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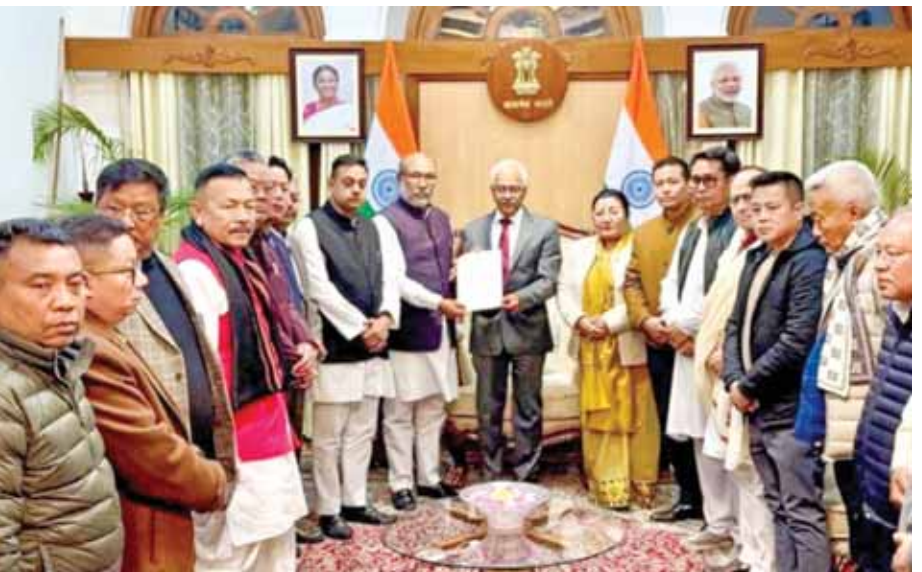
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MANIPUR UNDER PRESIDENT RULE



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

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

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

imposed in Manipur after Home Minister Amit Shah clearly failed to manage state, a task entrusted by Prime Minister. BJP, allies got majority in Manipur in 2022, but their politics led to 'colossal tragedy' 15 months later," the Congress said in a statement. The decision to impose the Central rule was taken after the governor sent a report to President Droupadi Murmu. "After considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of that state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India," the notification said. **Continued on page 2**

New I-Tax bill to be simpler

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

which is half the size of the 1961 Income Tax Act, seeks to achieve tax certainty by minimising the scope of litigation and fresh interpretation, said the Income Tax Department, after tabling of the new bill. The new bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha, has a word count of 2.6 lakh, lower than 5.12 lakh in the I-T Act. The number of sections is 536, as against 819 effective sections in the existing law. The number of chapters has also been halved to 23 from 47, according to the FAQ issued by the I-T department. The Income Tax Bill 2025, has 57 tables, compared to 18 in the existing Act and removed 1,200 provisos and 900 explanations. Provisions relating to exemptions, and TDS/TCS have been made crisper in the bill by putting them in a tabular format. **Continued on page 2**

Modi, Gabbard talk counter-terrorism

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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



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

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

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

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Prime Minister



Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister, Odisha

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WAQF BILL REPORT SPARKS PROTESTS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The report of the joint committee of Parliament on the Waqf bill was tabled in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha amid uproar on Thursday, with the proceedings briefly adjourned following a heated debate between the treasury and the Opposition benches. In Rajya Sabha the Opposition MPs led by Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that dissent notes were deleted from the report. Later in Lok Sabha Home Minister Amit Shah asserting the BJP has no objection to the Opposition's dissent notes being included without redaction, and asked the Speaker decide according to procedures. When panel chairman Jagdambika Pal rose to table the report, Opposition members shouted slogans, which were countered by thumping of benches by the Treasury side. The Opposition members then staged a walkout, raising slogans against Pal. Amid noisy protests by the Opposition, Shah said, "Some opposition members have

objected to their dissent notes not annexed fully. I wish to request you on behalf of my party that whatever their objections you can attach the same to the report as per parliamentary practice as you feel appropriate". "My party has no objection to it," he added. The Joint Committee of Parliament (JPC) on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill adopted the report on the draft legislation by a 15-11 majority vote. Earlier, reacting to Mallikarjun Kharge's charges, at a press conference in Parliament House complex, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that certain portions which amounted to casting aspersions on the panel itself were redacted. "Some of the points which amount to casting aspersion on the committee itself have been removed. The chairman of the committee has powers to do so," he said, asserting, "Everything has been done as per rules," he said. Later redacted portions were also submitted to Rajya Sabha. The report on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill was tabled in Rajya Sabha by BJP member Medha Vishram Kulkarni, a



Members protest in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Thursday. PTI

member of the panel. The tabling of the report was followed by uproar by members from the Opposition benches. The clamour continued as Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar tried to read out a message from President Droupadi Murmu. "Don't show disrespect to the President of India..."

Dhankhar said and urged Kharge to ask the Opposition members to take their seats. As the uproar continued, the Upper House was adjourned till 11:20 am. When the Upper House reconvened, the chairman read out the message from the president that she had received

the expression of thanks by members of the Rajya Sabha on her address to a joint sitting of Parliament on January 31. When the chairman tried to proceed with the Zero Hour, Opposition members continued to protest and some MPs trooped into the well of the House.

Leader of the House JP Nadda regretted that the Rajya Sabha was not in order when the president's message was read out. Chairman Dhankhar said Samirul Islam, Nadimul Haque and M Mohamed Abdulla "created chaos and disruption in the House". Kharge was then called to speak. The Congress chief said dissent notes from the Opposition MPs to the Waqf bill were redacted from the report. "The report of the joint committee of Parliament on Waqf... in which several members had given their dissent note has been taken out. Bulldozing the report by only keeping the views of the majority members is not right. It is condemnable, anti-democratic," he said. Calling it a "fake report", he said it should be withdrawn and sent back to a committee. The MPs are protesting not for personal reasons but because of the injustice being done to a community, he said. "This is not about any individual... These MPs are not protesting for their own sake, they are protesting for the community against which injustice is being done," Kharge

said. DMK's Tiruchi Siva and AAP's Sanjay Singh also objected to the alleged removal of dissent notes from the report. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Rijiju, however, denied the charge. "There is no deletion or removal of any part of the report. Don't mislead the House. Opposition members (are) making unnecessary issues. The allegation is false," he said. Union ministers Bhupender Yadav and Nirmala Sitharaman also accused the opposition parties of misleading the Upper House, prompting another heated exchange between the treasury and the opposition benches. The Congress' Syed Nasir Hussain accused Rijiju -- who is also the Union Minority Affairs Minister -- of misleading the House and said, "My own dissent note has been redacted." TMC member Saket Gokhale said it was not a "religious" but a "Constitutional issue". Rijiju reiterated that the report had all annexures and nothing was taken out. The opposition MPs then staged a walkout and the House proceeded with the Question Hour.

PMLA misused like dowry law: SC J and K LG Sinha orders tough action against terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

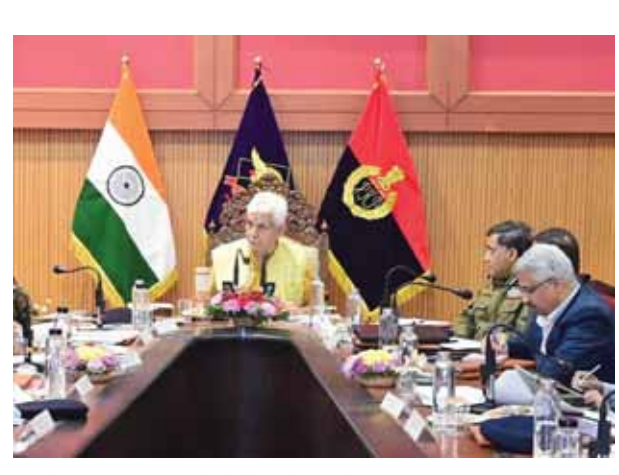
The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the ED for using the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to keep an accused in jail and questioned if the provision was "being misused" like the dowry law. A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan made the observation on Wednesday while granting bail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



"What kind of signals are we giving? Order taking cognisance is quashed and the person is in custody," the top court bench said. The top court was hearing an appeal of Tripathi, an Indian Telecom Services officer, challenging a Chhattisgarh High Court order denying him bail in connection with the high-profile liquor scam in the state. Tripathi, who served on deputation as Special Secretary and managing director of the Chhattisgarh State Marketing Corporation Limited, was arrested after an ED investigation. The ED initiated the probe based on a predicate offence registered by the economic offences wing, Raipur, under multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act. The federal agency alleged a criminal syndicate comprising senior government officials, private individuals, and political executives manipulated the state's excise policies to extort illegal earnings from the liquor trade.

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the wake of an uptick in the incidents of terrorist-related violence, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday directed the security personnel to wipe out terrorism in the Jammu region and complete dismantling of the infrastructure and local support of terrorism. Chairing a high-level security review meeting here in Jammu, a day after holding a similar review of the prevailing security scenario in the Kashmir Valley, the Lieutenant Governor also directed the security personnel to be prepared for conventional as well as non-conventional threats. Referring to the recent incidents of targeted attacks on the jawans of the Indian army along the line of control, the Lieutenant Governor directed them to take stronger measures to protect the borders. "We must strengthen border security against asymmetric threats due to porous borders



with riverine and difficult mountain ranges and all the security agencies must work together to provide necessary back-up support," the Lieutenant Governor observed. Last week, Union Home Minister Amit Shah while chairing a security review meeting in New Delhi directed the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to ensure that "there are no gaps in area domination," with a special focus on the hills in the Jammu region. The Union Home Minister also directed the Border Security Force (BSF) to ensure "zero infiltration" from the international borders by adopting strong vigilance and strengthening the border grid using advanced technologies for surveillance. Meanwhile, the Indian Army on Thursday clarified that the ceasefire on the Line of Control is intact and continues to be observed as per the understanding between both armies. The statement was issued in

the backdrop of recent incidents of cross-LoC firing and a suspected IED blast in the Akhnoor sector in which a young captain of the Indian army along with another soldier sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The Indian army also maintained that these incidents are being dealt with through the established mechanism. "No exchange of fire of heavy-caliber weapons has taken place along the LoC. Minor incidents are not unprecedented along the Line of Control". Concerns have been raised to the Pak Army at the appropriate level, the statement added. During the security review meeting, the DGP J&K Nalim Prabhat and IGP Jammu BhimSen Tuti briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the future action plan and the proposed measures to tackle the security challenges to ensure a safe and secure environment for the common citizen. During the meeting, the IGP Railways also gave a detailed presentation on the security

architecture of railways, and the roadmap put in place to strengthen the security of stations and the tracks, ahead of the launch of the rail services to Kashmir Valley. The Lieutenant Governor also discussed a roadmap for technology driven policing, area domination plan, inter-agency coordination, action against narco-terrorism, capacity building of police force and innovative strategies to improve cyber patrolling and monitoring capabilities. He laid stress on credible intelligence gathering, sharing of real-time operational intelligence, and anti-terror operations based on precise inputs. "Every perpetrator and supporter of terrorism must pay the price. We need to equip ourselves with credible intelligence and act more effectively to neutralise the terrorists and ensure the security of citizens. We must be prepared for conventional as well as non-conventional threats," the Lieutenant Governor added.

Manipur Under President rule New I-Tax bill to be simpler

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It further said: "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by article 356 of the Constitution, and of all other powers enabling me in that behalf, I hereby proclaim that I - assume to myself as President of India all functions of the government of the state of Manipur and all powers vested in or exercisable by the Governor of the that state". The notification said powers of the legislature of the state shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament. It also said any reference in the Constitution to the governor shall, in relation to Manipur be construed as a reference to the President. The decision to impose the President's rule by the BJP-led Centre came as the party failed to have a consensus chief ministerial candidate despite having several rounds of discussions between party's northeast in-charge Sambit Patra and party legislators. Patra had met Bhalla a few times before Thursday's decision by the central government that comes at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in the US. The governor has already declared the seventh session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly, which was set to

commence on February 10, as null and void. Singh's resignation came amidst dwindling support among BJP MLAs, many of whom have met party leaders in Delhi to convey their unhappiness with his continuation and had expressed the hope that his stepping down will help boost the central government's efforts to broker peace between the two main ethnic communities in the state. Meanwhile, the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF) said President's rule will give a ray of hope to the Kuki-Zo community. "The Kuki-Zo do not trust Meiteis anymore, so a new Meitei chief minister is still far from comforting. President's Rule will give a ray of hope to the Kuki-Zo, and we believe that it will be one step closer to our political solution," ITLF leader Ginza Vualzong said. The last session of the Assembly in the north eastern State concluded on August 12, 2024. Singh's tenure as chief minister was marked by a number of controversies, primarily centered on his handling of ethnic violence, allegations of instigating conflict, and questions regarding his governance. Singh, who started as a footballer and then became a journalist before entering politics, served as the chief minister for two terms - 2017 and 2022. He represents

the Heingang Assembly constituency in Imphal East district. In 2022, he managed to win the approval of his party to get a second term as chief minister. The journey since then has been not without hiccups. One of the most significant controversies of Singh's tenure was the ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023, that finally cost him the key post. The ethnic strife, which saw brutal clashes between the majority Meitei community in the Imphal Valley and the Kuki-Zo tribal groups in the surrounding hills, resulted in over 250 deaths and displaced thousands of people. The state's inability to contain it raised serious concerns about Singh's leadership. Singh's response to the violence, however, included a public apology in December 2023, where he expressed regret for the deaths and displacement caused by the unrest. He called for reconciliation, urging the various communities to forgive past mistakes and work toward rebuilding a peaceful Manipur. In February, a new controversy erupted when audio tapes allegedly featuring Singh were leaked, in which he was purportedly heard discussing how the ethnic violence was instigated with his approval.

From page 1

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

"no major policy-related changes" or tax rates changes have been made in the I-T bill, "material" changes are being proposed in the existing law. The bill consolidated the provisions pertaining to salary at one place for ease of understanding so that the taxpayer does not have to refer to separate chapters for filing return of income. Deductions, like gratuity, leave encashment, commutation of pension, compensation on VRS and retirement compensation, are now part of the salary chapter itself. "The drafting style of the new bill is straightforward and clear, making the provisions easier to understand... This (Tables) minimises cross-references and conflict by aggregating all applicable provisions related to a single scenario in one place," the FAQ said. A significant aspect of the

bill is the elimination of the concepts of "previous year" and "assessment year". As a taxpayer had to track two different periods, it presented difficulties in complying with the provisions of the Act, especially for a new taxpayer who had to keep track of "previous year", "assessment year" as well as the "financial year", the FAQ said. It said provisions involving the same issues, which were present in different chapters in the current Act, have now been consolidated. In case of provisions relating to non-profit organisations (NPOs), it has been consolidated and structured into seven sub-parts. The FAQ further said the current Income Tax Act was enacted in 1961 and came into existence with effect from April 1, 1962. It has been amended nearly 65 times with more than 4,000

amendments. Concerns were expressed over the accumulation of amendments, intricate language, detailed provisions, redundancies and the heavy structure of the I-T Act and hence the government decided to come out with a new law. Consultations were held with various stakeholders, including Australia and the UK where tax laws were rewritten in the past. A total of 20,976 online suggestions were received. Also, references were drawn from the 2009 Direct Taxes Code as also the 2019 report of the government constituted six-member committee to redraft the I-T law. The FAQ said 150 officials of the I-T department were involved in drafting of the Income Tax Bill, 2025, and more than 60,000 man hours were dedicated in its drafting.

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

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

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

beeline for the gate, while one particularly panicked guest decided that jumping off the first floor was a better idea-unfortunately, he ended up with injuries. "I could not believe my eyes. One moment we were enjoying the wedding, and the next, we were running for our lives," said Rajesh Verma, a family friend of the groom. Meanwhile, the bride and groom, proving their teamwork skills early in their marriage, sprinted to their car and locked themselves inside. On the other hand, the leopard, confused by the flashing lights and the screaming people, darted around the venue, looking for an escape. Forest officials and police arrived after an urgent SOS and began what turned into a five-hour game of hide-and-seek with the big cat. To locate the leopard, the



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



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

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

SC grants bail to Azam Khan, son

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has granted bail to former Uttar Pradesh minister Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam Khan, who had challenged an order of the Allahabad High Court denying them bail in a machine theft case. The criminal case was registered in 2022 against Khan, his son and five others alleging that they had stolen the road-cleaning machine, which was purchased by the Nagar Palika Parishad, Rampur district. It was further alleged that this machine was later recovered from Khan's Jauhar University of Rampur.

MCD presents ₹17,002.67 Crore budget for FY 2025-26

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday presented a ₹17,002.67 crore budget for the financial year 2025-26, 1.91 percent increase from the previous year's estimate of ₹16684.02 crore. Of them, ₹4,907.11 crore have been allocated for sanitation. In the special budget meeting, MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar presented the budget allocations, outlining key allocations for various sectors. Kumar estimated an income of ₹16,701 crore and an expenditure of ₹17,002 crore. Additionally, ₹2,894 crore (17.02%) will be allotted for public works and street lighting under the engineering department, up from ₹2,694 crore this year. According to the proposal, the education sector has been allocated ₹1,693.73 crore, while ₹1,833.51 crore has been earmarked for healthcare. The horticulture department has been allotted ₹393.26 crore, reflecting efforts to enhance green spaces and urban landscaping. In waste management, the MCD plans to establish waste-to-energy plants in Narela-Bawana (3,600 TPD) and Ghazipur (3,000 TPD), along with bio-CNG plants in Okhla, Ghogha Dairy, and Ghazipur to

process 750 metric tons of waste daily. The special budget meeting also announced that work is underway to set up bi-methanisation plants with a capacity of 200 metric tons per day, expected to be completed by March 2025. The education department has been allocated ₹1,693.73 crore, with initiatives such as the procurement of 12,234 desks for MCD schools, the launch of the 'Gyanodaya' YouTube channel, and enhanced sports facilities with a ₹3 crore budget, the commissioner said during the budget meeting. Among the key allocations, ₹37 crore has been earmarked for the transformation of Rawta and Daurala into model villages. Major infrastructure projects include the expansion of Kishanganj R.U.B. for ₹48.77 crore, construction at Karkardooma for ₹116 crore, and a new hospital in Lajpat Nagar. The environmental sector will see waste-to-energy plants at Narela-Bawana and Ghazipur, each with a capacity of over 3,000 tonnes per day. Additionally, 308 EV charging stations have been installed, with 262 more planned. Under the Green Delhi Action Plan, the Horticulture Department has planted 181,475 trees. On



Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Commissioner Ashwani Kumar presents the Budget for 2025-26 during the special Budget meeting



PTI

the education front, 12,234 desks are being procured for MCD schools, and ₹3 crore has been allocated for stadiums. Sharing details of revenue sources, the budget document stated that of the ₹1 revenue, 29 paise comes from transfer duty; 23 paise from property tax; 14 paise from others including auctions, fees, fines etc; 12 paise from electricity tax; 10 paise from toll and three paise from

conversion charges. MCD has also inaugurated parking facilities at key locations, including Gandhi Maidan and Lajpat Nagar. According to budget document, the work on the Sultanpuri railway crossing is being carried out at a cost of ₹64.38 crore. The expansion work of Kishanganj R.U.B. is being carried out at a cost of ₹48.77 crore. In Karkardooma, a building

construction project is underway at a cost of approximately ₹116 crore. Currently, about 90% of the work has been completed. The construction work of Lajpat Nagar Colony Hospital has been completed. Under D.V.D.B., approval has been given for 8 projects worth ₹7.76 crore, which will be completed in this financial year. Presenting the budget, Kumar

said Rawta and Daurala village in Najafgarh have been declared model villages, and ₹37 crore has been sanctioned for their development. Under the D.V.D.P. project, 34 works are in progress at a cost of ₹70 crore. Under the Delhi Gramoday Abhiyan, DDA has approved 474 works for the MCD with an estimated cost of around ₹522 crore. Out of these, 74 works have been completed, and 208

works are in progress. At least 36 locations have been identified for E.C.T.S. construction for waste disposal. Construction work is in progress at 10 locations. The strengthening of the Taimur Nagar drain for storm water drainage is being carried out at a cost of ₹3.38 crore. The outfall drain construction on Mehrauli-Badarpur Road will be undertaken at a cost of ₹11.90 crore. MCD has so far installed rooftop solar power plants with a capacity of 13.25 MW on 573 municipal buildings. A total of 23,341 new LED lights have been installed at dark spots so far. Under Public-Private Partnership (PPP), 200 TPD plants are being set up in Nangli Sakrawati and Goyla Dairy, with an estimated cost of ₹25 crore per plant. The construction of an automated parking facility with a capacity of 136 cars at Hauz Khas Plot and 246 cars at Central Market, Lajpat Nagar, has been completed. Parking facilities have been dedicated to the public at various locations: 56 cars in Adchini Village, 81 in Amar Colony (Lajpat Nagar), 86 near Nizamuddin Basti, 2,338 at Gandhi Maidan (Chandni Chowk), 174 at

Qutub Road, and 96 at Nigam Bodh Ghat. Under the MP Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), approval has been received for 27 works worth approximately ₹3.5 crore, and the works are in progress. The budget document stated that by January 2025, ₹1,908.06 crore in property tax revenue has been collected out of the ₹4,300 crore target for FY 2024-25. By December 2024, the corporation has received ₹2,653 crore in property transfer duty. By January 31, 2025, geo-tagging of 161,458 properties has been completed. Geo-tagging of total 4,84,484 properties have been completed till date. The budget document stated that from April to December 2024, a total of 97,994 stray dogs have undergone animal birth control and anti-rabies vaccination. "Revenue of approximately ₹13.45 crore has been generated from April to December 2024, which is ₹2.24 crore higher than the previous year. Around 111 illegal dairies have been removed, and Challans issued to 745 illegal dairy owners," it said. By January 2025, 32,418 general trade/storage licenses were issued, generating Rs. 84.16 crore in revenue.

AAP's Saurabh Bharadwaj releases berozgar netaji series

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Minister and senior AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj released the first episode of Berozgar Netaji, on Thursday. The video released on YouTube, headlines a one-of-a-kind series that offers an unfiltered, first-person narrative of the trials, emotions, and deep introspection following his unexpected electoral defeat on February eight. The AAP has started a YouTube channel after his loss in the recent elections. The first episode not only captures the shock and dismay of a seasoned politician like him but also delves into the broader implications of unemployment in an industry where every minute counts. In his inaugural episode, Bharadwaj recounts the fateful day at the counting center—that redefined his political career. "Until February 8, the idea of defeat never even crossed my mind. All our preparations, media interactions, and public engagements had led us to believe in a decisive victory," he explains. However, as the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were opened and numbers were tallied across 12 machines, he observed a subtle yet unsettling discrepancy. "During the first round of counting, I realized that my lead wasn't as robust as it should have been. By the second round, the reality of a tight contest became undeniable," he states. The gradual realization that the election was slipping away was compounded by the visible emotional strain on his counting agents, many of whom were overwhelmed with tears. Choosing to shield himself from further distress, he maintained his distance as he awaited the final verdict. Bharadwaj's narrative goes beyond mere numbers and also sheds light on the human cost of a professional

setback. His recounting reveals the profound emotional toll of defeat—not just on himself, but on everyone who had placed their hope in him. "The first thought that struck me as I left the counting center was the fear of facing my daughter. For a young girl, a father is her hero, and the idea that her hero had just lost was almost unbearable," he shares. In a poignant moment, he recalls his daughter's silent resilience: despite the news, she simply hugged him and said, "Papa, I love you." In the aftermath of the results announcement, Bharadwaj faced mixed reactions. While a few disparaging chants emerged from rival supporters, his commitment to gratitude and resilience prevailed. Determined to listen to his supporters, the former Minister organized a meeting on the following Sunday. What he describes as one of the most emotionally charged gatherings of his career, the meeting brought together a cross-section of his supporters—from impassioned youth to tearful elderly citizens. Berozgar Netaji also addresses a rarely discussed but critical issue: the future of full-time politicians after an electoral defeat. The YouTube channel 'Berozgar Netaji' will have daily discussions on different topics, allowing people to interact with Bharadwaj. Viewers will be able to send in their questions and suggestions, making it an open space for political discussions. According to Bharadwaj, he is now 'unemployed' and wants to share how a politician's life changes after losing an election. Bharadwaj, who holds a B.Tech in Computer Science and a law degree, candidly admits that he never prepared for the possibility of loss.

BJP scours for perfect venue for Delhi swearing-in ceremony

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP has started searching for a suitable venue to hold a swearing-in ceremony of its new government in Delhi and considering JLN stadium and Ramleela Maidan as possible options, with more than 200 MPs and former MPs of the party and NDA allies participating in it, it was learnt here on Thursday. Chief Ministers and deputy chief ministers of NDA-ruled states will also attend the ceremony. Besides, several celebrities are also expected to attend the event. Sources denied that there will be no deputy chief minister post in the BJP government in Delhi. There can be a cabinet of seven ministers including the Chief Minister. "A grand ceremony is on the cards to celebrate this highly cherished victory. We have discussed some venues in our meetings, but a final venue is yet to be pinpointed," said a senior Delhi BJP leader. However, some leaders said that the plans of



Photo: File photo

the oath-taking ceremony were in initial phases only and the national leadership will decide whether it will be grand or a simple affair to showcase the party's focus on serving people. The names of Ramleela Ground as well as Jawahar Lal Nehru (JLN)

stadium with large seating capacity were among the options which have been deliberated, but no final venue is shortlisted so far, he clarified. After over 26 years, the BJP will form a government in the national capital, ending the 10 year-rule of Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP, winning 48 of the 70 Delhi Assembly seats in the February 5 polls. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was reduced to 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank for the third time. The process of government formation in Delhi is expected to speed up after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from his foreign visit this weekend. The date for the first meeting of the BJP legislature party is likely to be held on February 16-17 to elect the new Leader of House in the Assembly who would also be the next chief minister of Delhi, party leaders said. It is expected that the chief ministers of all the BJP-ruled

states, Union ministers and a whole lot of people, including leaders of different parties, people from different walks of life, will be invited to attend the BJP government's swearing-in, they said. The party is also abuzz with the names of the contenders for the post of chief minister and other members of the new Council of Ministers in Delhi. Besides, two MLAs will also be appointed in the posts of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip, Deputy Whip, Delhi Jal Board, Women's Commission, Delhi Development Authority. Information about vacant posts and appointments of the board has been sought from the Delhi Secretariat. The term of the current Delhi Assembly will conclude on February 26 and the new government must take charge by then.

Delhi Government proposes one-month deadline to reclaim impounded vehicles

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

If your vehicle has been impounded by traffic police and you have not got it released within 37 days, authorities may auction it, with the Delhi government coming up with draft amendments in its parking management rules, a move that is aimed at addressing space crunch. The transport department has proposed bringing down existing 90 day-period to one month for the owner of impounded vehicle to get it released, an official said on Thursday. In a recent draft notification for amendment of rules, the department has sought objections and suggestions of stakeholders over the proposed Delhi Maintenance and Management of Parking (Amendment) Rules, 2024. The draft amendment along with the feedback of people will be taken into consideration by the Delhi government in one month



Photo: File photo

period from date of publication of the draft notification, the official said. In the Delhi Maintenance and Management of Parking Rules, 2019, Section 16 provides for 90 days time period for getting an impounded vehicle released within 90 days. If not, a 15 day-notice is served and if the vehicle is still not released by its owner, the impounding agency puts it to public auction. The draft amends 90 days time period to 30 days and the notice period is further shortened to seven days.

In case, the impounded or towed away vehicle is a registered vehicle and is not released by its owner within a period of 30 days, a notice of seven days will be served to the registered owner. If such vehicles are still not released, the impounding agency will put it to public auction, the amended rules said. In case of the unregistered or deregistered vehicles, the time period for getting such vehicles released will be 10 days after which a notice of seven days will be served on the owner. Such vehicles will be put to public auction if still not released. The transport department officials said there are three pits for keeping towed away, impounded vehicles for various violations. On an average, 50-60 impounded vehicles reach the pits every day and parking space is overcrowded. The proposed amendment in rules will help free limited parking space for such vehicles, they said.

Delhi HC raps DU for unilaterally asking St Stephen's college to exceed sanctioned seats



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday pulled up the Delhi University for "unilaterally" asking St Stephen's College to admit students over and above the sanctioned seats and said it would compromise the quality of education. A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela told the counsel for DU, "If you are asking the college to do so, you are diluting the education. You are compromising the quality of education. Will that be in the interest of students?" "Prima facie, the university cannot unilaterally ask any college to take admissions over and above the sanctioned seats and said it would compromise the quality of education. The bench however said, "You are a central university and you need to have some statutory backing or resolution of the academic council or executive council." It went on, "You cannot go only by practice. Every act of a statutory body has to be backed by laws, circulars or resolutions." The court posted the hearing on February 20. The single judge granted the relief to the seven students, saying the candidates were not at fault but had to face undue hardship due to an ongoing dispute between the institution and the university. The students sought a direction to the college to provide them seats for the courses for which they have qualified. They had sought admission under the "single girl child quota" fixed by the DU. According to the university's bulletin for admission information, one seat in each programme in every college is reserved under the "supernumerary quota for a single girl child". The college opposed the DU's stand that it was obliged to admit all candidates who were allotted seats through the university's common seat allocation system and it couldn't admit students beyond the sanctioned limit.

the DU counsel to show the statute or resolution relating to the original seat allocation and asked if the university could unilaterally increase the seat allocation. The counsel placed certain documents and said it was a practice followed by the university. The bench however said, "You are a central university and you need to have some statutory backing or resolution of the academic council or executive council." It went on, "You cannot go only by practice. Every act of a statutory body has to be backed by laws, circulars or resolutions." The court posted the hearing on February 20. The single judge granted the relief to the seven students, saying the candidates were not at fault but had to face undue hardship due to an ongoing dispute between the institution and the university. The students sought a direction to the college to provide them seats for the courses for which they have qualified. They had sought admission under the "single girl child quota" fixed by the DU. According to the university's bulletin for admission information, one seat in each programme in every college is reserved under the "supernumerary quota for a single girl child". The college opposed the DU's stand that it was obliged to admit all candidates who were allotted seats through the university's common seat allocation system and it couldn't admit students beyond the sanctioned limit.

Delhi court grants AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan protection from arrest till February 24

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Rouse Avenue court on Thursday granted protection from arrest till February 24 to AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan for allegedly attacking a police team in Jamia Nagar in the national capital on February 10 and said that allegation did not "seem to carry weight". Special judge Jitendra Singh ordered Khan to join the police's probe in the case whenever directed by the investigating officer. The direction came on the anticipatory bail plea filed by Khan in the case. The court directed police to bring all the documents aside from any CCTV footage related to incident before the court on



AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan arrives at a police station, in New Delhi

PTI

February 24. The court directed police to bring all the documents aside from any CCTV footage related to incident before the court on

team in Jamia Nagar on Monday, alleging that the mob led by Khan helped a proclaimed offender, Shahwej Khan, an accused in an attempt-to-murder case, escape from custody. The judge, however, observed, "The allegation of the police team that the applicant was instrumental in facilitating the escape of Shahwej does not seem to carry weight as he (Shahwej) was already on anticipatory bail by an order passed in July 2018 in the case in which allegedly police had gone to arrest him." The court went on, "Applicant has made out a case for interim protection till the next date of hearing. In the meanwhile, the applicant is directed to join the investigation as and when

required by the Investigating Officer." The court further directed the probe officer to procure and produce the CCTV footage of the place of incident to determine the nature and gravity of the allegations. "No coercive steps be taken against the applicant Amanatullah Khan till the next date of hearing," it added. According to the FIR, during the arrest of Shahwej at around 3 pm on February 10, Amanatullah, along with 20 to 25 persons reached the spot and obstructed the police to discharge its official duty resulting in a scuffle. Amanatullah, police said, aside from his associates took away Shahwej from the scene of crime.

Government to keep inflation in check: Finance Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The minister also highlighted that the government steered the economy very well during the Covid crisis, and the country emerged as the fifth largest major economy in the world. She also recalled that after the global financial crisis of 2008, India was termed as among the "fragile five" economies.

The minister also rebutted opposition parties' assertions that income tax incentives would only benefit rich people. She said income tax liability of the middle will significantly come down. The House was adjourned for a recess and will meet again on March 10 to continue the Budget session.

RS Chair asserts Parliament's jurisdiction on HC judge removal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

Members of several opposition parties had moved the notice in Rajya Sabha on December 13, 2024 for impeachment of Justice Yadav over his alleged controversial remarks at a recent VHP event, sources said. The notice was signed by Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, John Brittas, Manoj Kumar Jha and Saket Gokhale among others. These MPs met the Rajya Sabha secretary general and handed over the notice for impeachment a few minutes before the start of the day's proceedings, the sources said. Other MPs who signed the notice included P

Chidambaram, Randeep Surjewala, Pramod Tiwari, Jai Ram Ramesh, Mukul Wasnik, Naseer Hussain, Raghav Chadha, Fauzia Khan, Sanjay Singh, AA Rahim, V Sivadasan and Renuka Chowdhury. The notice for the motion was moved under the Judges' (Inquiry) Act, 1968, and Article 218 of the Constitution, seeking initiation of proceedings for impeachment of Justice Yadav. The notice mentioned that the speech/lecture delivered by Justice Yadav during the VHP-organised event prima facie showed that he "engaged in hate speech and incitement to communal disharmony in violation of the Constitution of India". The notice also mentioned that the judge prima facie showed that he targeted minorities and displayed bias and prejudice against them.

Delhi HC seeks status on DFI forgery case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

UPSC introduces new online application module for 2025

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

"The failure to provide the required information/documents along with the registration and online application form will entail cancellation of candidature for the examination," read the rules. The civil services examination is conducted annually by the UPSC in three stages - preliminary, main and interview - to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

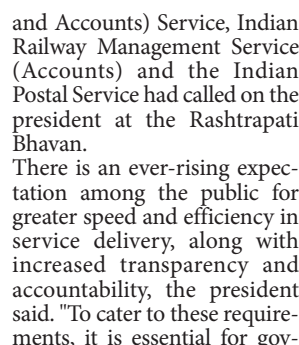


and identify probable Indian vendors who are capable to supply surveillance copter (HAA) along with accessories".

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

commonly encountered weather conditions in all kinds of terrains in the country, the RFI says. "Surveillance Copter (High Altitude Area) be modular in design, thereby lending itself to future upgrades through simple modifications, not leading to design or structural change. It should also facilitate integration and installation, without impacting the performance of any system/sub-system," it added. The Indian Army is also planning to procure 50 "heavy crawler rock drill" with the government on Wednesday issuing a draft RFI. "The RFI intends to achieve aim

President urges Government to embrace emerging technologies



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Keeping pace with the fast-changing technology is another area of challenge. You have to take measures to make accounting and payment systems smooth and effective," she said. Their role goes beyond optimising the use of financial resources and "involves analysing the impact of policies and suggesting inputs to improve governance systems, including the financial management systems", President Murmu added.

Speaking to the probationers from the Indian Postal Service, she appreciated the efforts of India Post Payments Bank for

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

"You should remember that you will be able to play a vital role in empowering citizens, especially the less privileged, through enhanced connectivity and financial inclusion," she added. She expressed hope that the officers would make all efforts not only to excel in their individual careers but contribute to effective delivery of government services.

Aditya Thackeray meets Rahul, Kejriwal on INDIA Bloc unity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

Aditya Thackeray, on a whirlwind tour of the national capital, also met the party's parliamentarians amid reports of dissent in the ranks and some leaders planning to join the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. He met Rahul Gandhi late on Wednesday and called on Kejriwal, the former Delhi chief minister, whose party faced defeat in last week's assembly elections on Thursday. "Is there any difference between the BJP and the Election Commission (EC)?... I don't even know where my vote goes. There needs to be more clarity on EVMs (electronic voting machines) and VVPATs (voter-verifiable paper

audit trail)," Aditya Thackeray said.

After calling on Kejriwal, Aditya Thackeray described the meeting as a gesture of friendship. "Governments keep coming and going but relationships continue. We met Kejriwal as a gesture of friendship. However, our democracy is not free and fair. Elections are not free and fair," he told reporters after the meeting. He was accompanied by party MPs Sanjay Raut, Arvind Sawant, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Sanjay Dina Patil and Bhausaheb Wakchaure, among others.

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

Smooth traffic ensures seamless holy dip in Sangam for pilgrims

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

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



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

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

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

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

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

Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi cremated with honors



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
HAZARIBAG/JHARKHAND

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

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

Haryana cracks down on illegal mining, seizes 324 vehicles



Photo: File photo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
BHUBANESWAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

Centre dispatches teams to tackle bird flu outbreak in Andhra Pradesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
AMARAVATI

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



Photo: File photo

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

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

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

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

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

STAFF REPORTER ■
GURUGRAM

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

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

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
KOLKATA

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



Photo: File photo

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

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

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

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

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

STAFF REPORTER ■
GURUGRAM

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
ITANAGAR

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

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

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

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

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Revamping the tax regime

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

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



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

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

PICTALK



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

Russia combines diplomatic strategy with military tactics



NISHAKANT OJHA

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COUNSELLING CENTRES FOR COUPLES

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

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

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

IAF CHIEF CRITICISES HAL

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

Supreme Court slams freebies



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

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

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

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

INVEST IN AI

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

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

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



GAURAV GANDHI

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

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

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



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

The Inevitable Drop in 5G Costs

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

Economies of Scale and Cost Reduction

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

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

Increased production volumes lead to lower prices for 5G hardware, including chips, antennas, and base stations. The 5G base station market is expected to grow from \$37.44 billion in 2020 to \$132.06 billion by 2025, at a CAGR of 28.67 per cent, according to Mordor Intelligence. These massive investments will drive economies of scale, further lowering the cost of private 5G network deployment for businesses.

Affordable 5G Handsets and Private Networks

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

adoption.

5G's Impact on Business

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

The Future of 5G Affordability

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

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



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S AI DIPLOMACY

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Will 'Jan Vishwas 2.0' deliver real reform



A S MITTAL

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



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

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

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

The Constant Flux of Compliance Rules

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



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

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

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

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

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

Labour Laws: The Elephant in the Room

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

Simplifying Business Permits: A Digital-First Approach

Establishing a factory in India

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

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

One Nation, One Business Identity

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

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

A Global Perspective: The US Efficiency Threat

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

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

The Way Forward

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Grim Reality: What the Data Reveals

Road accident statistics paint

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

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

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



ASHIM SANYAL

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

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

Strengthening Laws and Enforcement

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



term "accident" itself is misleading.

The Urgent Need for Action

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

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

Road Safety as a National Mission

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

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

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

A Collective Commitment to

Saving Lives

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

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

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

Erdogan urges India, Pak to resolve Kashmir issue

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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



President Erdogan, who is in Pakistan on a two-day visit, made the comments after holding one-on-one and delegation talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The leaders also witnessed the signing ceremony of 24 agreements and a Memorandum of Understanding between the two sides. Following this, they read statements to the media, expressing resolve to strengthen their bilateral ties, during which Erdogan also talked about the Kashmir issue. "The Kashmir issue should be addressed according to the UN resolution through dialogue and keeping in mind the aspirations of the people of Kashmir," Erdogan said. "Our state and our nation, as in the past, stands in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers today," he added. India has repeatedly emphasised that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were, are, and "shall forever" remain an integral part of the country. The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the spe-

cial status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. In his statement, President Erdogan also showed keen interest in promoting ties with Pakistan. "In the seventh session of our council, which we just concluded, we have agreed to further strengthen our relationship," he said. In the 7th Pakistan-Turkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council meeting, the two countries agreed to continue their efforts to achieve the goal of a USD 5 billion trade volume. At its conclusion, the two leaders signed a joint declaration to further deepen, diversify and institutionalise their Strategic Partnership. "Within the framework of this visit, we have signed a total of 24 agreements and MoUs in the fields of trade, water resources, agriculture, energy, culture, family, and social services, along

with science, banking, education, defence, and health." Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz said that Pakistan was the second home of the Turkish leader and added that it was wonderful to have him back after five years. "The people of Pakistan are extremely happy today to see you, along with your delegation, visiting your brotherly country," he said. He thanked Turkiye for standing by Pakistan "through thick and thin" during earthquakes and floods. "Your visit to Pakistan today has given a new level to our brotherly relations," Shehbaz said. He also called Erdogan an important and highly respected leader of Islamic world. "You have also led from the front, speaking for the problems and speaking for the rights of oppressed people, be it people of Gaza, Palestine or Kashmir," Sharif said. "When you speak, not only millions of people in Islamic world hear you very attentively but the globe hears you when you speak," he added. The prime minister and President Asif Ali Zardari received Erdogan at the Nur Khan airbase when he arrived early in the morning. The Turkish president was accompanied by First Lady Emine Erdogan and a delegation of investors and business leaders. A formal welcome ceremony was held in Erdogan's honour at the Prime Minister's House, where a contingent of armed forces presented him with a guard of honour. He was also honoured with a fly-past by F-16 fighter jets. Erdogan and Shehbaz also planted a sapling at the PM House. Later, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir also met Erdogan and extended greetings on his visit.

ERDOGAN LASHES

NATO allies insist Ukraine, Europe must be in peace talks

PTI ■ BRUSSELS

Several NATO allies stressed on Thursday that Ukraine and Europe must not be cut out of any peace negotiations as US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth denied that the United States is betraying the war-ravaged country. European governments are reeling after the Trump administration signalled that it is planning face-to-face talks with Russia on ending the Ukraine war without involving them, insisted that Kyiv should not join NATO, and said that it's up to Europe to protect itself and Ukraine from whatever Russia might do next. "There can be no negotiation about Ukraine without Ukraine. And Ukraine's voice must be at the heart of any talks," UK Defence Secretary John Healey told reporters at NATO headquarters, as the organisations' 32 defence ministers met for talks on Ukraine. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said: "For me, it's clear... that Europe must be involved in the negotiations — and I think that's very easy to understand," particularly if

Europe is "supposed to play a central or the main role in the peace order." Europe "will have to live directly" with the consequences, he added. Hegseth denied that the US has betrayed Ukraine by launching negotiations about its future without Kyiv's full involvement. After talks with Putin and then Zelenskyy, Trump said on Wednesday he would "probably" meet in person with the Russian leader in the near term, possibly in Saudi Arabia. "There is no betrayal there. There is a recognition that the whole world and the United States is invested and interested in peace. A negotiated peace," Hegseth told reporters. The European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, expressed surprise that Hegseth and Trump had listed what appeared to be concessions to Russia even before talks have begun in earnest. "We shouldn't take anything off the table before the negotiations have even started, because it plays to Russia's court," she said. "Why are we giving them everything that they want even before the

negotiations have been started? It's appeasement. It has never worked." Hegseth warned that the war in Ukraine must "be a wakeup call" for NATO's European allies to spend more on their own defence budgets. Twenty-three of the 32 member countries were forecast to have met the organisation's guideline of spending 2 per cent of gross domestic product on their national defence budgets last year, but a third still do not. But Hegseth's French counterpart, Sebastien Lecornu, described the wrangling over greater defence spending as "a false debate," saying that governments and parliaments across Europe are already approving more weapons purchases and bigger military budgets while helping Ukraine staff off an invasion. Lecornu warned that the future of NATO itself is now in question. "To say that it's the biggest and most robust alliance in history is true, historically speaking. But the real question is will that still be the case in 10 or 15 years," he said, after the US — by far NATO's biggest and

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

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

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

feet) of a P-8 Poseidon surveillance jet in daylight and in international air space, Defense Minister Richard Marles said on Thursday. The Australian plane usually carries eight or nine crew. The plane was not damaged and no crew member was injured, Marles said. "The J-16 was so close that there's no way you

could have been able to ensure that the flares did not hit the P-8," Marles told Sky News. "Had any of those flares hit the P-8, that would have definitely had the potential for significant damage to that aircraft," he added. China's foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun in turn accused the Australian military aircraft of "deliberately" intruding into airspace over the disputed Paracel Islands, which China claims. "China's measures to drive away the aircraft were legitimate, law-between Chinese and Australian forces that Australia has disclosed in nine months. Australia accused the pilot of a Chinese J-10 fighter of unsafe and unprofessional behaviour over the Yellow Sea in May last year by dropping flares in the path of an Australian navy Seahawk helicopter. Australia said the helicopter pilot had to take evasive action

ful, professional and restrained" Guo said. Australia has protested in its capital Canberra and in Beijing on Wednesday and Thursday, Marles said. The protest accused the two Chinese pilots of an "unsafe and unprofessional maneuver that posed a risk to the aircraft and personnel," a statement said. The protest highlights that while bilateral diplomatic and trade relations have improved, relations between the two militaries remain dangerous. The interaction is the first significant clash to avoid the flares. There were no injuries or damage, although experts warned the helicopter could have been forced to ditch at sea if a flare had struck an engine. China protested at the time that the helicopter had flown close to Chinese airspace and had attempted to carry out reconnaissance on a Chinese navy training exercise.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client RAJ KUMAR SINGH BHANDARI owner of the ENTIRE UPPER GROUND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF, PROPERTY NO. C-268/A, AREA 87 SQ. YDS, KHASRA NO. 375 VILLAGE GHONDA GUARAN KHADAR GALI NO. 12 BHAJAN PURA, SHAHDARA-110053 and Raj Kumar Singh Bhandari have Notarized Originals 1. Death and Survivor Certificate of Sh. Gulab Singh in favour of his legal heirs i.e. 1. Yashoda (Wife), 2. Ayushman Singh (Son) 3. Varnika Bhandari Daughter) And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 750 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile - 9899013918

RenServ Global Private Limited						
(Formerly known as ReNew Services Private Limited)						
CIN No. : U74999DL2019PTC348911						
Regd. Office : 138, Ansal Chambers II, Bikaji Cama Place, Delhi-110066						
Corporate Office : ReNew, Hub, Commercial Block-1, Zone-6, Golf Course Road, DLF City Phase-V, Gurugram, 122009, Haryana, Phone - 0124-4896 670/ 80						
Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024						
(Amounts in INR millions, except share and per share data, unless otherwise stated)						
Particulars	Quarter ended 31 December 2024	Quarter ended 30 September 2024	Quarter ended 31 December 2023	9 months ended 31 December 2024	9 months ended 31 December 2023	Year ended 31 March 2024
	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	Audited
Total Income from Operations	1,266	1,214	1,053	3,589	3,083	4,214
Net Profit for the year (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	157	9	183	120	405	140
Net Profit for the year before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	157	9	183	120	405	140
Net Profit for the year after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	142	16	183	114	405	189
Total Comprehensive Income for the year (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	142	16	183	114	405	192
Paid up Equity Share Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	128	(14)	228	128	228	16
Net worth*	278	136	228	178	228	16
Debt Equity Ratio*	3.36	2.63	3.76	3.36	3.76	2.39
Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each (for continuing and discontinued operations))						
1. Basic: (in INR)	14,221.74	1,581.51	18,304.30	11,377.16	40,514.97	18,869.11
2. Diluted: (in INR)	14,221.74	1,581.51	18,304.30	11,377.16	40,514.97	18,869.11
Debt Service Coverage Ratio*	0.58	1.53	11.57	0.90	10.80	2.64
Debt Service Coverage Ratio*	0.58	1.53	11.57	0.90	10.80	2.64
Interest Service Coverage Ratio*	1.79	1.53	7.65	1.52	10.80	2.64
Current ratio	1.26	1.30	1.98	1.26	1.98	2.18
Long Term Debt to Working Capital	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.03	1.03
Bad debts to Account receivable Ratio*	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Current Liability Ratio	0.78	0.75	0.50	0.78	0.50	0.45
Total Debts to Total Assets Ratio	0.59	0.57	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.59
Debtors Turnover Ratio*	0.27	0.36	0.31	0.81	0.99	1.24
Inventory Turnover Ratio*	0.56	0.58	0.72	1.86	2.39	3.18
Operating margin (%)	20%	6%	23%	12%	18%	8%
Net profit margin (%)	11%	1%	17%	3%	13%	4%

Notes :

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

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

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

NOTES:

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

For SAR Televenture Limited
Sd/ Pankaj Nagpal
Director

Date: 13.02.2025
Place: Noida

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

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Some 260 people, including some Indians, believed to have been trafficked and trapped into working in online scam centres are to be repatriated after they were rescued from Myanmar, Thailand's army announced Thursday. In a fresh crackdown on scam centres operating from Southeast Asia, the Thai army announced Thursday it is coordinating an effort to repatriate some 260 people believed to have been victims of human trafficking after they were rescued and sent from Myanmar to Thailand. Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, which share borders with Thailand, have come to be known as havens for criminal syndicates who are estimated to have forced hundreds of thousands of people in Southeast Asia and elsewhere into helping run online scams including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes. Such scams have extracted tens of billions of dollars from victims around the world, according to UN experts, while the people recruited to carry them out have often been tricked into taking the jobs under false pretenses and trapped in virtual slavery. An earlier crackdown on scam centres in Myanmar was initiated in late 2023 after China expressed embarrassment and concern over illegal casinos and scam operations in Myanmar's northern Shan state along its border. Ethnic guerrilla groups with close ties to Beijing shut down many operations, and an estimated 45,000 Chinese nationals suspected of involvement were repa-

triated. The army said that those rescued in the most recent operation came from 20 nationalities — with significant numbers from Ethiopia, Kenya, the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan and China. There were also nationals of Indonesia, Nepal, Taiwan, Uganda, Laos, Brazil, Burundi, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Ghana and India. They were sent across the border from Myanmar's Myawaddy district to Thailand's Tak province on Wednesday. Reports in Thai media said a Myanmar ethnic militia that controls the area where they were held, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, was responsible for freeing the workers and taking them to the border. Myanmar's military government exercises little control over frontier areas where ethnic minorities predominate. Several ethnic militias are believed to be involved in criminal activities, including drug trafficking and protecting call-center scam operations. The Thai army statement said the rescued people will undergo questioning, and if determined to be victims of human trafficking, will enter a process of protection while waiting to be sent back to their countries. Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai, who is also defense minister, said Wednesday that there might be many more scam workers waiting to be repatriated from Myanmar through Thailand, but that Thailand would only receive those that are ready to be taken back right away by their country of origin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LOST & FOUND I, Krishna Singh, Mother of JC-472354M Sub Manoj Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill-Medhauna, Tiloi, Dist-Amethi, U.P., have changed my name from Krishna Singh to Krishna Devi, vide affidavit dated 13/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1485)C I, Sorabh Singh S/o- JC-472354M Sub Manoj Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill-Medhauna, Tiloi, Dist- Amethi, U.P., have changed my name from Sorabh Singh to Saurabh Singh, vide affidavit dated 13/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1486)C I, No.14835492A Hav/MT Mahesh Singh Yadav, R/o-Vill/ Post- Tandwa M (Kajipurisra), Teh-Mohammadabad, Dist-Ghazipur, U.P.- 233227, have changed my daughter's name from Gauri to Gauri Yadav, vide affidavit dated 13/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1487)C I, R Archana W/o- JC-355597M Nb/Sub Arun Kumar, R/o- 2/242, Thiru Muragan Nagar, Pillanthipattu, Madinampattu, Dist- Vellore, Tamilnadu- 632204, have changed my name from R Archana to A Archana, vide affidavit dated 13/02/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(1488)C

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

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE is hereby given that Mrs. Sareena Singh (hereinafter referred to as the said Mortgagee/Borrower) is purchasing Flat Bearing Pvt. No. 36, 36m. 2750 Sq. Ft., Second Floor, built on Plot No. 9-9, adm. 1,500 Sq. Yds., Southend Castle, Jangra, Mathura Road, New Delhi (hereinafter referred to as 'said property') from Mr. Deepak Agarwal & Mrs. Astha Agarwal who are it's owners by virtue of Certificate of Sale dated 28.04.2022 executed in their favour by Deutsche Bank AG India through it's Authorized Officer: Mr. Vishal Charan, Regd. as Doc. No. 2548 on 09.05.2022. The Borrower will create mortgage in respect of the said property in favour of our clients Indus Bank Limited, 12th Floor, Hyatt Regency Complex, Brijkaj Cams Place, New Delhi-110066. Any person, body, individual, institution having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, interference, testamentary disposition or otherwise or having in their custody any title documents pertaining to the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claims of such person shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the 10 days shall not be binding upon the said property or purchaser. Mr. Akhil Gupta (Advocate) Khatian & Khattar A-38, Kalkaji Colony New Delhi, 110048 Tel. + 1149714545/99

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

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JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED CIN: L74899DL1994PLC059252 Regd. Office: 110, Bahar Road, New Delhi - 110 001

EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2024 (Rs. In Lacs)

NOTE: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Standalone Un-Audited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024 filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com. The same is also available on the Company's website www.jindalleasefin.in. 2. The above results duly reviewed by the Audit Committee, were approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 12.02.2025.

ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-104, 3rd Floor, DDA Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020 CIN: L51109DL1980PLC256335, Tel.: +91-120-2529335 E-mail: atul.addi@gmail.com & addiind@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors Addi Industries Limited Sd/- (SURENDER KUMAR JINDAL) Managing Director

ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-104, 3rd Floor, DDA Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020 CIN: L51109DL1980PLC256335, Tel.: +91-120-2529335 E-mail: atul.addi@gmail.com & addiind@gmail.com

ADDI INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Rs. In Lakh, except per share data)

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

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Income Tax Bill aims to achieve tax certainty: IT dept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The simplified Income Tax Bill, which is half the size of the 1961 Income Tax Act, seeks to achieve tax certainty by minimising the scope of litigation and fresh interpretation, the Income Tax department said on Thursday. The new bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha, has a word count of 2.6 Lakh, lower than 5.12 Lakh in the IT Act. The number of sections is 536, as against 819 effective sections in the existing law.



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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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



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

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

Rupee settles three paise higher at 86.92 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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



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

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

IOC signs long-term LNG import deal with UAE firm

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

NSDC plans to set up 50 new Future Skills Centres

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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



Ensure fair treatment to customers: RBI Governor to NBFCs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

Paytm Money settle market norms violation case with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Exploring the Magic of Childhood

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



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



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



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

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

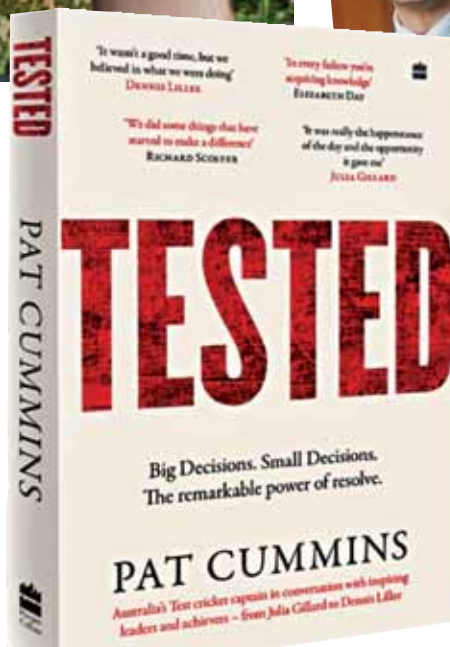


Australian cricket captain steps off the pitch into the world of storytelling with his book *Tested*, writes ABHI SINGHAL

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

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

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



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

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

MOMENT OF CHALLENGES IN PAT'S LIFE

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

Pat Cummins, Beyond the Game

RELEASING TOMORROW



CHAPTERS IN CONVERSATION WITH



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

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

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

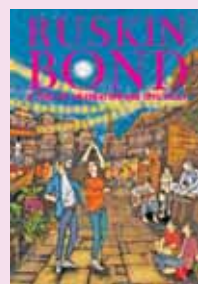
To this Pat wrote in the book, "I didn't feel prepared. I'd recently captained New South Wales in a handful of one-day matches, but before that I hadn't captained a side since I was fifteen. I hadn't even really thought that much about being the captain, even though I'd been a vice-captain for sometime.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

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

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



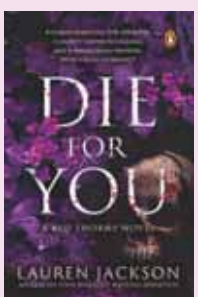
SOULFUL READS



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



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



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



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



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

NEW LAUNCH

The Ramayana in Art



BY TEAM VIVA

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

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

A Call to Protect the Earth

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



A Story of Unseen Affection forever

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

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

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

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



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

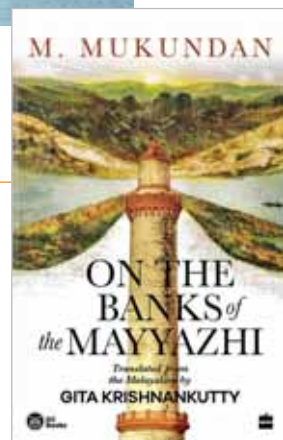
What brought Pappamma to my mind all of a sudden was the novel *On the Banks of the Mayyazhi* by M Mukundan, an avant-garde Malayalam writer. Mukundan was born in Mahe, a former French enclave in Kerala, now administered by the Union Territory of Puducherry. The novel, published in 1974, tells the story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

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

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

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

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



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

Shreyas was never supposed to be benched: Gambhir

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD
India head coach Gautam Gambhir has rubbished speculation that Shreyas Iyer was being side-lined from the ODI set-up despite his brilliant form, saying that the consistent right-hander was always in the "scheme of things" and will be an important player in this month's Champions Trophy (CT).
Iyer displayed excellent form during the just-concluded 3-0 ODI series sweep against England, hitting a counter-attacking 36-ball 59 in the opener when India were 19/2 chasing 249 in Nagpur, and scoring 44 and 78 in the next two games.
After the opening match, he created quite a stir by stating that he got into the side only after Virat Kohli had to sit out of the game because of a sore knee. This led to speculation that he would be dropped for Kohli in the next two games.
"He was not supposed to be benched throughout the series. We wanted to give Yashasvi (Jaiswal) a go in the first game and see what he can bring on the table because he was in (a) really good form in Australia," Gambhir said after the third and final match here on

Wednesday.
Iyer was preferred over Jaiswal eventually and Gambhir described him as an "important player" in the side.
"I know that you cannot judge someone (Jaiswal) by one innings. But we always knew that Shreyas was going to be an important player for us. Sometimes when you've only got three games, you want to try and rotate your squad as well," the coach reasoned.
"(And) when you have got Champions Trophy around the corner, you want to try and maximise these three games and try and give everyone an opportunity. But Shreyas was always in the scheme of things (and it is) good that he played all the three games," Gambhir added.
The Champions Trophy gets underway on February 19 with India talking Bangladesh on February 20 in Dubai.
Harshit and Arshdeep will have to step up
Someone's missed opportunity is another person's golden chance, believes Gambhir, who expects the likes of Harshit Rana and Arshdeep Singh to step up and fill the void created by pace talisman Jasprit Bumrah's injury-forced absence from the Champions



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

to try and deliver for the country, (it is) as simple as it can get. What we don't have, we do not have. What we have is what we have, and we are going to try and go with a very clear mind," he added.
Bumrah's replacement, Rana, has done reasonably well and was drafted into the Champions Trophy squad on Tuesday night.
"I think guys have shown some really good signs. Harshit has come along really well. Arsh (Arshdeep) was really good today (Wednesday) as well. Obviously, you would always miss a bowler like Jasprit Bumrah," Gambhir said.
"But then, it is always good to have someone like Mohammed Shami back with his experience and quality."
When asked if Bumrah's absence will give opposition teams any psychological advantage over India, Gambhir said, "We can't help it."
"If he's not available, he's not available. If he's injured, he's injured," Gambhir said.
"Whether it's me, (or) whether it's the captain, we can't do much about it. We know that he's an important factor, but as I just mentioned, people like Harshit, Arsh (and) Mohammed Shami, all

these guys will put their hand up." **Axar's elevation to No.5**
Gambhir said the promotion of all-rounder Axar Patel to No 5 in the first two ODIs was largely to ensure a left-handed batter in the mix.
"That's the way cricket is meant to be played. I know a lot of people talk about it but that's the way we've got to play the game and that's the way cricket should be played," he said.
"It's not about the batting order, it's about who can create what (kind of) impact. If you have the option of putting a quality left-hander in the middle, why won't you do that? Why would you want to have top five as right-handers?" he asked.
Gambhir said he the only criteria for deciding the order is the impact assessment of a player, which he believes, cannot be done purely through statistics.
"We don't look at averages and stats and all that stuff, we look at who can deliver more at that number and Axar has done fabulously well, (in) both the games he got the opportunity, (and) he delivered for us," he said. "I know there will always be people talking about it but I think that's the way we want to go in the future as well," he added.



RCB names Rajat Patidar as captain for IPL 2025

PTI ■ BENGALURU
IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday named Rajat Patidar as its captain for the upcoming season starting March 21, replacing South African Faf du Plessis who was released from the squad last year.
Patidar was among RCB's retained players before the mega auction in November, 2024 and has the experience of leading Madhya Pradesh in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (T20) and the Vijay Hazare Trophy (ODI).
The 31-year-old, who signed up with the franchise in 2022, guided Madhya Pradesh to the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy final where his side lost to Mumbai by five wickets last year.
"Rajat has the simplicity, (he) cares about the people around him, we have closely seen how he has led Madhya Pradesh, we really liked it," RCB chief coach Andy Flower said at the franchise event to announce



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

you, Rajat," Kohli said in a video statement shared by the franchise.
"The way you have grown in this franchise and the way you have performed, you've made a place in the hearts of all RCB fans. This is very well deserved," he added.
Kohli had a fine run as RCB captain, though he could not land them the title. The 36-year-old led RCB in 143 matches, the second longest stint as captain after the legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni for Chennai Super Kings.
Under him, the team won 68 games, and logged 70 losses and four no-results.
In 2016, Kohli had led the franchise to the IPL final, and made 973 runs, to date the highest for a batter in a single IPL season.
In IPL 2024, Kohli was the top run-getter with 741 runs at a strike-rate of 154.
The franchise conceded that Kohli's name was also discussed for the leadership role.

Bahutule appointed Rajasthan Royals spin-bowling coach

PTI ■ JAIPUR
Former India cricketer Sairaj Bahutule was on Thursday appointed Rajasthan Royals' spin-bowling coach for the upcoming IPL season, adding to the long list of support staff led by head coach Rahul Dravid.
Bahutule, a former leg-spinner and left-hand batter, played two Tests and eight ODIs taking a total of five wickets but his exploits in first-class cricket put him in the league of domestic greats.
Bahutule, 52, scored over 6,000 runs and took 630 wickets, besides 197 scalps in List A games.
"The 52-year-old returns to the Royals having been a part of the setup from 2018-21. He represented India in two Tests and eight ODIs and has since transitioned into a successful coaching career, mentoring teams such as Mumbai, Bengal, Kerala and the Indian national men's team where he has been instrumental in developing emerging talents," said Rajasthan Royals in a statement. Head coach Dravid said Bahutule would bring a wealth of experience to the side that won the inaugural edition of the IPL in 2008 under the legendary Shane Warne.
"Sairaj's deep understanding of spin bowling and his extensive coaching experience make him an invaluable addition to our team. His proven ability to mentor young bowlers aligns perfectly with our vision at Rajasthan Royals.
"Having worked with him before, I am confident that his insights and guidance will significantly benefit our players as we strive for excellence in the upcoming season," said Dravid. Bahutule said he was looking forward to working with Dravid.
"I am eager to work alongside Rahul and the rest of the coaching staff to develop our bowling attack and contribute to the team's success," said Bahutule.

Families not to travel with Team India for ICC Champions Trophy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Families will not be accompanying the Indian cricket players heading to Dubai on February 15 for the ICC Champions Trophy (CT) as the BCCI's new travel policy comes into effect for the first time with this tournament.
The Indian team starts its campaign in Dubai against Bangladesh on February 20, followed by the marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan (February 23) and the final preliminary face-off with New Zealand on March 2. The Rohit Sharma-led squad will play its games in Dubai while the rest of the tournament unfolds from February 19 in Pakistan across three venues.
Given that the duration of the tour is just over three weeks even if the final on March 9 is taken into consideration, the BCCI will not allow families to accompany the players. As per the new policy, families can be with players for a maximum of two weeks during a tour which is of 45 days or more.
"If anything changes then it is different but as of now, the players are unlikely to be accompanied by their wives or partners for this tour. One of the senior players had enquired about it and he was told that the policy decision will be followed," a senior

BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.
"Since the tour is of less than one month, families won't be accompanying the players. But if exceptions are made, I think that individual will have to bear the full expenses as BCCI won't be covering any cost," he added.
The BCCI policy document states: "Players absent from India for more than 45 days during overseas tours can be joined by their partners and children (under 18) for one visit per series (format wise) of up to a two-week period.
"Any deviation from this policy must be pre-approved by the coach, captain and GM Operations. Additional expenses outside the visitors' period will not be covered by the BCCI."
However, families will be there with the team during the five-Test tour of England in June-July-August as the five-Test. The window for their two-week stay during the trip will be worked out later.
The new rules were drafted after India's horror tour of Australia during which the team was outplayed 1-3, leading to speculation about lack of discipline and cohesion in the dressing room.
Rules already put into effect
The senior official said that most of the rules have already been enforced by the BCCI.

"If you look at it, already no player can ask for a private vehicle to come for practice. All state units have been notified. Similarly once the players assembled in Kolkata (for the T20I series against England) and Nagpur (for the ODI series against the same side), the team has travelled together," he confirmed.
The stars have also adhered to the new regulations of playing domestic cricket when they get time off from their international assignments.
Accordingly, Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and Shivam Dube turned up for Mumbai.
Virat Kohli played his first game for Delhi in more than 12 years amid a lot of fanfare. So did Rishabh Pant while KL Rahul represented Karnataka. Ravindra Jadeja played for Saurashtra.
Personal staff to stay at different hotel
Restrictions have also been imposed on personal staff (managers, agents, chefs), who were accompanying the team and the coaching group earlier. Accordingly, the personal secretary of a member of the coaching staff, who was regularly seen staying at the team hotel, now stays at a different facility even though he has been seen at every venue during the England home series.

Three Pakistan players fined for breaching ICC Code of Conduct

PTI ■ KARACHI
International Cricket Council (ICC) has slapped Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi, Saud Shakeel and Kamran Ghulam with fines and a demerit point each for their belligerent behaviour during the tri-series match against South Africa here.
Shaheen was fined 25 per cent of his match fee for breaching Article 2.12 of the Code, which pertains to "inappropriate physical contact with a Player, Player Support Personnel, Umpire, Match Referee or any other person (including a spectator) during an International Match."
The incident occurred in the 28th over of South Africa's



innings when Shaheen deliberately obstructed batter Matthew Breetzke as he ran a single, resulting in physical contact and a heated exchange between the two players on Wednesday.
The ICC had imposed a similar 20 percent match fees

behaviour.
The tall fast bowler admitted after the match that he had been trying to rile up and disturb Breetzke for a while in the match but once it was over everything was forgotten and both shook hands.
In another incident, Shakeel and substitute fielder Ghulam were fined 10 percent of their match fees for celebrating too closely to batter Temba Bavuma following his run-out in the 29th over.
Both players were found guilty of breaching Article 2.5 of the Code, which relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match."

Three Pakistan players fined for breaching ICC Code of Conduct

fine and one demerit point on Indian star Virat Kohli for barging into Australia's Sam Konstas during the Border Gavaskar Trophy series. Interestingly, while Kohli got a lot of flak for his action, Shaheen has hardly been criticised in Pakistan for his

Kane lifts Bayern to beat Celtic in Champions League playoffs

PTI ■ MUNICH
Bayern Munich looks set to survive the new Champions League playoffs round. AC Milan joined Atalanta and Monaco losing their first-leg games Wednesday.
Bayern got high-class strikes from Michael Olise and Harry Kane either side of halftime in a 2-1 win at Scottish champion Celtic. The return game is Tuesday in Munich.
"The (Celtic) fans haven't seen many losses here, especially in Europe, so we appreciate the importance of the game and the victory," Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said.
Bayern had joined Real

Madrid and Manchester City as Champions League title winners in the past five years who surprisingly found themselves in the playoffs because they finished outside the top eight in the new 36-team single standings format. Madrid won 3-2 in Manchester on Tuesday.
Feyenoord's goal in a rain-soaked 1-0 win over Milan came in the third minute and relied in France goalkeeper Mike Maignan spilling Igor Paixão's shot into the net. Feyenoord's Brazilian winger gave Milan new signing Kyle Walker a tough first game in the competition for the seventh-time European champion. It also was a quick winning

start for Feyenoord's interim coach Pascal Bosschaart in his first game after the firing Monday of Brian Priske. Benfica won 1-0 at Monaco with another goal from Vangelis Pavlidis, a delicate chip shot in the 48th. Monaco had Al Musrati sent off four minutes later.
Club Brugge scored with a disputed penalty kick in stoppage time to beat Atalanta 2-1. That was a meeting of teams that finished 24th and ninth, respectively, in the 36-team standings two weeks ago. The top eight teams in those standings advanced direct to the round of 16 in March, leaving Nos. 9 to 24 to compete this month for eight



more entries in playoffs over back-to-back midweeks.
Kane vs Schmeichel
Harry Kane loves scoring against Kasper Schmeichel, his

longtime rival in Tottenham and Leicester and England vs Denmark games.
Bayern star Kane's sharp volley in the 49th, when left unmarked at the back post at a corner, was his 19th career goal past Schmeichel, more than any other goalkeeper he has faced.
It was a second impressive goal conceded by Schmeichel, who was helpless against Michael Olise's rising left-footed shot in the 45th.
On a tough evening for Celtic's all-American central defense of Cameron Carter-Vickers and Auston Trusty, the Scottish champion has more hope next Tuesday thanks to Japan forward Daizen Maeda cutting the deficit late on.
"At 2-1, Bayern are hanging on," Celtic coach Brendan Rodgers said. "Let's go and have no regrets and see where

it takes us. We've shown we can play football and be a threat."
Pavlidis hot streak
Benfica's Greece forward might be the most in-form striker in the Champions League. It is now six goals in the competition and five in the past three games including a hat trick against Barcelona. The 26-year-old Pavlidis latched onto a pass from the halfway line and shrugged off defender Mohammed Salisu before neatly clipping the ball over goalkeeper Radoslaw Majecki in the 48th minute.
Benfica's win was soured by another injury for veteran winger Angel Di Maria. The 2022 World Cup winner with

Argentina lasted 20 minutes as a substitute before sustaining a left hamstring injury. He pulled up near the penalty area and immediately lay on the ground.
It was Benfica's second win in Monaco, adding to a 3-2 victory in November in the league phase.
Atalanta anger in Brugge
A late light-touch clash between two Sweden teammates was decisive in Club Brugge's 2-1 win over Atalanta.
Entering stoppage time, Atalanta defender Isak Hien was judged to have raised a hand into the face of Brugge forward Gustaf Nilsson as they chased a loose ball.