, bridging the gap between



cultural heritage and contemporary expression.

Each artist interprets blue in a way that feels both personal and universally relatable. The layers of textures, interplay of light and shadow and central use of blue create a visual narrative that inspires introspection and connection. The exhibition showcases a variety of perspectives, celebrating art's ability to unite history, emotion and creativity.

This thoughtfully curated showcase of talent is a must-visit for art lovers and anyone looking to experience the magic of blue. Held at W-23, GK-II, New Delhi, the exhibition is open daily from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM. This showcase of creativity and talent remains open until 10th February 2024.







By TEAM VIVA

usic lovers gathered for a special evening Las the Raga Fellowship Foundation brought together two maestros. An evening with sitarist Abhik Mukherjee and sarod player Arnab Chakrabarty proved just that. Their performance celebrated tradition, devotion, and the timeless beauty of Indian classical music.

Mukherjee began with a 50-minute mesmerising 50-minute rendition of *Raga Puriya*, playing through the pain of an injured finger. His alaap was rich with emotion, each note carefully placed, making the raga feel fresh and deeply



personal. His jod and jhala the music. Ustad Rafiuddin sections carried a quiet Sabri's tabla accompaniment intensity, and his adaptation of provided a steady yet dynamic rhythm, adding depth to khayal compositions from the Agra gharana into sitar gats Mukherjee's melodies. brought a new dimension to Chakrabarty followed with

Raga Hameer, playing with a grace that felt both effortless profound. His alaap unfolded gently, drawing listeners into the raga's mood. The rhythmic flow of his

was a moment of silence before the applause began, reflecting the depth of the experience. For those in attendance, it was a night of pure musical joy, a reminder of the enduring power of to move hearts and bring people together.

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.co

Manchester United, Tottenham reach Europa League round of 16

PTI ■ LONDON

anchester United and Tottenham put their inconsistent domestic campaigns aside and advanced to the Europa League round of 16.

Diogo Dalot tapped in a

precise cross by Kobbie Mainoo on the hour mark and Mainoo netted eight minutes later for a 2-0 victory over Romanian champion FCSB in Bucharest on Thursday.

Tottenham got goals from academy graduates to beat Swedish club Elfsborg 3-0 in London. Spurs waited until the 70th minute for substitute Dane Scarlett to break the deadlock before adding two more through substitute Damola Ajayi and 17-year-old Mikey Moore.

Of the 36 teams in the revamped competition, the top eight go directly to the round of 16 in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the two-legged knockout

playoffs on Feb. 13 and Feb. 20 with the winners making the last 16.

The draw is scheduled for Friday.

United, which is 12th in the Premier League, competed the league phase of the second-tier European competition in third place and undefeated with five wins and three draws, trailing the top by one point. "Kobbie (Mainoo) played very well in that position, with more freedom and not so much responsibility running back all the time," United manager Ruben Amorim told TNT Sports. "The lads did a good job, poether clean sheet"

another clean sheet."
Amorim's squad has shown signs of improvement since he said the team was "the worst, maybe, in the history of Manchester United."

Thursday's victory was the third straight in one week after beating Rangers in the Europa League a week ago and Fulham in the Premier



League three days later.

Tottenham is languishing in 15th place in the Premier League. Its seven-match winless run in the league is its worst since 2008. But it won five, drew two and lost one for the fourth place in the Europa League.

Lazio, the only team that

qualified to the round of 16 with a game to spare, was handed its first defeat, 1-0, away at Braga. Still, the Portuguese team was eliminated.

Lazio still topped the standings with 19th points, the same as the second Athletic Bilbao.

Athletic Bilbao.
Bilbao secured the second place after a 3-1 home win over 10-man Viktoria Plzen, which has a playoff spot.
Frankfurt completed the league phase in fifth despite a 2-0 loss at Roma. Angeliño and Eldor Shomurodov lifted Roma with the goals at Stadio Olimpico.

Stadio Olimpico. Lyon was sixth despite being

held 1-1 at home by

Olympiacos in seventh after routing Qarabag 3-0.

Rangers squeezed in to complete the top eight by beating Union Saint-Gilloise

José Mourinho's Fenerbahce avoided an embarrassing early exit with a 2-2 away Denmark's Midtjylland. The result sent both into the playoffs. The hosts were 20th while Midtjylland took 24th, giving Mourinho a chance to to his European trophies.

Ajax ended a three-game losing streak by handing Galatasaray its first defeat, 2-1 with both teams making the playoffs.

the playoffs.

Hoffenheim's 4-3 away win at Anderlecht was not enough for the Bundesliga team to advance. The Belgian club finished 10th.

Real Sociedad, FCSB, Porto, AZ Alkmaar, Twente and PAOK are among other teams that advanced



Lyon confirms Paulo Fonseca as its new coach

PTI ■ LYON

Lyon has confirmed the hiring of Paulo Fonseca as its new coach.

Fonseca is replacing Pierre Sage, who was fired despite leading the French league club out of a crisis last season and having the team within reach of a Champions League place in this campaign. Sage's dismissal on Tuesday

followed a 1-1 draw with Nantes in Ligue 1 last weekend and left many observers perplexed. Sage had rapidly become a fans' favorite after guiding Lyon from the sixth-place finish last season. The Associated Press reported earlier this week that Lyon had sealed a deal with Fonseca. Fonseca's first match in charge

will be against Marseille in the French league on Sunday, Lyon said.

Fonseca won the Portuguese Supercup with Porto in 2013 and the Portuguese Cup with Braga in 2016. He also coached Shakhtar Donetsk, where he won three leaguecup doubles (2017, 2018, 2019) and the Ukrainian Supercup in 2017.

Paulo Fonseca then coached AS Roma between 2019 and 2021 before joining Lille in June 2022, where he built one of the best attacking and efficient sides in France despite operating on a limited budget. More recently, he was less successful at AC Milan,

producing only 12 wins in 24 across competitions

Fonseca had been out of a job since he was fired by AC Milan on Dec. 30.

After 19 matches this season, Lyon is sixth in the league – just four points off a Champions League spot — and has qualified for the knockout stage of the Europa League. Lyon, however, said the decision to part ways with Sage was a "sporting choice" after the Frenchman averaged fewer points per game this season and struggled against big rivals.

businessman John Textor, who visited the club in person this week. He had been in regular contact with Fonseca in recent years and previously tried to hire him. Fonseca joins on a deal until the end of June 2027

Lyon believes that Fonseca will be able to add defensive stability to the team and make it more competitive against the top four Ligue 1 teams. The club's ambition is to qualify for the Champions League on a regular basis and to challenge Paris Saint-Germain's supremacy.

"Paulo Fonseca and his staff will be tasked with starting a new cycle and taking the club to the highest level in the second half of the season, with the ultimate goal of qualifying for next season's Champions League," Lyon said.

Only Santos can give me the love I need: Neymar

PTI ■ SAO PAULO

Neymar has confirmed he will sign what is expected to be a short-term contract with his boyhood club, Santos, as the Brazil striker aims to recharge his career ahead of the 2026 World Cup. The 32-year-old Neymar said on Thursday that he's on Thursday that he's returning to the Sao Paulo club, and local media reported that the deal will extend only to June 30.

"Only Santos can give me the love that I need to prepare for

"Only Santos can give me the love that I need to prepare for the challenges I have in the next few years. All of you, no matter who you support, know well what I am talking about," Neymar said on his social media channels.

"I hope you all follow me in this new phase of my life."

this new phase of my life." Santos used its social media channels to respond Neymar's video: "Your home awaits. Your people awaits." Neymar left Santos nearly 12

years ago to join Barcelona. The striker's return follows the termination of his contract with Saudi Arabian club Al-Hilal. Neymar had returned in October from an



ACL injury sustained while playing for Brazil only months after he joined Al-Hilal. He played only seven matches and scored once for the Saudi team.

Neymar also left Paris Saint-Germain under criticism from fans, who accused him of not caring enough about his fitness. In 2017, his exit at Barcelona was also frustrating for club supporters, who hoped he could help Lionel Messi and Luis Suárez win more trophies.

A Santos official told The Associated Press that Neymar is expected to arrive at Sao Paulo's international airport at 9 am on Friday. He will then board a helicopter to go to the club's Vila Belmiro Stadium. After he signs his will contract, reintroduced to fans during the evening.

official spoke on

condition of anonymity due to lack of authorisation to discuss the matter publicly. Neymar has already played 225 matches with Santos. He scored 138 goals for the club, many of which key for the six titles he won at the Brazilian giant, which was relegated in 2023 and returned to the

Neymar became the most expensive player in soccer

country's top division last

history when he transferred from Barcelona to PSG for 222 million euros (then USD 262 million) in 2017.

262 million) in 2017.

Neymar's most recent match was played in November. Al-Hilal coach Jorge Jesus had repeatedly cast doubts about the striker's form to play.

Neymar left the Saudi Arabian league after playing just seven games in 17 months following his bigmoney move to the oil-rich kingdom. The Brazilian's contract was due to expire after this year's FIFA Club World Cup, which will be played between June 15 and

played between June 15 and July 13 in the United States. The striker joined the Saudi club from PSG in August 2023 for 90 million euros (USD 94 million). His salary was reportedly one of the biggest in world soccer as

Neymar, Brazil's all-time top goalscorer with 79 goals in 125 matches, also said he is focused on getting more playing time so he can prepare for the World Cup in North America next year in what could be his last shot at

replacement for Marsh in

'The deadline for the final

squads for the ICC men's

The 33-year-old Marsh has

been roped in by Lucknow Super Giants ahead of the

2025 edition of the IPL,

which will start on March 23.

of Beau Webster for the final

Trophy

due course

CA said.

innings.

Yet to play two white games out of meet Jorden van Foreest of Holland in the penultimate round and then finally an out of sorts Arjun Erigaisi. Abdusattorov Both

Champion's Trophy is prior to Wednesday 12 February," black games left which makes Gukesh a huge favourite to win his maiden title here. It may be recalled that the Indian had lost in tiebreaker to Wei Yi last year after tying for the top spot. Not only a victory here, what is also at stake for Gukesh is the 2800 rating barrier and he will be the third Indian to achieve it after Viswanathan Anand and Ariun if he can. He is at 2794

PTI WIJK AAN ZEE

On top of the table with a slender lead, world champion D Gukesh will take on Wei Yi of China in the 11th round of Tata Steel Chess Tournament, aiming to continue his unbeaten streak and claim the season's first

With five victories and five draws, Gukesh has remained unbeaten in the first major tournament of the year and if he adds another 1.5 points in the last three rounds, it should be enough to lift the title. With 7.5 points, Gukesh is in

pole position, half a point ahead of Nodirbek ahead of Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and a full point more than compatriot \hat{R} Praggnanadhaa.

Praggnanandhaa have two points in live ratings. Praggnanandhaa will meet

pre-event rating favourite Fabiano Caruana of United States while Abdusattorov has to tackle the solid defenses of Vincent Keymer of Germany in the other key clashes of the

It has been tough for the remaining three Indians in the

11th round.

Masters section as Harikrishna has scored 4.5 points while Arjun and Leon Luke Mendonca are at the bottom of the table with three points each. These three will have to work hard in the remaining rounds to finish better in the final standings.

In the challengers section, R Vaishali is on five points out of a possible 10 and has shown brilliance in patches.

Divya Deshmukh is on two points and needs a pullback. This section is led by Czech Grandmaster Nguyen Thai Dai Van on 7.5 points with Erwin L'Ami of Holland in close pursuit a half point behind.

Pairings round 11

Masters: Jorden van Foreest 3); D Gukesh (Ind, 7.5) vs Wei Yi (Chn, 5.5); Fabiano Caruana 5.5) (Usa, Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 6.5); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4) vs Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 7); Anish Giri (Ned, 5)) vs Max Warmerdam (Ned, 3.5); Alexey Sarana (Srb, 5) vs P Harikrishna (Ind, 4.5); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6) vs Leon Luke Mendonca (Ind, 3). Challengers: Oro Faustino (Arg, 2.5) vs Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb, 5); Lu Miaoyi (Chn, 5.5) vs Erwin L'Ami (Ned, 7); Nogerbek Kazybek (Kaz, 5.5) vs Ediz Gurel (Tur,

5.5); R Vaishali (Ind, 5) vs

Aydin Suleymanli (Aze, 6.5);

Svane Fredrik (Ger, 6) vs

Nguyen Thai Dai Vam (Cze,

7.5); Irina Bulmaga (Rom, 1) vs

Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 2);

Benjamin Bok (Ned, 6.5) vs

Arthur Pijpers (Ned, 4.5).

Mitchell Marsh out of Champions Trophy **PTI** ■ SYDNEY return to play plan. The NSP

ustralia all-rounder Australia Marsh has been month's ruled of next month's Champions Trophy and is also in doubt for the Indian Premier League after that owing to lower back pain that responded "not sufficiently to rehabilitation". Cricket Australia informed about Marsh's injury in a statement ruling him out of the Champions Trophy, which will be held in Pakistan and Dubai from February 19 to March 9. A few other reports suggest Marsh is also doubtful for the

'Mitchell Marsh has been ruled out of the upcoming ICC men's Champion's Trophy with ongoing lower back pain and dysfunction," CA said in a release. "The National Selection

out of the tournament with the injury which has not responded sufficiently to rehabilitation." "His lower back pain flared in recent weeks leading the NSP to make the longer term

decision for Marsh to

complete a more extended

period of rehabilitation," it

Panel and Australian men's

medical team ruled Marsh

added. CA said the national selection panel will be meeting soon to name a replacement of Marsh, who was picked in the 15-member Hardie, Aaron Maxwell and Marcus Stoinis. "Marsh will now undergo a period of further rest and

rehabilitation as part of his

Marsh was dropped in favour Test of the five-match Border-Gavaskar which concluded earlier this Glenn

month. He had an ordinary run in side for the competition the four Tests. The right-arm alongside other all-rounders medium pacer did not share medium pacer did not share much workload with the front-line bowlers and managed to score in double digits only once in seven

BCCI Award: Bumrah chosen for Best International Cricketer

subsequently for the Indian team for the last two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Kotian will be awarded with the Best Performance in BCCI Domestic

Tournaments trophy. The 26-year-old, who rose to limelight with all-round also grabbed 29 wickets.

Having won the Ranji Trophy for a record-extending 42nd time in the season, Mumbai also claimed the Irani Cup after a gap of 27 years. Mumbai The

winning various titles such as Ranji Trophy, U-16 Vijay Merchant Trophy, U-14 West Zone Championship, senior women's T20 Trophy, women's U-19 One Day Trophy, Bapuna Cup T20 Tournament and men's U-19 All India Tournament. Mumbai teams also finished

as runner-up in Cooch Behar U-19 Trophy and Vinoo Mankad U-19 Trophy. Akshay Totre from Indore was adjudged the Best Umpire in Domestic Cricket

for the season. Legendary batter Sachin Tendulkar has been chosen

Tournaments Trophy for

PTI MUMBAI

Talismanic pacer Jasprit Bumrah was chosen for the BCCI's Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer 2023-24 in men's category while elegant batter Smriti Mandhana was picked for the corresponding women's trophy in the Board's annual honours that will be presented here on Saturday

Bumrah, who was selected as the ICC Test and overall Cricketer of the Year for delivering a "a master-class in skill, precision, and relentless consistency", was India's standout bowler last year, playing a pivotal role in Îndia's home wins over

England and Bangladesh. The 31-year-old was also the Player of the Series against Australia in the Border-

Gavaskar Trophy, bagging 32 wickets across five Tests. Mandhana, who was the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year, made 743 runs in the 2024 calendar year.

She scored four ODI centuries, a record in the women's game, and found the boundary more than a hundred times in the year, hitting 95 fours and six maximums.

The 28-year-old cricketer's ODI runs came at an average of 57.86 and an impressive strike rate of 95.15.

Ashwin, who retired from Test in February 2024.

international cricket December 2024 as India's second highest wicket-taker in Tests with 537 dismissals and overall eighth highest, has been bestowed with a special award at the end of his career.

The 37-year-old Ashwin, who made his Test debut in November 2011, played a defining role in India's 12year domination in the longest format at home wherein they won 18 series on the trot.

Among newcomers, Mumbai batter Sarfaraz Khan was for picked the International Debut among men for his quick-fire fifty Spin great Ravichandran against England in the Rajkot



The middle-order mainstay also hit a counter-attacking 150 against New Zealand in Bengaluru Test to continue his ascent.

Among women, Sobhana has been chosen for the award International Debut as she picked up 4/21 against South

highest run-scorer in 2024, smacking 747 runs at 57.46 in 13 matches with four tons and one fifty. Similarly, Deepti Sharma was

Africa to help India win by 143 runs in their first ODI at

Mandhana will also be

honoured with the Highest

Run Getter in ODIs medal

after she finished as the

Bengaluru in June 2024.

awarded with the Highest Wickets in ODIs medal for taking 24 wickets in 13 matches. Tanush Kotian continued to

make waves with his rise through the ranks in Mumbai in the 2023-24 season, which culminated with his maiden call-ups for the India A side for their tour of Australia and

performances in Mumbai's 42nd Ranji Trophy win in 2023-24, scored 502 runs in 10 matches at 41.83 with one century and five fifties and

Association would be given the Best Performance in

for Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award.

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