LUCKNOW, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3

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: DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA

INDIA AND MODI RETURN WITH MUSCLE FROM THE USA

Terroist to be extradited

Defence ties to be bolstered

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump announced after talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India will buy more oil, gas and military hardware, including F-35 fighter jets, from America to bring down New Delhi from reciprocal tariffs.

At his Oval Office in the White House on Thursday (Friday India time), Trump warmly welcomed Modi with a long handshake and a bear hug while describing the prime minister as a "great friend" for a long time and a "terrific" man.

The US president, at a joint media briefing with the Indian prime minister following the talks, said both sides are looking at striking a major trade deal soon while calling import duties imposed by India on certain US products as "very unfair" and "strong".

"Whatever India charges, we will charge them," Trump said, adding "We are being reciprocal with India."

The Modi-Trump meeting took place hours after the US President announced a new reciprocal tariff policy for all the trading partners of the US in the latest in a series of such actions initiated by his administration.

In his remarks, Trump said he and PM Modi have

reached an agreement that could potentially make the US the "number one supplier" of oil and gas to India, suggesting it to be part of measures to bring down the US trade deficit with India that stands at around USD 45 billion.

The US president also said trade deficit but asserted that that both sides have decided Washington will not spare to expand the overall defence

partnership.
"Starting this year, we will be increasing military sales to India by many billions of dollars," Trump said.

"We are also paving the way to ultimately provide India with F-35 stealth fighters," he added. The F35 jets are known as the most lethal, survivable and connected fighter aircraft in the world. Trump also announced that India and the US will be working together like "never before" to confront the threat of radical Islamic terror across the world.

"I am pleased to announce that my administration has approved the extradition of one of the very evil people of the world," he said, referring to the extradition of 26/11 Mumbai attack plotter Tahawwur Rana to India.

Rana, currently detained at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles, is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the terror attack.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House, in Washington, DC, USA

US CLEARS RANA'S EXTRADITION

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has announced that his administration has approved extradition of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana to India and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the state government is prepared to lodge

Addressing a joint press meet along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington on Thursday, Trump said, January as it rejected his review petition

"Today I am pleased to announce that my administration has approved the extradition of one of the plotters and very evil people of the world, and having to do with the horrific Mumbai terrorist attack, to face justice in India. So, he is going back to India to face justice."

"We're giving him back to India immediately" and more such extraditions could follow as we have quite a few requests (from New Delhi), the US president added. The extradition of Rana was cleared by the US Supreme Court in

in the case.

On his part, Modi thanked Trump for the decision. "I am thankful to the President that he has decided to hand over the culprit who committed the killings in India in 2008, to India now. Indian courts will now take appropriate action," he said. Thanking Prime Minister Modi for his efforts to bring Rana for trial, Fadnavis said here "We kept Kasab, what is the big deal here? We will keep him for sure, when asked about Maharashtra's preparedness once Rana is extradited.

Continued on page 8

A US military aircraft carrying 104 deported Indian immigrants upon its

Deportation flights to arrive again

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

AUS plane carrying 119 dillegal immigrants is likely to land at Amritsar airport on February 15, the second such batch of Indians deported by the Trump government as part of a crackdown it resolved to carry out when it was sworn in last month.

According to official sources, the plane is expected to land at the airport around 10 pm on Saturday.

Among the 119 illegal Indian immigrants, 67 hail from Punjab, 33 from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, three from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Goa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan and one each from Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

Another US plane carrying deportees is also expected to land on February 16. The development came days

after a US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar airport last week. Of them, 33 each were from Haryana and Gujarat and 30 from Punjab.

Most of the deportees hailing from Punjab had said they wanted to migrate to the US for a better life for their families. However, their dreams were shattered when they were caught at the US border and brought back in shackles.

After Donald Trump assumed office as the US President, the country's law enforcement agencies have launched a crackdown against illegal immigrants. Many people from Punjab and some other states, who entered the US through "donkey routes" -- an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter America or other illegal means by spending lakhs of rupees are now facing deportation.

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MARKETS



WEATHER



BJP to swear in government in Delhi next week

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The swearing-in ceremony of the BJP government in Delhi is likely to take place on February 19 or 20. The legislative party meeting of the BJP is expected to be held a day before the grand swearing-in that marks the return of the saffron party in the national Capital after a

gap of 27 years.
Preparations to form the BJP government are expected to gain momentum after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns to the Capital on Friday night following his trip to France and the United States of America. PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President JP Nadda and other senior party leaders will finalise key decisions regarding the new government which includes a chief minister, a council of ministers and perhaps one or two deputy chief ministers. According to sources, after the arrival of PM Modi, the

central leadership will appoint observers who will held discussions with newly elected MLAs to take a final decision before announcing the name for the chief minister. The BJP asserted that it will soon announce the name of Delhi chief minister and

slammed AAP leader Atishi over her claims of power cuts in the city, saying she should observe 13 days of mourning over her party's "death".

Continued on page 8



MHA seeks sanction to prosecute Jain

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Friday sought the President of India's approval to prosecute former Delhi minister and AAP leader Satyendar Jain under Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita (BNS), 2023 in the alleged disproportionate assets were to the tune of Rs 1.47 crore, about 217 per cent more than Jain's known sources of income during 2015-17.

The agency alleged that Jain, with the help of his family members and associates, amassed disproportionate assets between February 14, 2015, and May 31, 2017, while serving as a minister in the Delhi government. The

Pioneer was the first to report the disproportionate assets

Jain lost Shakur Basti seat to BJP's Karnail Singh by a margin of 20,998 votes. According to sources, the request is based on evidence provided by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which has found sufficient grounds for prosecution in the case. "On the basis of the material received from the Enforcement Directorate, sufficient evidence has been found to grant the sanction", sources said. The MHA's move comes after reviewing findings from the ED's investigation into alleged financial irregularities linked to Jain. The final decision now rests with the President.

Continued on page 8

Kerala ragging row turns political

KUMAR CHELLAPAN KOCHI

Ragging of three freshers by third year students of Government Nursing College at Kottayam in Kerala is the fall out of the refusal of the former to part with hafta money demanded by the seniors to buy liquor and drugs, according to the cops investigating the case. Many parents expressed their reservation apprehension over sending their wards to professional colleges in the state following the gruesome ragging incident at the

Kottayam nursing college. Lakshmana Perumal, father of one of the students, told media that the perpetrators of the crime belonged to the SFI, the student wing of the CPI(M) and enjoyed political patronage. "My son had told me about the cruelties perpetrated on him and others by the senior students for refusing to part with money to buy their daily quota of liquor and drugs," said Perumal while speaking to reporters.

All the five students held by the police on charges of ragging belonged to the SFI. The video of the cruel ragging that went viral shows that geometry divider was used by the seniors to engrave pictures on the rear side of the victims. According to a member of the investigation team, dumbbells were placed on the private parts of the victim students. While the victims were writing in pain and crying out loudly, the seniors poured some lotion into their mouths and were seen laughing out. Veena George, Kerala Minister for Health, told reporters that she could not watch the horrifying video. "The ideal punishment for them is to throw them out of the college once and for ever. Suspension is too small a punishment for the kind of crime they have done," said George.

VD Satheeshan, leader of opposition and the chief minister in waiting, asked the CPI(M) to disband the SFI. "This outfit is



Kerala police personnel escort students who were arrested for allegedly ragging first-year students at the Government Nursing College, in Kottayam on February 12, 2025

responsible for all type of cruelties and antisocial activities happening in campuses in the State," said Satheeshan.

Responses from the college principal and other senior teachers in the college sounded hollow and it was like passing the buck. While the principal said that an assistant warden has been appointed to be in the hostel 24X7, students said that they have not seen any such officials at any time.

It has come to light that the cruel act of ragging took place on the first anniversary of the death of Sidharthan, a first year veterinary science student at the Government Veterinary College in Wayanad. Sidharthan, a tribal student, was found dead in his hostel room under mysterious conditions on 20th February 2024 following three day and night ragging by the SFI students. Though the 16 accused were arrested within weeks and were suspended from the college, judiciary in Kerala came to their help and allowed them to attend regular classes. But a division bench of the Kerala High Court quashed on 5th February the order of the single bench which had allowed the accused to attend regular classes.

Follow

Panel to name next **CEC on February 17**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

February 18, a three member selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to meet on Monday to finalise the name of the next chief election commissioner, sources said on The selection Friday. committee also comprises the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The Committee will recommend a name from among the candidates shortlisted by a search committee. The president will then appoint the next CEC based on the recommendation. Last month, the Union Law Ministry set up a search committee under Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to shortlist names for the appointment of the next CEC. The process of appointing the CEC from a panel of five as per Chief Election Commissioner And Other Commissioners Election (Appointment, Conditions of Service And Term of Office) Act, 2023, would be used for the first time, it was used to appoint ECs Gyanesh Kumar and Sandhu to fill the vacancies created by the

retirement of Anun Chandra Pandey and the resignation of With Chief Election Rajiv Arun Goel last year. Prior to the enactment of the law, the Kumar set to demit office on CEC was usually appointed by elevating the senior-most FC The selection process for the CEC would involve a panel of five names as per the Act. After Rajiv Kumar, Gyanesh Kumar is the senior-most election commissioner. His tenure is till January 26, 2029. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu is the other election commissioner.

According to the law, the CEC and ECs will be appointed by the president on the recommendation of a selection committee headed by the prime minister and comprising the Lok Sabha opposition leader and a Union Cabinet minister to be nominated by the prime minister. The sources said the same set of candidates could also be used to appoint a new EC.

According to the law, the CEC and other ECs will be appointed from among persons who are holding or have held a post equivalent to the rank of secretary to the government of India and will be persons of integrity with knowledge of and experience in management and conduct of elections. In other words, serving and retired secretarylevel officials can be appointed as the CEC and ECs.

Kejriwal under fire for renaming Delhi CM's official X account

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he Chief Minister's Office of }}_{\text{Delhi on Friday wrote to the}}$ social media platform X to restore the "CMO Delhi" (@DelhiCMO) official handle allegedly renamed to Kejriwal At Work' (@KejriwalAtWork) at the behest of the former chief minister Arvind Keiriwal.

"Since '@CMODelhi' became free changing after it '@KejriwalAtWork, one user used this ID and opened a parody account. It also appears that previously '@CMODelhi' and now @KejriwalAtWork' are showing an error - "something went wrong" when tried to see a post from this account," the email sent to X said while adding that official accounts are not associated with individuals and pass on to successors.

This comes a day after the BIP. which won 48 seats in the recent Delhi Assembly polls, demanded Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's intervention in the renaming of the official 'CMO Delhi'. In an email to X on Friday, the CMO said as per established practice, official accounts are not associated with individuals and pass on to successors as and when change takes place. "It has come to our notice that on 'X' (previously Twitter), a "Grey Tick" Government "@CMODelhi", has now been unauthorisedly changed "@KejriwalAtWork". The said account is having approximately 9,90,000 followers," it said.

This will ensure that the official handle of the Chief Minister's Office is not misused in future and cannot be tampered with, the letter said,

Arvind Kejriwal at Work 🌼 @KejriwalAtWork Former Chief Minister of Delhi Shri Arvind Kejriwal

revolutionized Delhi's governance with reforms in education, healthcare, electricity, and public services.

Joined March 2020

asking the social media platform to deactivate any other account having "@cmodelhi" immediately. In view of the above, it is requested

to 'X' Platform to restore "@CMODelhi" and Password of the same may kindly be sent to the official email ID cmdelhi@nic.in,

which is the authorized official ID of Hon'ble Chief Minister, Delhi. This, inter alia will ensure that the said Handle / ID is not misused in future and cannot be tampered with. Further, it is also requested that any 'X' Handle having "@cmodelhi" as its ID, must not be allowed on 'X'

at present any other account having "@cmodelhi" must be deactivated immediately," CMO said.

On Thursday, political controversy erupted on Thursday after the BJP claimed that Arvind Kejriwal renamed the official X handle of the Delhi Chief Minister's Office (CMO) to 'Arvind Kejriwal at work' (@kejriwalAtWork). In-charge of the BJP's National Information and Technology Department, Amit Malviya, also slammed Kejriwal. "After losing the Delhi elections, Arvind Kejriwal deactivated and renamed the official Twitter and YouTube accounts of the Chief Minister of Delhi. These digital assets, previously known as @CMODelhi, have been rebranded as @KejriwalAtWork," Malviya tweeted. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva accused AAP national

without consent of this office. Also convenor of "stealing" the digital property of the Delhi government. Arvind Kejriwal changed the account of Delhi CMO and made it his own account, this is a direct loot of government money. This is digital loot. We have demanded from LG that the IT department of Delhi government should immediately file an FIR, start an investigation and take strict action," said Sachdeva. Notably, the account was deleted later. The Delhi BJP chief also sought Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's help to seek a report from the Delhi government's IT and social media departments over the alleged renaming of the Delhi CMO's social media handles. The BJP has returned to power in

Delhi, after 26 years, defeating the Aam Aadmi Party in February 5 Assembly polls. The party government is yet to be formed.

between India and Japan, not-

ing that both countries share a

strong connection through their Buddhist heritage. He underscored the robust

economic ties between UP and

Japan and expressed confi-

dence that the visit would

The minister also commended

Nirendra Upadhyay, an advisor

to Yamanashi Prefecture and a

native of UP, for his pivotal role

in fostering these ties.

strengthen these relations.

2 four-lane flyovers inaugurated | LDA e-auction | Minister discusses growth of Buddhist tourism with

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that Lucknow was emerging as an investment hub with world-class infrastructure.

Lauding the Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Singh said that the state was witnessing unprecedented development under Yogi Adityanath's lead-

Highlighting the state's progress, he emphasised that efforts were underway to transform Lucknow into a global investment hub with worldclass infrastructure.

Rajnath Singh and Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of various development projects worth Rs 1,028 crore in Lucknow on Friday.

The defence minister said, "In a recent international survey, Lucknow has been included among the fastest-growing cities in the world, with rapid-

ly increasing land prices."
He also recalled the contributions of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, emphasising that concrete steps have been taken to develop urban and rural infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh in line with his vision.

The defence minister highlighted the significant increase in urban infrastructure investment, stating that between 2004 and 2014, only Rs 1.78 lakh crore was spent in this sector. However, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, from 2014 to 2024, the investment has surged to Rs 28.52 lakh crore, he added.

Emphasising the expansion of the Lucknow Metro, Singh mentioned that the Charbagh to Vasant Kunj project is expected to receive approval soon. To improve traffic flow in the city, multiple flyovers and highways are being constructed, he added.

"A four-lane flyover from Polytechnic crossing to Munshi Pulia, built at a cost of Rs 170 crore, and another flyover from Indira Nagar to Khurramnagar, constructed at a cost of Rs 270 crore, were formally inaugurated on Friday. Additionally, Rs 45 crore has been approved for the construction of a service road near Amar Shaheed Path,"



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the inauguration or laying of the foundation stone of several development projects, in Lucknow on Friday

he informed.

The defence minister further mentioned that Lucknow's railway network is being upgraded significantly. The renovation of Gomti Nagar railway terminal, Alamnagar satellite station, Aishbagh and Badshahnagar railway stations has been completed, while the modernisation

of Transport Nagar and Utraitia stations is underway, he pointed out.

He said Lucknow airport was being developed to enhance

international flight services. He also said that the BrahMos He also said that the BrahMos missile manufacturing project, part of the Defence Manufacturing Corridor, would be inaugurated in MayJune this year, marking a significant milestone in Uttar Pradesh's industrial growth. Singh added that the Lucknow-Kannur Expressway is being Kanpur Expressway is being constructed rapidly, and it will reduce travel time between the two cities to just 40 minutes. Rajnath Singh further highlighted the surge in religious tourism following the development of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple and Kashi Vishwanath Corridor. He also stated that Lucknow is witnessing increased invest-ment in real estate, the hotel industry, and healthcare. The defence minister requested Nitin Gadkari to approve

additional road and infrastructure projects for Lucknow that were granted approval. He said that these initiatives would be milestones in transforming Lucknow into a world-class city and expressed confidence that in the coming years, Lucknow would rank among India's top cities, with Uttar Pradesh playing a crucial role in the country's economic

Lucknow to be developed as AI city: Yogi

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said that Lucknow was being developed not only as an Aero City but also as an AI City under the leadership of the double-engine government.

The chief minister said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh is now equipped with modern facilities, providing every citizen with better infrastructure and public services."

The chief minister mentioned that Lucknow has been gifted development projects worth over Rs 1,000 crore, including two major national highway projects costing Rs 440 crore and state projects worth nearly Rs 600 crore. He highlighted that efforts are being made to develop Lucknow into a metro-level city with world-class infrastructure. The Chauraha praised

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for his significant contribution to Uttar Pradesh's development. He highlighted Singh's crucial role in advancing the BrahMos missile manufacturing project under Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in Lucknow and bringing major projects to Jhansi, strengthening UP as a defence manufacturing hub under the Defence Manufacturing Corridor initiative.

Yogi said that the city was being systematically developed on the model of a State Capital Region and key projects like Green Corridor, Kisan Path, International Convention Centre, and an international airport were shaping Lucknow into a global city. Additionally, plans are underway to connect Yamuna Expressway and Purvanchal Expressway, positioning Lucknow as a transportation hub, he added.

The chief minister described the

the money." Prior to this mes

sage, the accused had sent two

videos, one showing the son

bathing in the bathroom with

a bucket, and another of the

daughter-in-law bathing. Upon inspection, a hole was

discovered in the bathroom

ceiling. The accused threatened

the family with death if the

A case has been registered, and

authorities are investigating

The Gautampalli police claimed

to have arrested a youth for

allegedly extorting money online using a fake identity. As per reports, the accused, iden-

tified as Hrithik Khare (24), had

been fraudulently posing as a

junior engineer (JE) from the

Delhi Development Authority

(DVA), Ministry of Urban

Housing, Government of India.

He was allegedly extorting money from individuals by

claiming to check tickets at the

During one of his ticket checks,

Khare allegedly misbehaved

with and assaulted a visitor,

Ankit Kumar. Based on the

complaint, the police arrested

Khare, a resident of Sarojini

Devi Lane, Vishwakarma

Mandir, Maqboolganj. Upon

investigation, the authorities

uncovered the fraud and seized

a fake DVA ID card, a mobile

phone, and two tickets from the

Gomti Riverfront.

money was not paid.

the matter.

ARRESTED

historic Maha Kumbh 2025 in Prayagraj as a symbol of Uttar Pradesh's cultural and economic prosperity. He highlighted that 50 crore devotees have already taken the sacred dip, showcasing the state's strength and efficient management. He mentioned that the Maha

Kumbh is held on land leased from the Defence Ministry, which the state government has been acquiring smoothly for the past eight years and for the first time, devotees are able to visit Akshayavat, Patalpuri, and Saraswati Koop, which were historically restricted sites.

"To accommodate the massive influx of devotees, the state has enhanced connectivity via road, rail and air. Forty regular flights are linking Prayagraj to major cities, while hundreds of special trains have been deployed. Most devotees are arriving by road, with infrastructure projects approved by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari playing a crucial role," he said.

"Maha Kumbh is not just a religious event but also a major economic driver for Uttar Pradesh. The grand festival would contribute Rs 3 lakh crore to the

state's economy," he said.
Addressing concerns over the event's expenditure, he clarified that the Rs 1,500 crore investment was aimed at revitalising Prayagraj, and in return, the state is set to gain significant economic benefits. The event is expected to provide a major boost to tourism and trade, he added. The chief minister stated that the UP cabinet made an on-site inspection of Maha Kumbh arrangements on January 22 by taking a collective holy dip in Prayagraj. During the visit, he requested Union Minister Nitin Gadkari to approve the construc-tion of a new bridge parallel to Shastri bridge and a signature bridge over the Yamuna river.

sell 300 plots

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Development Authority Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar inaugurated the e-auction portal at its head office in Gomti Nagar on Friday.

The LDA vice-chairman emphasised that this initiative is a significant step towards ensuring transparency in the registration and allotment process of properties, aimed at reducing favouritism and corruption. He also stressed the importance of providing a fair and transparent system for all stakeholders involved. Kumar announced that the

LDA would begin accepting registrations for individuals interested in purchasing residential plots at Basant Kunj and other housing schemes across the city. Registration will be open from February 15 (Saturday) to March 10, with (Saturday) to March 10, with status updates provided to applicants by March 17. Providing further details on the available properties, the LDA vice-chairman mentioned that

there were plots in Sector-H of Basant Kunj, measuring 400 square feet, designated for economically weaker sections. Additionally, 300 unsold plots across various locations, across various locations, including Gomti Nagar, Gomti Nagar Extension, Jankipuram Extension, Sharda Nagar, Transport Nagar, and CG City, will be sold through the new equation portal auction portal.

The VC also urged field officers to remain vigilant regarding plots intended for community centers, nursing homes, and city clubs. He noted that such plots, often larger than residential ones, attract interest from locals and musclemen looking to seize them unlawfully.

The online registration system will also allow users to alter the land use status by simply filling out a form and submitting it via the software. Authorities will update applicants about any changes in land status within three days of registration.

of Buddhist tourism with Japanese delegation deep cultural and spiritual ties

Lucknow (PNS): UP's Minister of Tourism and Culture, Jaiveer Singh, welcomed a Japanese delegation, led by Osada, Vice Governor of Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan. During the reception at a hotel in Gomti Nagar, Singh emphasised Uttar Pradesh's rich historical significance as the land of Lord Buddha's teachings and home to some of the most important Buddhist sites that attract millions of pilgrims each year. Singh had in-depth discus-

sions with the delegation about the development of Buddhist tourism sites, investment opportunities, and related sectors. He highlighted that Uttar Pradesh, the birthplace of Buddhism, remains a

pivotal destination for Buddhist pilgrims and a major area of focus for tourism growth. Further elaborating on tourism development, Singh outlined

plans centered on sacred Buddhist sites. The Buddhist Circuit, one of the state's 12 key tourism sectors, is being prioritised by both the Central and state governments, he noted. Efforts are underway to improve connectivity to these sites via rail, water, air, and road, with a strong focus on ensuring the safety of interna-

tional tourists visiting UP. Singh also acknowledged the

Osada expressed his admira-

tion for UP's sacred sites and its immense tourism potential. Drawing a parallel between tourism and "spreading the light of knowledge", he reaffirmed Yamanashi's commitment to collaborating with UP on tourism development. He also announced that a large delegation from Japan would visit UP soon to explore investment opportunities. Principal Secretary (Tourism

and Culture) Mukesh Kumar

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar Short Term E-Tender Notice for

Sophisticated Equipments E-Tender Notice

Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of Universal Testing Machine, Archery Equipments and Naturally Ventilated Poly-House be submitted online latest by 1-03-2025 upto 4:00 p.m. Detailed information can be obtained from website www.eproc.punjab.gov.in. Any corrigendum/ Addendum related to these e-tender will be uploaded, required, on Punjab Govt. website: eproc.punjab.gov.in

Lucknow (PNS): Unidentified number. The accused demand-

NOTICE It is to inform that my name in my aadhar card is incorrectly mentioned as Sherfan which should be read and written as Irfan as per my academic and other documents. Irfan s/o Mo Rafeek vill khalispur Gopalpur pargana

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Neerma Rai To Neerma Gupta, Neerma Gupta W/o Santosh Gupta R/o Flat No.51, Panchratan Apartment, 7/128, Swaroop Nagar Kanpur 208002

Aldemau tehsil Kadipur Distt

Sultanpur

NOTICE

In all my educational records my name has been recorded as DHRU SAINI, Whereas my correct name is DHRUV SAINI. Making correction as per the said revised name should be recorded as Dhruv Saini S/o Mr. Deen Daval Saini R/o 43/91, Dhobi Mohal, Chowk Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

Inform all, I Manoj Kashyap S/o Ram Kishore R/o Village Milkindera Majre Kodar Post & P.S. Lalauli, Tahsil & Distt. Fatehpur U.P. I, Declares By Mistek in Aadhar Card My Name Ram Milan is wrong. In My Educational Records & Passport Correct Name is Manoj Kashyap. Please Note & change in my Aadhar card & read this. All concerned For All Future Purpose.

NOTICE

I Uday Bhan Singh S/o Late Shri S.D.S. Manral R/o A-18 Kurmanchal Nagar Lucknow To be Informed that My Original Sale Deed House No 628K/A-18 Kurmanchal Nagar Lucknow Measuring 5500 Sq.ft. Duly Ragistered in Book No.1 Volume No. 2193 Pages 254 A.F.B. No 1 Volume 2200 Pages 1509 to 1518 Serial No 2857 Dated 29.07.1975 is Lost. Use of Above Ragistry paper by any other person will be considered illegal.

₹6-cr extortion demanded from family

accused demanded an extor- ed Rs 6 crore to be brought to tion amount of Rs 6 crore Gomti Nagar, stating, "You from a family after sending will be wise if you come with them videos filmed secretly in their house's bathroom. A complaint in this regard was filed at the Sushant Golf City Police Station. According to the complaint, on February 11, his son and daughter-in-law received threatening messages on their phones from an unknown



NOTICE

I Sankuntala Trivedi, Spouse of Bhagwati Prasad Trivedi R/O vill-Fanda, Post-Dilip Nagar, Bairi Sawai, Kanpur Dehat- 209204, have changed my name from Sankuntole to Sankuntala Trivedi vide Affidavite Dated 07-02-2025 at Kanpur (U.P)

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Anamta Khan To Anmol Khan. Now I will be known by this name only, Anmol Khan D/o Late Raees Khan R/o 116/123, Bashir Estate Shivpuri, Roshan Nagar Kanpur

NOTICE

I have changed my name from AFROJ AALAM To AFROJ ALAM which is also recorded in the government documents. In future I should be known and identified as AFROJ ALAM, Afroz Alam S/o Hafeejulla R/o Plot No.292 Scheme No-39 Face No -1 Emerald Gulistan, Jajmau Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

Notify that due to mistake my son's Shagun Shukla father name written in High School Marksheet vear 2024(unique ID 8073339) Lalit Shukla where as correct name is Lalit Kumar Shukla.Please correct accordingly.Lalit Kumar Shukla R/o Parehata Post Mohari Khurd Lucknow-227305

Registrations for IIM-L PhD programme close on Feb 23

Lucknow (IIM-L) is closing online registrations for its Doctoral Programme in Management (PhD) 2025 on February 23.

IIM-L Director Prof Archana Shukla shared, "Our PhD programme fosters intellectual curiosity and scholarly excellence, challenging conventional boundaries and inspiring innovative thinking. Doctoral candidates are equipped with the tools to lead impactful research, address real-world challenges, and emerge as thought lead-ers in academia, industry, and society."

The programme offers a comprehensive academic journey, where scholars are mentored by world-class faculty, engaging in research that is both academically rigorous and

Lucknow (PNS): Indian practically relevant, she added. shortlisted based on exam scores and invited for a selection interview. Those holding qualifications from IIMs may be exempt from the exam and can apply directly.

The PhD programme offers research specialisations in Agri-Business Management, Business Sustainability, Communication, Decision Sciences (OR/Stats), Business Environment (Economics), Finance & Accounting, Human Resource Management, Information Technology & Systems, Marketing Management, Operations Management, and

Strategic Management. Chairperson of the Doctoral Programme in Management, Prof Pushpendra Priyadarshi, highlighted diverse career opportunities for graduates.

Traffic cop beaten with belts

Lucknow (PNS): Car-borne unidentified youths allegedly assaulted a traffic constable in the presence of his daughter in an incident of road rage here on Thursday.

The incident occurred near a signal at Mandir Marg turn, where the constable was on his bike, dropping his daughter to school. The accused allegedly hit the bike of the constable, Omkar Mishra, causing his daughter to fall off. When the constable protested, the youths in the car allegedly showered swear words on him, and then attacked him with belts. A crowd gathered at the scene as the issue escalated, but when bystanders attempted to intervene, the attackers threatened them and fled the scene. On the constable's complaint, a case was registered at the Madiaon police station. The police have detained the father of one of the accused, a clerk at Jal Nigam, and are currently questioning him.

CITYBRIEFS

accused.

MOOT COURT CONTEST

The 'First Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar National Moot Court Competition' was inaugurated by the Spectra Moot Court Committee of the Department of Law at BBAU on Friday. Prof Ranbir Chander Sobti, former vice-chancellor of BBAU, was the chief guest, alongside others, including Prof Sudarshan Verma, HoD, Law, and Prof SK Bhatanagar, former VC of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University. In his address, Prof. Sobti highlighted India's journey towards becoming a devel-

oped nation and emphasised the youth's role in driving progress. He stressed the importance of self-study and the right use of freedom of expression. Prof Bhatanagar spoke on the significance of moot court competitions in developing advocacy skills and practical legal knowledge. The first day of the competition included a researcher test for participants.

PLACEMENT DRIVE The Institute of Management

Sciences (IMS), in collaboration with the Indian Industries

Association (IIA), organised a placement drive on Friday. Companies such as Alfa Engineers, Syam Sons Trading, Anuradha Enterprises, 3i Finserve LLP, Mejor Ventures, and Mohanah Enterprises participated. Over 20 recruiting companies, spanning manufacturing, financial services, stock market, marketing, and sales sectors, took part in the event. Students showed enthusiasm, participating in the interview process with these companies. The final selections by the recruiters will be announced

NA/12/28086/2023/41661 Dated CHD :- 2/14/2025

MADHYA PRADESH ROAD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD (Govt. of M.P. Undertaking) 45-A, Arera Hills, Bhopal- 462 011, Madhya Pradesh, CIN: U45203MP2004SGC016758

MPRDC Ph. No. : 0755-2527290, 2765205, Fax : 0755-2572643, Website : www.mprdc.gov.in NIT No.: 14762/665/MPRDC/Procu/2025 Bhopal, Date: 14.02.2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation Limited (MPRDC) Bhopal invite online tender for following Work.

\$.	Name of Work	Bid Security		Completion
No.		(EMD) (in INR Lakhs)	Document (in Rs.)	Period (I/c Rainy Season)
1.	Rehabilitation and Upgradation of Ingoria- Depalpur Road in two lane with Paved shoulder in the state of Madhya Pradesh.	 50.00	50,000/-	24 Months
2.	Rehabilitation and Upgradation of Ingoria- Unhel Road in two lane with Paved shoulder in the state of Madhya Pradesh.	50.00	50,000/-	24 Months

The dates for purchase, submission, etc. are mentioned in the key dates. Tender forms can be purchased online only upto 15:30 hrs. on 24.03.2025 from website www.mptenders.gov.in. The bidders have to submit the Technical bid as well as Financial Bid online only. The Addendum/Corrigendum (if any) shall only be published on the website of www.mptenders. gov.in only. If holiday is declared by Govt. of M.P. on the date of opening, the same will automatically be shifted to subsequent working days.

MPRDC reserves the right to accept/reject any/all tenders without assigning any reason

verka

M.P. Madhvam/118820/2025

MANAGING DIRECTOR

e/ Sealed tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following Sr. Name of Work/Item No. Period/Tentative Qty For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Ice Cream Stabilizer. For Verka Chandigarh Dairy Annual/5085 No's i. Lids for ice cream cups (65ml & 80ml). ii. Lids for ice cream cones (125ml). b) e-tenders:-8500 kg 17000 kg 20 MT Chikki ii. Krisp refined palm kernel oil iii. Mango pulp concentrate iv. Ice cream cones with foil wrappers (125ml), (butterscotch, chocolate 8.7 Lacs & cookie delight). c) Advertisement Material Glow Sign Board, Non Lit Board, Sun Board, Standee, Umbrella, Poster, Dangler etc. Annual d) Hiring of three Refrigerated Vehicles for supply of Ice Cream 01.04.2025 For Verka Sangrur Dairy a) Pest Control Services to 31.03.2026 b) Rice Husk. c) Outsourcing activities i.e. packing of products, Loading/ unloading April 2025/1500 MT Annual d) Milkbar PGI Ghabdan 03 Years For Verka Ferozepur Dairy Annual/ Cap.10000kg-05 a) Hiring of insulated road milk tankers for transportation from verka Cap.15000kg-02 Cap.20000kg-02 Cap.25000 kg-02 Ferozepur dairy to various Milk plants in Puniab or to any other destination etc, on Annual Rate Contract as per Transport Policy. b) Hiring of Mahindra Pickup/ Max Pickup etc. to lift the Cattle feed from various sub store of Milk Union Ferozepur to MPCSs as transport 02 No's policy. For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Hiring of insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in Jalandhar, Kapurthala and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district and Verka Amritsar, Ludhiana Dairy. Annual 01.04.2025 b) Hiring of vehicles for procurement section, accounts sections, sale depot section, marketing section & quality assurance section. i. Car swift dzire, Toyota Etios or equivalent or Sub compact SUV to 31.03.2026 09 No's Bolero Jeep 01 No Bolleto Jeep For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy A) Hiring of car(dzire) for marketing section (Sedan vehicle only) 01 No

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

Supply, Installation and Commissioning of solar water heater different sites under Verka Gurdaspur Dairy.

2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only NA/12/28104/2023/41680 Dated CHD :- 2/14/2025

For Cattle Feed Plant, Bhattian(Khanna) Pest/ Rodent Control service

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

Cap.250 LPD-

25 No's Cap. 300 LPD -

16 No's

Annual

Over 50 cr devotees take holy dip



Devotees gather at a ghat in the Sangam area during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Friday

PNS MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

 $T^{
m he}$ divine and grand gathering of Maha Kumbh 2025, held on the sacred land of Teerthraj Prayagraj since January 13, has now etched its name in history. With over 50 crore devotees taking a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam, this mega event has set a global benchmark for religious and cultural unity. This participation marks the largest congregation in human history for any religious, cultural or social event.

To grasp the sheer magnitude of this gathering, one only needs to compare its scale: aside from India and China, no other country in the world has a population exceeding the number of devotees who have already visited Maha Kumbh.

Nations like the United States, Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan and Bangladesh all have smaller populations than those who have immersed themselves in the sacred waters of Sanatan dharma.

According to the US Census Bureau, among the world's top 10 most populous countries are India (1,41,93,16,933), China (1,40,71,81,209), America (34,20,34,432), Indonesia (28,35,87,097), Pakistan (25,70,47,044),Nigeria (24,27,94,751), Brazil (22,13,59,387), Bangladesh (17,01,83,916),Russia (14,01,34,279) and Mexico

Only India and China surpass the number of devotees at Maha Kumbh. In contrast, nations like the United States. Indonesia, Pakistan and Brazil

(13,17,41,347).

fall significantly behind. This unparalleled spiritual phenomenon is a testament to the

timeless grandeur of Sanatan dharma, transforming Maha Kumbh from a mere festival into a global symbol of faith and unity.

and unity.
The seamless and well-organised efforts of the Yogi Adityanath government have showcased India's rich traditions on a grand stage, mesmerising the world with the divinity and scale of this ancient celebration. ancient celebration. The sacred confluence of the

Ganga, the Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati has witnessed an unprecedented surge of faith as saints, devotees, kalpvasis and pilgrims immerse themselves in the holy waters. The scale of this divine gathering has now surpassed the

amrit snan. More than two crore devotees bathed on January 30 and February 1. Paush Purnima witnessed 1.7 crore devotees taking the sacred dip. On Basant Panchami, 2.57 crore devotees participated in the ritual bathing. The significant bathing festival of Maghi Purnima also saw over two crore devotees at Triveni Sangam. With Maha Kumbh 2025 continuing to draw millions, this spiritual congregation is on track to become the largest in human history, reaf-firming the eternal grandeur of Sanatan dharma on a global scale. Meanwhile, there was a huge

crowd of devotees at the Maha Kumbh again on Friday. On the 33rd day of Maha Kumbh, 79.73 lakh devotees had taken a holy dip till 4 pm.

There was a jam on the roads of Prayagraj and long lines of vehicles were seen on all the highways connecting the

Mahakumbh Nagar. There was a 1.5 kilometrelong-jam on Naini bridge in the morning. Due to the increasing crowd in the Sangam area, people have been stopped at many barriers. The police are constantly announcing that the devotees should wait for the Sangam area to be vacated. The administration estimates that the crowd may swell on Saturday and Sunday.Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a meeting in Lucknow and instructed senior officers to come on the road and fix accountability at every level. He said that there should be no jam anywhere on the roads leading to Prayagraj Maha Kumbh and the devotees should not face any problem. "If there is a jam, then the accountability of the officers there will be fixed," he said.



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis after taking a holy dip with family at Sangam during the ongoing Maha Kumbh

Maha Kumbh on track to set world record in cleanliness



Sanitation workers on Friday clean a ghat in the Sangam area during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

PNS MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The sacred land of Teerthrai Prayagraj is not only hosting the grand Maha Kumbh 2025, but is also making history with record-breaking achievements. On Friday, over 300 sanitation workers undertook a massive river-cleaning drive, simultaneously purifying the Ganga at multiple ghats. This remarkable feat was meticulously organised under the guidelines of the Maha Kumbh Mela Authority, adhering to all required procedures for official recognition.

Representatives from the Guinness Book of World Records will now verify the process. Upon certification, this initiative will stand as an extraordinary milestone, marking the largest-ever synchro-nized river-cleaning campaign. Aligned with chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, the government has launched a arge-scale public awareness campaign to maintain the sanctity of the rivers. As a result, millions of devotees at the Maha Kumbh are experiencing the holy waters of Ganga, Yamuna, and the invisible Maa Saraswati in their purest form. The newly established world record further strengthens this mission. According to officer on special duty Akanksha Rana, the

record-setting cleanliness drive was carried out at three key ghats — Ram Ghat, Bhardwai Ghat, and Gangeshwar Ghat spanning over half an hour. She added, "Beyond achieving a world record, this campaign has also raised awareness about maintaining the river's clean-liness and ghats. With over 300 sanitation workers actively participating, this initiative marks the first-of-its-kind large-scale river-cleaning effort, setting a new global benchmark in environmental responsibility."

Akanksha Kana stated that representatives from the Guinness Book of World Records were present to witness the campaign, along with environmentalists and professors from MNIT, who served as official observers. She added, "The entire process was also documented through videography, which will undergo verification before receiving formal recognition."

Police crackdown on those defaming Maha Kumbh

FIRs against 54 social media accounts

PNS MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

While Maha Kumbh 2025 is being widely praised worldwide, some elements are attempting to defame this grand religious and cultural gathering of Sanatan dharma by spreading fake videos and misleading news on social media. In response, the Uttar Pradesh Police have launched a crackdown on those engaging in such malicious activities. On the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the police are monitoring social media platforms round the

clock and have so far taken legal action against 54 social media accounts involved in spreading rumours through false and misleading posts. During routine social media monitoring on February 13, 2025, the police identified two

misleading videos falsely linked to Maha Kumbh. One of the misleading videos claimed that a massive fire broke out at the Maha Kumbh bus stand, resulting in 40-50 vehicles being burnt to ashes. However, the video was actually from a 2020 oil pipeline accident in Egypt. The police registered an FIR at Kotwali Kumbh Mela police station against seven social media accounts responsible for spreading this false informa-

At the same time, the second misleading video falsely claimed that "nationalist people threw slippers at army jawans in Kumbh". In reality, the footage was from a chaotic event during a film production in Patna, Bihar. The police identified 15 social media accounts responsible for spreading this misinformation and have taken legal action against them. Accounts that linked the Egypt fire incident to Maha Kumbh 2025 include:. India With Congress (@UWCforYouth) X (Twitter);

Afzal Ansari faces legal action

PNS LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MP Afzal Ansari faces trouble for making a controversial statement on Maha Kumbh. A alleged that earlier also Afzal case has been registered in Ansari had made a statement Ghazipur's Shadiabad police station against him.

The case was registered by former District Cooperative Bank chairman Devprakash Singh. Meanwhile, the police have started investigating the mat-

In the complaint given to the police, Devprakash Singh has alleged that despite being an MP. Afzal Ansari has made indecent remarks on Maha Kumbh and this has hurt the

Harindra Kumar Rao

sentiments of crores of people who believe in Sanatan dhar-

The former chairman of District Cooperative Bank about the saints and sages coming to Maha Kumbh. Superintendent of Police Dr Iraj Raja said that a case had been registered and the matter was being investigated. It may be mentioned that while participating in the programme organised on Ravidas ayanti in Jakhania on Wednesday night, Afzal Ansari had made a controversial statement on bathing in Maha Kumbh.

(@kumar.harindra.rao) Instagram; Anil Patel (@_1_4_3_anil_patel)
Instagram; Vishal Babu (@a.v.r_rider_0) Instagram; Nemi (@nemichand.kumawat.2022) Instagram; Sifa Bhadoriya (@bhadoriya6285) Instagram; Hello prayagraj (@Hello_Prayagraj) YouTube. Accounts that linked the Patna incident to Maha Kumbh include; Inderjeet Barak (@inderjeetbarak) SUNIL (Twitter): (@sunil1997_) Nihal (@mr_nihal_sheikh) - X (Twitter); (@Dimpi77806999) - X (Twitter); Sat Sewa (@lalit-jawla76) – X (Twitter); Sandesh

Chand

- X (Twitter); Shaikh Ďimpi Vatak News (@Sandeshvataksv) - X (Twitter); Lokesh Meena (@LOKESHMEEN46402) - X

(Twitter); Raj Singh Chaudhary

(@RajSingh_Jakhar) - X (Twitter); Yunus Alam -

Facebook; Aminuddin Siddiqui

- Facebook; Arvind Singh

Shivam Kumar Kushwaha Facebook; Jain Renu Facebook: Amit Kumar II Facebook; Mehtar Ek Yoddha Ballia - Facebook. In the past month, the UP Police have taken strict action

Yadav Ahirwal - Facebook;

against various misleading posts and videos attempting to tarnish the image of Maha Kumbh 2025. On January 13, 2025, a Twitter

user posted a mock fire drill video, falsely claiming it was an actual fire incident at Maha Kumbh. On February 2, 2025, action was taken against seven accounts that circulated an old video from Nepal, falsely presenting it as a stampede at Maha Kumbh. On February 7, 2025, an FIR was registered against a Facebook account that misrepresented a large crowd in the Sangam area as a stampede. On February 9, 2025, a case was registered against 14 Twitter accounts for falsely linking an incident in Dhanbad, Jharkhand, to Maha Kumbh.

Mamta to continue as Kinnar Akhara 'mahamandaleshwar'

(PTI): Mamta Kulkarni will continue as a Kinnar Akhara mahamandaleshwar after her resignation from the post was not accepted. She was made a mahamandaleshwar on January 24 during a ceremony at the ongoing Maha Kumbh. The former actor said in a video on Thursday, "My resignation from the post of mahaman-daleshwar was not accepted. I am grateful that Acharya Laxmi Narayan Tripathi retained me." Kinnar Akhara's 'acharya mahamandaleshwar' Narayan Tripathi confirmed to PTI that Kulkarni would remain in her role. Kulkarni had announced her resignation from the post in a video on February 10. Akharas are monastic institutions or sects that unite seers (ascetics) under specific spiritual traditions and practices.

expectations set by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who had envisioned a record-break-

ing Maha Kumbh even before

Right from the start, Chief Minister Yogi had projected that this Maha Kumbh would

see 45 crore devotees, a mile-

stone already achieved by February 11. By February 14,

the number of bathers had

crossed 50 crore, with 12 days

and one major bathing festival remaining. The total count is

now expected to soar beyond

55 to 60 crore.
A closer look at the pilgrimage highlights the overwhelming

participation on key bathing days, with Mauni Amavasya

seeing the most significant

gathering, with eight crore

devotees taking the holy dip. On Makar Sankranti, 3.5 crore

it began.

Attacked: A mahamandaleshwar of the Kinnar Akhara and his three disciples were allegedly attacked by unknown assailants. All four injured individuals have been admitted to the Central Hospital in Sector 2 from the fair area in an injured condition. "Last night, when we were leaving the Akhara, more than half a dozen boys came in front of the car and surrounded it. They first attacked me with a sharp weapon, and when the disciples protested, they also attacked them," said Mahamandaleshwar Kalyaninand Giri of the Kinnar Akĥara. He added that after a long scuffle, they found an opportunity to escape. "In this attack, my three disciples and I were all injured. We were brought to the Central Hospital, where we are undergoing treatment." Station House Officer (SHO) of Anna Kshetra police station, Shambhu Singh, stated that people from the Kinnar Akhara side are set to lodge a formal complaint about the incident. Initial investigations have revealed that the attack is related to an old rivalry between two groups of eunuchs, he said.

Rahul, Priyanka likely to take dip tomorrow

Lucknow (PNS): Leader of opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi along with his sister Privanka Gandhi, also a MP, are likely to take a holy dip in the Maha Kumbh on coming Sunday. According to Congress sources, their programme has almost been finalised and preparations are being made by the party leaders. So far, the Congress leaders have not confirmed officially any

programme of Rahul or Priyanka

but sources said that they would

directly reach Prayagraj and may

also walk down to the Sangam

nose to take a holy dip.

पंजाब नैश्नान बैंक 🔘 punjab national bank **GAD SECTION, CIRCLE OFFICE**

59/29, BIRHANA ROAD, KANPUR -208001 PREMISES REQUIRED Punjab National Bank requires suitable ready built and well-constructed

premises having Carpet Area of 80-100 sq ft for ATM on lease/rental basis. Premises should be on Ground Floor near Gurudwara Gumti No 5 Kanpur Premises offered should have all clearance certificates from statutory authorities. Interested owners / registered Power of attorney Holders of such premises in the desired locality, who are ready to lease out their readily available premises on long term lease basis preferably for 15 years or more may send their offers in the prescribed format available on Bank's Web Site www.pnbindia.in or the same may be obtained from the above address during office hours. The complete offer duly sealed & signed and should reach the undersigned on or before (22.02.2025 by 5.00 pm) at the above address. Bids can also be placed in sealed box kept at Circle Office. No brokerage and other charges will be paid by the Bank. Bank reserves the

right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons whatsoever. **CIRCLE HEAD**

SOUTH ASIAN ENTERPRISES LIMITED

Regd. Office: Room No.1, 4/25, Gagan Deep, Triveni Nagar, Meerpur Cantt, Kanpur -208004 (U.P.) Corp. Office: 90, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase-III, New Delhi-110 020, Ph. No. 011-46656666

CIN No.L91990UP1990PLC011753, Website: www.sael.co.in, Email: southasianenterprises@gmail.com STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2024

				(₹ in Lakhs)			(₹ in Lakh
S. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE			CONSOLIDATED		
		Quarter Ended		Nine Months Ended	Quarter Ended		Nine Months Ende
		31.12.2024	31.12.2023	31.12.2024	31.12.2024	31.12.2023	31.12.2024
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)
1	Total Income						
	- From Operations	6.89	11.95	20.66	37.02	130.98	150.
	- From Others	10.75	10.73	31.99	34.98	14.58	48.
	Total	17.64	22.68	52.65	72.00	145.56	199.3
2	Net Profit /(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional Items and /or extraordinary Item)	(2.21)	(2.98)	(9.23)	18.65	(19.53)	(25.4
3	Net Profit /(Loss) for the period before Tax (After Exceptional Items and /or Extraordinary items)	(322.99)	(2.98)	(330.01)	(142.22)	(19.53)	(186.3
4	Net Profit /(Loss) for the period after Tax (After exceptional Items and /or Extraordinary items)	(317.13)	(2.96)	(323.63)	(137.14)	(18.92)	(181.9
5	Total Comprehensive Income [Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(318.07)	(2.72)	(326.43)	(137.67)	(19.13)	(183.5
6	Paid up Share Capital (F.V. of Rs.10/- each)	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.
7	Other Equity	9.5				95	
8	Earnings Per Share (EPS) :						
	from continuing operations						
	(1) Basic (In Rupees)	(7.93)	(0.07)	(8.09)	(3.63)	(0.32)	(4.3
	(2) Diluted (In Rupees)	(7.93)	(0.07)	(8.09)	(3.63)	(0.32)	(4.3
	from discontinuing operations						
	(1) Basic (In Rupees)	54			14		
	(2) Diluted (In Rupees)	19.		C.	2	1.2	

Jal Kalash contributes to Green Maha Kumbh

Mahakumbh Nagar (PNS): Maha Kumbh 2025 has witnessed several innovative initiatives aimed at environmental protection and cleanliness. The Jal Kalash initiative has emerged as a major attraction among them. Established at Arail ghat, Sector 24, Nishad Raj Marg, this initiative focuses on collecting and recycling used plastic water bottles from the Maha Kumbh meal area to prevent their harmful impact on nature. So far, over 20,000 plastic bottles have been collected during this cam-

paign. The initiative has been launched with the support of various organisations under the leadership of G Ashok Kumar, former Director General of the Namami Gange Mission. This 20day campaign, organised by Development Alternatives in col-laboration with the HCL Foundation, runs from February 1 to February 20, 2025. At the local level, the Adarsh Seva Samiti and Mangal Bhumi Foundation are actively supporting the initiative. Speaking about the initiative, Kumar said, "To

make Maha Kumbh a Green Kumbh, we have taken this small step by collecting plastic bottles used in the Maha Kumbh mela area. The installation of Jal Kalash symbolises the urgent need to prevent plastic waste from entering the Ganga. This effort reinforces the message that plastic pollution disrupts the uninterrupted flow and purity of the river. By placing these plastic bottles inside a Kalash, we hope to raise awareness and encourage people to keep the Ganga clean and free from plastic waste."

NOTES:

Place: New Delhi

Date: 13/2/2025

The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / nine months ended Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange's website at http://www.bseindia.com and also on the Company's website at www.sael.co.in.

Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items (if any) have been adjusted in the Statement of profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules. The consolidated financial results include the financial results of the subsidiary viz. Chai Thela Private Limited. The Consolidated financial results have been prepared as per IND AS 110 on Consolidated Financial Statements

The above unaudited financial results for the quarter & nine months ended 31/12/2024 were approved and taken on record by the Board in its meeting held on 13/02/2025 after being reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee on

the same date and have been subjected to limited review by the statutory auditors of the Company. Corresponding figures of the previous period have been regrouped / rearranged, wherever necessary

For and on behalf of the Board (Tej Bhan Gupta) Managing Director DIN: 00106181

LUCKNOW | SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 15, 2025

Akhilesh demands actual count of stampede victims

Former Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav reiterated the demand for disclosure of the actual number of victims in the stampede during the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. He was talking informally to reporters at the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Babatpur on Friday. Akhilesh came here by a private plane from Amausi Airport in Lucknow to attend the wedding ceremony of the daughter of Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Lal Bihari Yadav and to bless the bride and groom at the Rameshwar Dham Lawn in Wajidpur, Harhua here.
The SP chief criticised the

state government for claiming to have spent ₹100 crore on the Maha Kumbh. He claimed that arrangements were not good and devotees had to face great inconvenience. He said it is the moral responsi-



bility of the state government to return the money given for allotment of shops to shop-keepers who suffered losses in the Maha Kumbh fair. He said when the main roads

were closed or diverted due to the 'mismanagement' of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

government, how could customers reach these shops and how could these traders run their business. He alleged that the BIP-ruled Uttar Pradesh government is completely responsible for their losses. "We demand from the UP government return the money

questioned that on one hand the government is claiming that billions of rupees are linked to the economy of Prayagraj and UP due to Maha Kumbh, then why can't the BJP government return a few lakhs of these shopkeepers. He said there is a discussion among the shopkeepers of the Kumbh Mela that all of them together will demand this from the BJP govern-ment of UP. On being asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to America, the SP chief said this visit will be meaningful only when the trade between the two countries is in India's favour. He expressed serious concern over the continuous devaluation of the rupee in comparison to the US dollar. Earlier, when Akhilesh reached Babatpur Airport, local party leaders warmly welcomed him. Later, after attending the wedding ceremony, the Samajwadi Partu president returned to Lucknow by plane.



Kanpur (PNS): International table tennis player and income tax officer Geeta Tandon Kapoor won the gold medal in Kapoor won the gold medal in the Central Revenue Sports and Cultural Board (North Zone) sports competitions 2024-25 organised by the Income Tax department at Uttar Pradesh Table Tennis Academy, Lucknow. She defeated Ishita Tripathi of Ludhiana, 2.0 While attributing the signal of the Contract of the C 3-0. While attributing the victory to her colleagues in IT department, friends, well wishers and family members, she extended gratifude to them for their encouragement and support which helped her in attaining glo-rious heights. It may be recalled that Geeta Tandon Kapoor won gold medals in international table tennis tournaments to make the country and the Income Tax department shine in sports. She also works for the uplift of weaker section of society and is president of Women's Wing of Khatri

Geeta wins gold Control room set up in CMO office

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

 $T^{\text{he Health department is}}_{\text{constantly taking new initiatives in medical services. In}$ order to strengthen the medical system, all community health centres (CHCs) and primary health centres (PHCs) are being monitored by setting up a control room in the chief medical officer (CMO) office. Giving this information, CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said CCTV cameras have been installed at registration counters, OPDs, wards, MNCUs, pathology and medicine distribution counters and other rooms of the hospitals as well as in hospital premises and entrance roads. They have been connected to the control room of the CMO office so that every activity of the hospitals can be closely monitored. The CMO said CCTV cameras have been installed in all 29 Urban PHCs, five Urban CHCs, nine Rural CHCs and five block community centres. With this initiative while mothers and children admitted in MNCU etc as well as patients admitted in other wards, the timely presence of doctors and staff is also being



CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary on Friday monitoring activities at CHCs and PHCs at control room in Varanasi

ensured. Dr Chaudhary said four CCTV cameras have been installed in all the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (health sub-centres) operating in the district, which are being monitored from the PHCs/CHCs of their block headquarters. Assistant research officers working at the block level have been given the responsibility for this work. The control room set up in the Chief Medical Officer's office is being operated 24 hours a day and seven days a week, in which additional chief medical officers, additional research officers

and other personnel have been put on duty. The CMO is also inspecting the control room daily. As soon as something is in the camera at any CHC/ PHC in the district which is against medical standards, then the medical superintendents are immediately directed to resolve the situation. The monitoring is being done in the CMO office control room by Additional Chief Medical Officer (ACMO) Dr AK Maurya, Dr Rajesh Prasad, Dr SS Kanaujia, Additional Research Officer (ARO) SP Shukla, Arun Srivastava and

DM inspects Namo Ghat, reviews preparations PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI from Namo Ghat by boarding the main event will be held at

District Magistrate S Rajalingam inspected Namo Ghat on Thursday evening to ensure the successful completion of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) 3.0 and to review the preparations made so far. He inspected the site along with Additional District Magistrate (Finance/Revenue) Vandita Srivastava and inquired about the arrangements and gave necessary instructions to the officers present on the spot. The ADM (F/R) gave detailed

information about necessary arrangements, including those to be set up at various places through the map.

The district magistrate directed to finalise the final set up of the stage pandal, backdrop, creative and other materials soon. The district magistrate completed for the KTS 3.0

the motor boat of water police. The boat drivers and operators who operate boats after 6 pm were warned of action and the Water Police personnel were instructed in this direction. While walking from Dashashwamedh Ghat the district magistrate warned the street vendors not to set up shops on road sides and they were removed immediately. He said if shops are set up here again, action is certain. The officials of Municipal Corporation were instructed for further action. After this, the district magistrate again inspected Godowlia and Girjaghar cross-

Earlier, while addressing a press conference at Circuit House, the district magistrate said all preparations have been reached Dashashwamedh Ghat starting from Saturday in which

Namo Ghat and students of IIT-BHU and IIT-Madras will also participate in it. He said the participants from Tamil Nadu will reach Kashi in six groups. He said this time emphasis is being laid on the academic sessions and stalls related to various artefacts and cultural subjects of north-south

will also be set up.
Rajalingam further said that every type of art forms of Tamil Nadu will be performed every day and like previous two KTS events, this time too efforts will be held so that the participants can visit the major places here related to Tamil people like Sringeri Math, Kanchi Math, Jangamwadi Math, Kumaraswamy Math, Tailang Swami Temple, Kedareshwar Temple, Agasteshwar Temple, Annapurna Temple and

Kaudiya Mata Temple.

Vegetable trader killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

vegetable trader died while Avegetable trader dica mine around half-a-dozen people were injured when a speeding car hit an e-rickshaw from behind on Mandhana flyover under Bithoor police station area on Friday morning. With the help of a crane, police got the damaged car and e-rickshaw to the side of the road to restore the traffic. Naresh of Hallu Sarai, Sambhal, along with wife, Gudiya, daughter Kashish, Aditya, Shalu and Naini of the family was going to Prayagraj Maha Kumbh on car with driver Harsh. On GT Road Mandhana flyover, the car hit an e-rickshaw laden with tomatoes from behind due to which it overturned on



the spot. This led to the killing of vegetable trader Munni Lal Kashyap (55) of Manpur, Chaubepur, on the spot. Another trader Sumit, e-rickshaw operator, car driver Harsh were seriously injured while other car riders sustained minor injury. Police sent all the injured to the hospital.

Officials visit areas near KVT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

In view of the rush of devotees from Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Dr S Channappa inspected Girjaghar and Godowlia crossings and their surrounding areas on Friday and gave necessary instructions to the policemen deployed on the

After this, the DM walked to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) from Gate Number 4. He visited the Chowk police station and reviewed the arrangements. He directed the chief medical officer (CMO) to deploy one medical team each at Kotwali police station and

Maidagin crossing. A Telangana couple's five-year-old son named Revanth Reddy



got lost in the crowd for which they requested the district magistrate for help. The DM immediately took cognisance of it and instructed the policemen to find the child who was found safely within half an hour and handed over to the couple. The couple expressed their gratitude to the DM.

During the inspection of Gate Number 4 of the temple from the church at Girjaghar cross-

ing, shopkeepers selling on carts and footpaths were warned not to create unnecessarv crowds, otherwise, action would be taken. They were also immediately removed from there. After this, they walked back from the temple to Maidagin and reached Chowk police station and Maidagin crossing. ACP Pragya Pathak was also present at Maidagin

Al's role in revolutionising healthcare discussed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ

The Indian Institute of Prof Anirban Guha delved into Al's rapid evolution over the past Allahabad (IIIT-A) organised fifth international workshop on Generative AI and Human Robot Interactions at its Centre for Intelligent Robotics (CIR), IIITA

campus on Friday. The inauguration ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, including chief guest Dr Alok Misra (MD-DM, Allahabad) and guest of honour Prof. Anirban Guha (IIT Bombay). Prof Mukul Sharad Sutaone, Director of IIIT-A, and Prof GC Nandi, Head of CIR, extended a warm welcome to the attendees, underscoring the significance of generative AI in shaping the next frontier of robot-

ics and automation. The event commenced with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, followed by felicitation of guests and keynote speeches. Prof Mukul Sharad Sutaone highlighted CIR's 25-year legacy in AI and robotics research, emphasising the growing importance of explainability and accountability

decade and its expanding influ ence across multiple disciplines. Dr. Alok Misra discussed Al's role in revolutionising healthcare, citing breakthroughs such as AlphaFold's protein structure prediction and the integration of robotic systems in hospital management. He encouraged researchers to focus on AI-driven innovations for healthcare chal-

MISHAP: An eight-year-old child was killed after being hit by a speeding motorcycle near Maudostpur Panchayat Bhawan in Mauaima area.

FIRE IN THREE HOUSES: Three houses of Mishrapur Basti located in Meja area suddenly caught fire late on Thursday night. The flames engulfed all three houses in no time due to which all the goods kept in the houses were burnt to ashes. However, how the fire broke out it not yet known.

MSME outreach programme held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The divisional office of Punjab National Bank (PNB) organised an MSME outreach programme at Mandakini Nakshatra Lawn, Saket Nagar, on Thursday. The event aimed at fulfilling prime minister's vision of making an self-reliant and developed country and promoting the MSME sector. It was inaugurated by Adviser, Merchant Chamber of Commerce (MCC), Uttar Pradesh, RK Agarwal. Secretary, MCC, Mahendra Modi and general manager of PNB HQ Gaurav Gupta were also present along with the divisional chief Prem Chandra Chaudhary. Speaking on the occasion, RK Agarwal, while praising the efforts of PNB said it had been making its special contribution in country's progress. Apart from extending financial aid, it was also providing guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs in setting up their units. MCC Secretary Mahendra Modi said he

would arrange for the training of some of the bank's employees in industry department to make them proficient right from the stage of registration to subsidy disbursement in MSME sector. General Manager Gauray Gupta and Divisional chief Prem Chandra Chaudhary assured people of always remaining at their disposal to extend all possible assistance. Chaudhary also proposed the vote of thanks. The outreach programme was an important platform for the entrepreneurs in MSME sector where industry experts, investors and entrepreneurs shared their views and experience. Problems relating to micro, small and medium industries were also resolved. Entrepreneurs were provided guidance about the latest techniques, product development and marketing strategies. This proved to be an important initiative in spreading awareness about new avenues in MSME sector.

confined to major cities worldwide

The recognition of Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in the ing rapidly. Higher education is no longer confined to major cities worldwide. Several other cities are also progressing rapidly with skills and technology". This was stated by the AIU President and Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU) Vice-Chancellor Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak while addressing academicians from around the world in London on Thursday.

Participating in the India-UK Achievers Programme, Prof Pathak said institutions in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities have significantly advanced their educational infrastructure. They have incorporated new curricula aligned with contemporary needs, along with research initiatives.

Prof. Pathak emphasised that today's world relies on connectivity, knowledge exchange and



Pathak: Higher education no longer

global collaboration. Higher education is not just about academic excellence; it also serves as a means for socio-economic development, innovation, and addressing global challenges. Therefore, it is essential to move beyond traditional boundaries, foster collaborations and build an inclusive, empowered and sustainable educational future. In today's era students must

possess not only degrees but also essential professional and technical skills to succeed in

The India-UK Achievers Programme and the India-UK-Ireland Higher Education Summit held at the Palace of Westminster in the House of Lords, witnessed the participation of prominent figures from various countries. The summit will see global academicians,

university vice-chancellors and policymakers deliberating on pressing global challenges such as climate change and public

On the occasion Prof Pathak stated that the educational ties between India and the UK have deep historical roots. Great leaders and scholars such as Mahatma Gandhi and Dr BR Ambedkar studied in universities in Britain and Ireland and used their knowledge to shape India's future. Today, this partnership is not just a part of history but is also entering a new era through innovation, research and academic excellence.

He highlighted that the primary objective of this summit is to establish deeper ties and strengthen partnerships between educational institutions in India, the UK, and Ireland. Education must transcend borders so that universities do not remain merely local institutions but evolve into global knowledge hubs.

Lecture on interrelationship between creation & criticism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Literary scholar Prof Radhavallabh Tripathi said there is a critic even in the creator. In the Indian tradition, a great philosopher can also be a great poet. "Anandvardhan has compared Sahitya Vidya with Lakshya texts. Śahitya Vidya means the Shastra of literature and Lakshya texts mean Gaurav texts and classic texts. Bharat Muni has accepted in Natyashastra that the Shastra should reach the people; there is no people without Shastra and there is no Shastra without the people, the same relationship exists between creation and criticism", he said.

Expressing these things while delivering a lecture on the topic 'Interrelationship between creation and criticism: View of Indian tradition' in the Kamala Prasad Smriti Lecture 2025 organised in the Sambodhi Auditorium of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Thursday, he said Kalidas presents a challenge to criticism. "In Ritusanhar, Kalidas sings the praises of whole earth,



A lecture being held at BHU in Varanasi

encompasses the entire cultural understanding. Europe differentiates between poet, philosopher and critic but it is not so in the Indian tradition. Shankaracharya is a great philosopher and he has also written the Saundaryalahari poem. Poets like Magha, Bharavi etc have given many formulas to criticism. Kalidas tells about the standards of poetry and art in Shakuntala. Pt Jagannath is both a great poet and critic," Prof Tripathi

said. Delivering the welcome speech on behalf of Kamala Prasad Smriti Cultural Institute, Sanjay Srivastava said Kamala Prasad was not a critic of the university campus, he was known for his pro-people stance. Kedarnath Singh, Arun Kamal, Awadhesh Pradhan, Rajesh Joshi, Abhay Kumar Dubey, Vishwanath Tripathi etc have been associated with the earlier Kamla Prasad Smriti Lectures. While presenting the topic, Prof Manoj Kumar Singh said there is a need to talk about how today's generation is looking at the tradition. There should be thought on how much Sanskrit scholars have talked about what we call criticism in the modern sense, which has a creative process. A thing like criticism did not exist in Sanskrit.

Prof Rajkumar, who was presiding over the programme, said western criticism moves forward towards theory building; instead of creation, it emphasises on what can be the principles of the study of literature. All the sects in the Indian tradition search for 'what is literature'. The history of Western criticism also influenced us. It is said that there is no knowledge in literature and arts. They should remain under the discipline of knowledge", he said. This joint event was organised by Dr Preeti Tripathi and the vote of thanks was proposed by Prof Ashish Tripathi, coordinator of Centre of Women's Studies and Development. In this programme, Prof Awadhesh Pradhan, Prof Binda Paranjape, Prof Sadashiv Kumar Dwivedi, Prof Krishnamohan Pandey, Prof Vinay Kumar Singh, Prof DK Ojha, Prof Archana Sharma, Prof Arpita Chatterjee, Prof Prabhakar Singh, Prof Satyapal Sharma, Prof Neeraj Khare, Prof Sameer Kumar Pathak, Dr Prabhat Kumar Mishra, Dr Mahendra Prasad Kushwaha, Dr Satyaprakash Singh, Dr Ravishankar Sonkar, Dr Priyanka Sonkar, Dr Meenakshi Jha, Dr Vindhyachal Yadav, Dr Meenakshi Shailendra Singh, Dr Jhabloo Ram, Dr Sachin Mishra, Dr Vihag Vaibhav along with

researchers and students were

present in large numbers.

NTPC marks 50th anniversary with Electron Quiz

Kanpur (PNS): NTPC, India's largest integrated power utility, marks its 50th anniversary with the Electron Ouiz 2025 from February 1-28 across nine regional locations (Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Ranchi, Noida, Raipur, and Patna).

The Northern Region round is on February 17 at Indira Gandhi Pratisthan, Lucknow, with 100+ teams are expected to participate from top engineering and manage-ment colleges in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

The quiz, open to two-member teams, fosters knowledge, critical thinking, and industry-academia connections. The prizes include: 1st winner: ₹30,000, 2nd runner-up: ₹20,000, Third place: ₹10,000 and consolation prizes - fourth-sixth place: ₹4,000 each. The top two teams from each region will advance to the national semi-finals with the best progressing to the national finals. Since 2004, the NTPC Electron Quiz has celebrated intellectual excellence. As NTPC turns 50, this edition embodies its legacy of progress, innovation, and knowledge.

trophy unveiled organisers are trying to

For the first time in the history of India, the Day Night Divyang Premier League (DPL) cricket is going to be organised by the All India Divyang Cricketer Association at Sigra Stadium here from February 16 to 18 in which Divyang cricket players from all over the country will participate. On the occasion, the trophy of DPL

was unveiled. Addressing the press conference Varanasi on Friday by organisers. here on Friday, chief trustee of Shri Ranchhod Das Ji Charitable Eye Hospital Rajkot (Gujarat) Praveen Vasani said that sports is the most powerful medium to increase the self-confidence of Divyangs and

motivate them to contribute in the construc-

tion of a developed India. General Secretary of All India Divvang Cricket Association and renowned pediatrician Dr Sanjay Chaurasia said Divyang cricket players from every state of India are participating which will have a positive impact all over India. He said in the DPL there will be thrilling matches between West Warriors, East Eagles, North Dabangs, Central Lions, Kashi Trends and South Survivors teams. President of All India Divyang Cricket Association Dr Uttam Ojha said this DPL is unique in the whole world because it is being organised completely with public cooperation and participation. The



The DPL Trophy being unveiled in

organise the DPL matches in metros as well, he said, adding that this match will be broadcast live all over the world through a special app Sport Biz'. COE of All India Divyang

Association Dr Rajesh Pandey said the start of DPL Premier will prove to be a milestone in the history of Divyang cricket and this will give more opportunities to

Cricket

Divyang players to showcase their skills and the interest of new Divyang players towards the game will increase. The opening ceremony of the match will be

held on February 16 at 2 pm. Dr Deepa Malik, the first Divyang player to receive the Padma Shri Major Dhyanchand Award and Uttar Pradesh Minister Ravindra Jaiswal will be present at the opening ceremony. On February 17, UP Sports Minister Girish Yadav and Vice- Chancellor of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University Prof Bihari Lal Sharma will be the guests. The closing ceremony will be held on February 18 at 6 pm in which former captain of the Indian cricket team and international legendary cricketer Dilip Vengsarkar will participate. Special Olympics Bharat President Dr Mallika Nadda has also

CBI seeks hearing dates for 2G case | Buddha's teachings offer solution acquittal appeal involving A Raja

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $T^{
m he\ CBI}$ on Friday informed the Delhi High Court that its appeal against the acquittal of former Telecom Minister A Raja and 16 others in the 2G spectrum allocation case was "ripe for

CBI counsel senior advocate Sanjay Jain urged Justice Vikas Mahajan to either fix multiple dates to hear the matter, having a voluminous record, or post it on another date to decide a hearing schedule. He said, "The matter is ripe for hearing. I request the court to give a bouquet of multiple dates." Justice Mahajan then posted the matter on March 18.

A special CBI court on December 21, 2017 acquitted former UPA-era Telecom Minister Raja, who is now an MP from Nilgiris, DMK MP Kanimozhi and others in the CBI and ED cases stemming from the 2G scam. CBI and ED filed appeal challenging



Former tellicomm minister A Raia

Court in March 2018. After six years, the High Court on March 22, 2024 admitted the CBI appeal saying there were "some contradictions" in the trial court judgment requiring a "deeper examination".

the acquittal in the High In the CBI case, Raja, Kanimozhi and 15 others were tried under provisions of the IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act for offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery, using as genuine fake documents,

criminal misconduct by public servant and taking bribes. Aside from Raja and Kanimozhi, the special court acquitted former telecom secretary Siddharth Behura, Raja's former private secretary R K Chandolia, Unitech Limited managing director Sanjay Chandra and three top executives of the Reliance Anil Ambani Group -Gautam Doshi, Surendra Pipara and Hari Nair - in the CBI case.

Swan Telecom promoters Shahid Balwa and Vinod Goenka and the directors of Kusegaon Fruits and Vegetables Private Limited -Asif Balwa and Rajiv Agarwal - were also acquitted in the CBI case.

The special court also acquitted Swan Telecom (Private) Limited, Unitech Wireless (Tamil Nadu) Limited, Reliance Telecom Limited, film producer Karim Morani and Kalaignar TV director Sharad Kumar in the CBI

to global conflicts, says PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that many of the world's conflicts are an outcome of taking extreme positions instead of a balanced approach, asserting that Buddha's teachings of fol-lowing the middle path and avoiding extremes offer solu-tion to numerous global chal-

In a video address to the fourth edition of Samvad, a global Hindu-Buddhist initiative for conflict avoidance, organised in Thailand, Modi said the shared traditions of Asia rooted in the principles of Dhamma provide answers to the environmental crisis plaguing the

Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, and other Asian traditions teach people to live in harmony with nature, he said, adding they do not see themselves as separate from nature but as a part of it. According to a statement, Modi highlighted the concept of Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses 'SAMVAD' programme in Thailand via video conferencing. trusteeship, as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, and empha-

resources for progress, one must also consider our responsibility to future generations. This approach ensures that resources are used for growth, not greed, he added. Noting that this edition of Samvad is hosting a religious roundtable, bringing together diverse religious leaders, He expressed confidence that valuable insights will emerge from this

sised that when using natural

platform, shaping a more harmonious world. Praising the host country Thailand for its rich culture, history, and heritage, Modi stressed that it stands as a beautiful example of the shared philosophical and

spiritual traditions of Asia. Ûnderlining the deep cultural ties shared by India and Thailand spanning over 2,000 years, he said Ramayana and Ramakien connect the two nations and that their shared reverence for Lord Buddha

Citing Buddha, he said the principle of moderation remains relevant today, offering guidance in addressing global

He mentioned the vibrant partnership across multiple sectors between the two countries, and said India's 'Act East' policy and Thailand's 'Act West' pólicy complement each other. He said another cause of conflict is perceiving others as fundamentally different, adding that differences lead to distance, and distance can turn into discord. To counter this, he cited a verse from the Dhammapada, which states that everyone fears pain and

The prime minister noted that he hailed from Gujarat's Vadnagar and represented Varanasi in Parliament, and said it is a beautiful coincidence that places associated with Lord Buddha have shaped his journey. He said, "Our reverence for Bhagwan Buddha is reflected in the policies of the

SC slams TN Govt on delay in filing appeal against Isha Foundation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Supreme Court on Friday slammed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board for moving after two years against an order that quashed a showcause notice issued against Jaggi Vasudev's Isha Foundation for allegedly flouting environmental norms. A bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh termed the petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) as a "friendly match" played by bureaucrats wanting the apex court's stamp on the petition's dis-

"Mr Advocate General what prevented the authorities from approaching the court on time. There is a delay of 637 days in filing this petition, which is nearly two years. This is actually a friendly match where the bureaucrats want the stamp of the Supreme Court and the High



Supreme court of India

Court on dismissal of the petition," the bench said. The showcause was issued to the foundation for constructing buildings between 2006 and 2014 without reportedly obtaining mandatory environmental clearances but the Madras High Court quashed

Justice Surya Kant further told the State's law officer. "When the State comes belatedly, we become suspicious.

We start reading between lines. How can you say a yoga centre is not an educational institution? If they are not going as per plan, then you can challenge the noncompliance but you can't be allowed to demolish the structure constructed in over a lakh yards. It is not some kind of hutment.

The top court told State Advocate General PS Raman that now that Isha Foundation

meditation centre in Coimbatore district's Velliangiri, the state must ensure environmental compliance. "Now that a yoga centre has been constructed and you are not saying that it is dangerous, then your concern must be to ensure that all environmental parameters are complied with like sunlight, greenery, sewage treatment plant. You can raise those issues. Everybody is obligated to comply with these norms," it said.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Isha Foundation, urged the top court to hear the matter after Shivratri, saying a major function was scheduled to be held there. "We have all necessary approvals.

They are talking only about environmental clearance. The yoga centre is 80 per cent green. It's one of the best centres in India," he said.

The Madras High Court, said the court, was right in its view

had constructed a yoga and on the claim of Isha Foundation that it is covered under the notification of Centre for an educational centre. When asked about the delay, Raman said the matter was stuck between two State departments. The bench posted the matter for

hearing post Shivratri. On December 14, 2022, holding that the facilities set up by Isha Foundation in Coimbatore would fall under the education category, the High Court set aside the TNPCB notice.

The High Court quashed the notice dated November 19, 2021, and allowed the plea of Jaggi Vasudev's Isha Foundation.

The showcause notice was over construction of buildings in the foothills of Velliangiri without prior environmental clearance. The Centre had informed the High Court that the foundation was imparting yoga lessons aside from running a school and it fell under the education category.

NOTA votes hit record low of 0.99 per cent in 2024 Lok Sabha polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The None Of The Above (NOTA) option in EVMs recorded its lowest percentage share in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls since its introduction in 2013, according to data shared by the Election Commission(ÉC). The option was implemented in a Lok Sabha poll for the first time

According to the polls panel's 'Atlas-2024', a book containing data from last year's Lok Sabha polls, there has been a gradual decline in NOTA votes over the past three Lok Sabha elections, from 1.08 per cent in 2014 to 0.99 per cent in 2024.

While the percentage might seem small, the total number of NOTA votes can still be significant, especially in seats with comparatively lower winning margins, where the NOTA votes could have affected outcomes in some constituencies.

The distribution of NOTA votes across the states exhibits significant variation, reflecting regional political dynamics, voter preferences and levels of political engage-

Bihar recorded the highest share (percentage) of NOTA votes at 2.07 per cent, followed closely by Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu with 2.06 per cent and Gujarat at 1.58 per cent. In contrast, Nagaland recorded the lowest share of NOTA votes at just 0.21%, suggesting a stronger alignment or preference for the contesting candidates in the state.

Such varying trends across states may be influenced by factors such as political competition, the prominence of regional parties, voter education, and the overall electoral landscape within each

The variation highlights the diverse ways in which voters engage with the electoral process and express their preferences, either by actively participating in choosing a candidate or by using NOTA as a tool for protest or dissent.

NOTA option on electronic voting machines (EVMs) has its own symbol - a ballot paper with a black cross across it. The EC added the NOTA button on EVMs as the last option on the voting panel after a September 2013 Supreme Court order. Before the apex court's order,

Introduced in 2013, the

those not inclined to vote for any candidate had the option of filling what is popularly called Form 49-O.

But filling out the form at the polling station under Rule 49-O of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, compromised the secrecy of the

Experts share tips on healthy eating, sleep for exam success | BJP hails PM Modi's US visit as landmark, | Union Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Adequate sleep, eating home-cooked food and avoiding binge eating to counter stress during examinations were among the mantras for school students shared by top nutrition experts as part of the prime minister's latest "Pariksha Pe Charcha" episode, aired on

Nutrition and health experts Shonali Sabherwal, Rujuta Diwekar and Revant Himatsingka shed light on the importance of healthy eating habits and the crucial role of quality sleep in academic success during a special session of "Pariksha Pe Charcha" - an annual event in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with students appearing for board examinations.



setting this time and took students to Delhi's iconic Sunder Nursery for his annual interaction. Eminent personalities such as boxer MC Mary Kom and spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev have shared their experiences and knowledge on key aspects of life and learning in different episodes. On Wednesday, actor Deepika Padukone shared tips on stress man-agement while opening up about her own struggles with

author Sabherwal said, "Homemade food is the best (for destressing)... millets and brown rice can be included in the diet. One should eat a balanced meal to keep cravings under control. Millets can keep you full for around eight

Diwekar said it was fine to eat the things that made one feel better during exams but suggested avoiding binge eating to counter stress. "Especially In a shift from the traditional town hall format, Modi preferred a more informal macrobiotic nutritionist and significant to counter stress. Especially junk food, processed foods and sugar...," she said.

Talking about his "Label"

Padhega India" initiative, foodpharmer and health and nutrition influencer Himatsingka said the idea was to know about the things one was consuming.
"If every person in India

starts reading labels, they will know what they are eating. My goal is to include health in the school curriculum in the next five years," he

"Pariksha Pe Charcha" is an annual event in which Modi interacts with students appearing for board examinations. During this, he also answers students' queries related to exam stress and

other issues. The first edition of the interactive programme with school and college students was held at Delhi's Talkatora Stadium in 2018. A seventh edition was held in a town hall format at Bharat Mandapam, engaging participants from around the country and overseas.

slams Rahul Gandhi for criticism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The BJP on Friday hailed ♣ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit as "landmark" and slammed Rahul Gandhi for his remarks on him, saying it has become a habit of Congress leaders to find fault in the prime minister's foreign visits. În a social media post, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla wrote, "PM Narendra Modi's impactful USA visit solidified India-US bonds like never before." "A landmark visit," he added, listing Modi's achievements during his US visit.

Party national spokesperson Syed Shahnawaz Hussain said ÚS President Donald Trump's announcement about his administration's go-ahead to the extradition of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana is a "very big

diplomatic victory for India". 'Tahawwur Rana, the master mind of 26/11 terror attack, will be brought to india. He (PM Modi) convinced the US for this. This is a very big diplomatic victory for India,"

Hussain said. He also slammed Rahul Gandhi for accusing Modi of "covering up" the alleged corruption of businessman Gautam Adani, saying the Congress leader should keep in mind that Modi visited the US as the prime minister of the country and leader of its 140 crore people, not as a BJP leader.

"Finding faults with the prime minister's foreign visits has become a habit of the Congress," he said, responding to Gandhi's remarks. Earlier, Rahul Gandhi said

Modi maintains silence when questions are asked in the country and terms it a person-

al matter when asked abroad. "If you ask questions in the country, there is silence. If you ask abroad, it is a personal matter! Even in America, Modi Ji covered up Adani Ji's corruption!" Gandhi charged in a social media post in Hindi. The Congress leader criticised Modi, apparently latching on to his reply to a media query on Adani in the US. To a question

on whether the issue relating to

Adani figured in the talks,

Modi at a joint media briefing with Trump in Washington said: "India is a democracy and our culture is 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. We consider the whole world as

one family. I believe every Indian is mine." Modi further said such individual matters are not discussed in talks between two leaders. "Two prominent leaders of two countries never discuss such individual issues,'

Athawale supports project 'Atmanirbhar' by Rotary Club

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW

Union Social Justice Minister Ramdas Athawale extended his support to Project 'AtmaNirbhar', an initiative port by Rotary Club of Delhi Imperial aimed at empowering individuals with physical challenges through prosthetic limb donation, training, and rehabilitation.

As part of its launch, 400 prosthetic limbs are to be distributed in the first phase. The initiative, led by President of Rotary Club of Delhi Imperial Rtn. Rajesh Aggarwal is being well supported by the members.

Project 'AtmaNirbhar' is not just about prosthetic limb donation - it is a movement for self-reliance.

The initiative goes beyond charity, focusing on identifying the right beneficiaries, and equipping them with the skills, confidence, and resources needed to rebuild their lives with dig-

The project aims to transform at least one life every single day over the coming year, ensuring that losing a limb does not mean losing a future.

Athawale lauded the efforts stating, "Helping people walk again is not just a medical achievement but a step towards an inclusive society. This is the true spirit of social service. Initiatives like 'AtmaNirbhar' address the root causes of social issues and empower those in need."

PM Modi, Amit Shah pay tribute to Pulwama martyrs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $P_{ ext{Modi}}^{ ext{rime}}$ Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday paid homage to 40 Central Force(CRPF)personnel who lost their lives in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama on this day in 2019.

"Homage to the courageous heroes we lost in Pulwama in known as the Balakot 2019. The coming generations will never forget their sacrifice and their unwavering dedication to the nation, Modi said in a social media

A suicide bomber crashed his explosive-laden vehicle into a bus ferrying CRPF personnel on February 14 in 2019, killing 40 jawans. Days later, India launched a retaliatory attack, which came to be terror attack in Pulwama on



airstrike.

Paying tributes to the jawans, Shah said the Narendra Modi government is determined to completely destroy terrorists by carrying out a campaign with a "zero-tolerance" policy against them, Shah also said. "On behalf of a grateful nation, I pay my heartfelt tribute to the soldiers who were martyred in the cowardly



Hindi in a social media post. Terrorism is the biggest enemy of the entire humanity and the whole world has united against it, the home minister added.

"Be it through a surgical strike or an air strike, the Modi government is determined to completely destroy terrorists by carrying out a campaign with a 'zero-tolerance' policy against them," Shah said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Voluntary relocation of villages from core areas of tiger reserves should be carried out on a "priority" to support wildlife conservation and ensure the inclusive growth of people living in forest areas, the National Tiger Conservation Authority(NTCA)has said. During a meeting of the NTCA, some members also said the current voluntary village rehabilitation package might not be attractive to all communities living in core and critical tiger habitats and suggested it be revised.

According to the minutes of the latest NTCA meeting, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said green growth should be achieved through mitigation strategies in buffer and corridor areas while core and critical tiger habitats made "inviolate", according to tiger management principles.

NTCA urges priority village relocation from tiger reserves for conservation

Yadav, who is also the NTCA chairman, "emphasised" that "voluntary relocation of villages from core or critical tiger habitats of the tiger reserve, which is backed with statutory provisions, should be taken on a priority so that a win-win situation for tiger conservation and inclusive growth can be achieved and people living inside forest areas can be brought into the mainstream". He stressed that the needs of forest dwellers should be considered while carrying out voluntary relocations and highlighted the potential of tiger reserves as an "instrument for development of Tier II cities". Last year, a large number of people from tribal communities living in the core zones of India's tiger reserves protested against the NTCA's directive to grammes. A Union tribal

forest officials to speed up the relocation of 64,801 families from 591 villages in the core areas of 54 tiger reserves. Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj, the NTCA's member secretary, said in the meeting that village

rehabilitation was a "completely voluntary process" and informed consent of the gram sabha and the people affected is obtained" before relocation. The resettlement package for families was raised from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 15 lakh in 2021, he added.

An NTCA member suggested that the relocation package be revised periodically based on inflation trends. He pointed out that the people being relocated from forest areas were usually reluctant to change and this should be considered while encouraging voluntary rehabilitation through capacity and skill development pro-

affairs ministry official informed the NTCA that it had received several representations from organisations following the NTCA's letter requesting states to undertake voluntary village relocation. The ministry last month asked states to gather data on the number of villages and families living in tiger reserves, details of villages relocated outside, and the status of claims to forest land and produce settled under the Forest Rights Act,

A tiger reserve consists of two zones - the core (critical tiger habitat) and the buffer (peripheral areas). According to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, core areas must remain "inviolate for the purpose of tiger conservation". The buffer areas, in contrast, permit sustainable human activities alongside wildlife conserva-

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

US U-turn on Ukraine war

Trump and Putin have agreed to negotiate an end to the Ukraine war, a move that could have far-reaching implications for global peace and trade

he US President Trump has had a good relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and that is now showing in the policy shift of the US. The US stance on the Ukraine war now seems to be taking a U-turn as in all likelihood the US would now go soft on Russia and leave Ukraine in the cold. In a significant geopolitical development, US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin have agreed to initiate negotiations aimed at ending the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. This move marks a notable shift in US foreign policy and has elicited varied reactions globally. President Trump held a 90-minute phone conversation with President Putin, discussing a range of topics, with a primary focus on the situation in Ukraine. Following the call, Trump announced that both Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had expressed a willingness to pursue peace, leading to the initiation of negotiations to end the war. Trump indicated that these talks would commence immediately, with a potential meet-



ing with Putin in Saudi Arabia in the near future. Ukrainian and European leaders have expressed concerns about being sidelined in the negotiations and the potential for unfavourable concessions.

The decision by the US to engage directly with Russia has raised questions about a potential shift in its support for Ukraine. By recognising Ukraine's NATO membership as 'impractical' and the return of Russianoccupied territories as 'illusionary,' the US appears to be moving away from its previous stance of isolating Russia. This shift has led to concerns that Ukraine may be left in a precarious position, especially if European allies are unable to fill the void left

by a potential US withdrawal. The announcement of potential peace talks has had immediate effects on global markets. European stock markets have shown optimism, with indices such as Spain's Ibex 35 reaching new highs. Oil prices have also declined, with Brent crude falling below \$75 per barrel, as traders anticipate a relaxation of sanctions on Russian producers. However, uncertainties remain. Analysts caution that while a de-escalation could stabilise energy and food markets, the specifics of any agreement will determine the long-term impacts. The agricultural sector, in particular, is closely monitoring the situation, given that Russia and Ukraine together account for a significant portion of global wheat exports. A resolution to the conflict could ease supply constraints, but logistical challenges and infrastructure damage in Ukraine may continue to pose obstacles. India, as a major importer of commodities like sunflower oil, stands to be affected by these developments. A potential end to the conflict could lead to more predictable trade flows and possibly lower prices for key imports. While Trump- Putin negotiations it offers a glimmer of hope for peace, the potential shifts in alliances and the impacts on global markets warrant careful consideration by all stakeholders involved.



Kumbh Mela: The catalyst for

Gandhi's freedom struggle



It was at this grand confluence of faith and politics that Gandhi fully grasped his growing influence, reinforcing his resolve for satyagraha

notable episodes in the history of the Kumbh Mela occurred in 1915 when Mahatma Gandhi visited the Haridwar gathering shortly after returning from South Africa after twenty-one years. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gandhi's political mentor, had advised him to undertake a nationwide tour to understand India's socio-political landscape before formulating his strategies - and plunging himself into the dynamics of the freedom movement. It was during this tour that Gandhi decided to attend the Kumbh, primarily to visit Mahatma Munshiram at his Gurukul in Rishikesh and to oversee the activities of the Servants of India Society.

While Gandhi's views on various issues such as cleanliness and sanitation, including that of communal harmony were critical - which Gandhi distinctly mentions in this autobiography too - his brief political debut at Haridwar Kumbh Mela pointed towards the necessity of bridging the communal divide to achieve a more conscientious goal for freedom. Gandhi was also awestruck, not only by the overwhelming crowds but also by the chaos, superstition, and lack of hygiene. He noted the rampant disregard for cleanliness, which tarnished the sanctity of

'The banks of the Ganga, a symbol of purity, were defiled by human waste and negligence, he lamented in his speeches decades later. In 1947, remembering his Kumbh experience, Gandhi remarked, 'We must ensure that our religious gatherings become sanctuaries of cleanliness and serenity, not breeding grounds for disease and disorder. It was also here in Haridwar that

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi first grasped the profound impact his humble efforts in South Africa had on Bharat's people. Reflecting on this experience, he wrote in The Story of My Experiments with Truth: "My business was mostly to keep sitting in the tent, giving darshan and holding religious and other discussions with numerous pilgrims who called on me. This left me not a minute



The Kumbh Mela at Haridwar proved to be a pivotal moment in shaping Mahatma Gandhi's sense of purpose and his eventual entry into the political arena of India's freedom movement. This deepened his realisation that the people of India looked up to him, not just as a spiritual figure, but as a leader capable of addressing the nation's struggles.

This realisation planted the seeds of confidence and responsibility within Gandhi, inspiring him to expand his mission of service and truth to the broader cause of India's liberation - which resulted in his first non-violent satyagraha in 1917 in Champaran, Bihar. The overwhelming response he received at the Kumbh Mela reinforced his belief in the power of collective action and solidified his resolve to dedicate his life to the fight for India's freedom

It is also fascinating to note that Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Haridwar and his entry into the political arena coincided with a landmark moment in history - the All India Hindu Mahasabha formation during



THE KUMBH MELA AT HARIDWAR **PROVED**

TO BE A **PIVOTAL** MOMENT IN SHAPING MAHATMA GANDHI'S SENSE OF **PURPOSE** AND HIS **EVENTUAL**

ENTRY INTO THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

the Kumbh Mela. In April 1915, amidst the spiritual fervour of the Haridwar Kumbh, Gandhi joined luminaries such as Swami Shraddhanand, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and other visionaries at the inaugural conference of the Sarvadeshak (All India) Hindu Sabha, marking a pivotal chapter in India's sociopolitical awakening. Gandhi's participation at the Kumbh was also available to British intelligence, who had made records - now available in the Regional State Archives.

The colonial period introduced a fresh perspective to the Kumbh Mela, with European observers chronicling its magnificence and adding valuable historical context. Fascinated by the immense scale and diversity of the pilgrimage, the British left behind detailed records that provide significant insights into the evolution of the Maha Kumbh Mela which also can be found in the well-documented writings of James Prinsep, a British colonial

administrator. It is worth referring to The Sunday Guardian's article, Beyond Faith: How Kumbh Mela Reshapes the Course of History, which highlights the Kumbh Mela's role in India's independence movement. A 1920 British intelligence document, displayed at the Allahabad Museum, reveals a pivotal 1918 meeting during the Mela. This meeting adopt-

ed a memorial supporting political reforms, demanded Panchayats, permanent settlements, and tenant protections, and founded the UP Peasants Association. Led by Pt Madan Mohan Malviya, the association grew to 450 branches, fostering unity among peasants and opposing zamindar dominance.

The Sunday Guardian further highlights the pivotal role of the Kumbh Mela in shaping India's post-independence democracy, particularly during the Emergency. The JP Movement gained significant momentum at this Kumbh, with the Sadhu Samaj lending strong support. Events such as the 'Dharma Sansad' and 'Sadhu Sammelans (congregation)' cemented widespread support for the Janata Party across the Hindi heartland.

The 'Maha Kumbh Mela' transcends its role as a spiritual gathering, reflecting the profound confluence of the sacred and the secular.

While it offers a space for deep introspection and devotion, it also acts as a mirror to the socio-political currents that shape Indian society. This timeless festival continues to evolve, bridging spiritual and worldly realms. The Kumbh Mela remains a powerful testament to India's enduring cultural legacy.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are

WazirX hack exposes crypto risks: A call for stringent regulations



SOUNDARARAJAN

Such cyberattacks expose regulatory gaps across jurisdictions and underscore the need for investor protection and the need for stricter crypto regulations

t the 2023 G20 Summit under India's presiden-Cy, world economies pledged to create a global regulatory framework for crypto assets. While each country must establish Its regulations, international collaboration is equally important.

This need for both domestic and global regulatory frameworks is exemplified by the recent WazirX case, which underscores the urgency of addressing vulnerabilities in the crypto ecosystem. WazirX, one of India's leading cryptocurrency exchanges, suffered a cyberattack in July 2024 by the North Korean hacker group Lazarus. This has been confirmed by a joint statement issued by the governments of the United States, Japan and South Korea and the three countries have pledged to collaborate to counter this.

In India, the attack has raised concerns about cybersecurity risks and the reliability of custodial exchanges. Custodial exchanges, where assets are held centrally pose significant risks, as evidenced by this cvber-attack. This episode has exposed broader systemic risks and has revived the con-



try. Approximately 4.4 million users were affected. The Anatomy of a Crypto

Crisis WazirX's holding company, Zettai Pte Ltd, is based in Singapore, meaning any legal recourse must go through Singapore's regulatory channels, even though over 95 per cent of WazirX's users were Indian investors.

In response to the crisis, WazirX introduced a Restructuring Scheme aimed at user recovery and longterm operational stability. The proposed scheme promises quicker asset recovery, profitsharing mechanisms and operational changes. Last month, WazirX received approval from the Singapore High Court to propose its Scheme of Arrangement to creditors. Additionally, WazirX recently completed its recovery prospects, the

asset rebalancing exercise, Scheme includes the issuance which ensures hack victims of Recovery Tokens (RTs), will receive 85 per cent of their portfolio value as of July 18, 2024. Following the breach, WazirX faced a significant shortfall in ERC-20 tokens, leaving it unable to fully cover user balances. Since matching individual token losses would be complex and impractical, the proposed Scheme aims to distribute available assets equitably among all creditors, based on their claim values at the time of the attack.

This standardised valuation approach ensures fairness and transparency and has been approved by the Singapore court.

The Scheme of Arrangement The Scheme of Arrangement promises to offer a legally binding path to recovery, ensuring equitable treatment of all creditors, regardless of the size of their claims or the type of cryptocurrency they hold. This approach takes an egalitarian stance, providing all users with a fair opportunity to recover their assets. The restructuring and resolution process will only proceed with the approval of a majority of creditors. To enhance

of Recovery Tokens (RTs), which would give creditors a stake in future platform profits and assets. If the Scheme is rejected, WazirX may face liquidation, which would likely erode value, force the sale of assets at distressed prices and drag out the recovery process for years with uncertain outcomes. The Way Forward

WazirX's restructuring plan represents a bold approach to crisis management, prioritising immediate user recovery and laying the groundwork for a more resilient crypto ecosystem. However, the broader lesson from this case is the urgent need for a robust regulatory framework for virtual digital assets in India. As the G20 emphasised, global cooperation and regulatory consistency are key to addressing the risks in the crypto ecosystem. India must develop a comprehensive regulatory framework to better protect investors and mitigate future risks, ensuring the country's preparedness for a rapidly evolving digital

economy. (The writer is CEO & Cofounder, The Policy Consensus *Centre; views are personal)*

stands convicted in yet another case related to anti-Sikh violence in Delhi after the death of the then PM Indira Gandhi, gunned down by two Sikh security

SAJJAN KUMAR CONVICTED IN SIKH RIOTS

Madam — Congress leader Sajjan Kumar

guards more than 40 years ago. There were no FIRs and the Congress goons roamed across Delhi to burn alive the Sikhs along with damaging their property continuously for 3 days when the Army was called to contain the violence. The moot question is, "Who was respon-

Obviously, the violence had the blessings of Rajiv Gandhi, who took over as PM immediately after the death of her mother and justified the killings on camera, vet no case was made against him or the family, and even the courts remained aloof to the bare fact about the responsibility of Rajiv Gandhi while hearing the petitions pertaining to the violence. Sajjan Kumar or Jagdish Tytler were only carrying out the orders to finish the Sikhs as much as possible within 3 days. The same courts as well as the media tried and tried Gujarat CM Narendra Modi for the violence that erupted after the gruesome burning alive of 59 Hindus. Doesn't it establish that the special family is much bigger than scores of poor Hindus in the eyes of the media and judiciary?

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

US BANS ASSOCIATED PRESS Madam— The decision by U.S. President Donald Trump to ban the renowned news agency Associated Press (AP) from entering the White House is a severe blow to democracy. This is not merely a restriction on a media institution but an attempt to crush independent iournalism. The Trump administration accused AP of misusing the term "of America," but can this truly justify curbing press freedom? The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the press the right to operate fearlessly, impartially, and independently. However,

New Income Tax Bill simplifies taxation

E EDITO



he newly tabled Income Tax Bill brings much-needed reforms to India's tax system and deserves commendation. By replacing the outdated Income Tax Act of 1961, the bill aims to simplify tax laws, reduce litigation and remove obsolete provisions, making the tax process more transparent and efficient for both taxpayers and the government. One of the most notable changes is the

to silence the voice of truth.

The role of the media is to provide the public with unbiased information and critically examine government policies. Blocking a media organisation from entering the White House, the epicentre of power, is a direct attack on the press. History bears witness that wherever governments have attempted to suppress the press, dictatorship has followed. An independent media is the fourth pillar of democracy, and any restriction on it is an infringement on public rights. In a true democracy, power does not lie with the ruling authorities but with the people. Freedom of the press is the most powerful tool to amplify the voice of the

Jai Prakash Gupta | Tirunelveli

RAGGING MUST STOP

Madam — The Kottayam Nursing College ragging incident is a crude reminder that ragging is very much prevailing in our colleges without any when those in power seek to evade deterrent and despite ragging being a

increased tax rebate under Section 87A which will now provide up to Rs 60,000 for individuals with a net taxable income of Rs 12 lakh or below. This is a significant step towards reducing the tax burden on the middle class, offering greater financial relief.

Furthermore, the introduction of two clear deductions under the new tax regime, a Rs 75,000 standard deduction and NPS contributions, enhances tax planning options for individuals, making it simpler to manage finances. Although the income tax slabs remain unchanged for FY 2025-26, the streamlined approach will likely benefit taxpayers in the long run, fostering greater compliance and reducing unnecessary complications. Overall, this bill paves the way for a more modern and efficient tax system that is better suited to today's economic landscape.

Vishal Mayur | Tumakuru

accountability, their first move is often criminal offence. These ragging incidents continued for three months, telling how much ordeal freshers had to face during

that period. Till about the 90s, ragging in the educational institutes used to be a platform to create affinity, closeness, and rapport between first-year students and seniors. Sadly, it has now taken an unfortunate turn and become a tool to torture. Merely getting parents and students to sign the undertaking was never going to help and prevent ragging from taking place. Punishing culpable students is an absolute must, but college administration must be held accountable in such cases too. One out-of-the-box idea could be to set a rule that any student who is found guilty of ragging and torturing juniors would not be allowed to participate in final placement or not be given passing out certificates. We have to hit it where it hurts them most

Bal Govind | Noida

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FIRST COLUMN

SHAPING INDIA'S AI FUTURE

As Al redefines global power dynamics, India is

emerging as a key player in its governance and innovation



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

rime Minister Modi's Paris and Washington visit, meetings with the two most powerful leaders from the developed world, comes at a time of shifting geopolitical sands. The buzzword around both these high-level bilaterals was high-end technology cooperation in a world, increasingly getting fragmented. India was the co-chair of the Al Action Summit in Paris, along with the host country France. This is the third global-level event on Artificial Intelligence, making it a Kumbh of technology leaders, policy makers, experts, corporates and world leaders in France. The theme was how to harness the power of this nearly mind-bending technology, whose evolution has been compared to the invention of the wheel and humans learning to use fire safely.

Almost simultaneously. China released a nimble version of the generative AI tool DeepSeek, which is currently a huge challenger to US billions of dollars infused into US technology companies' almost monopolistic dominance on Al tools and standards. US President Biden in his last week at the Oval Office had passed an executive order called the Interim Final Rule (IFR) on Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion, essentially imposing export controls on high-end software and hardware required for AI development across nations which may be considered inimical to US interests (i.e. China) but also, close allies



While the global technology industry stakeholders have requested the new President to be consistent with the Trump Administration's previously stated, Regulatory Freeze Order, and suspend implementation of the Al Diffusion Rule until the Secretary of Commerce and other relevant officials can review the rule appropriately and pursue robust stakeholder engagement so that the rules reflect the government's objectives and ensure companies can engage with key US trading partners. President Trump is yet to revoke the executive order signed by his predecessor, even though he did sign a fresh one on January 23, which potentially hints at a pause.

Three days into the Oval Office President Trump signed the executive order on AI development and deployment stating the purpose as "The United States has long been at the forefront of artificial intelligence (AI) innovation, driven by the strength of our free markets, world-class research institutions, and entrepreneurial spirit. To maintain this leadership, we must develop AI systems that are free from ideological bias or engineered social agendas. With the right Government policies, we can solidify our position as the global leader in Al and secure a brighter future for all Americans. This order revokes certain existing Al policies and directives that act as barriers to American Al innovation, clearing a path for the United States to act decisively to retain global leadership in artificial intelligence. It is the policy of the United States to sustain and enhance America's global Al dominance in order to promote human flourishing, economic competitiveness, and national secu-

India is aiming to have an equal say on global high tables of Al governance, innovation and development. It has an ambitious Al mission of its own, which is heavily dependent on high-end chips and Graphic Processing Units (GPUs) currently available from US technology companies. Any restrictions on access to these high-end processors would upset the ambitious goal envisaged under the India Al mission. The conversation in Paris, India's announcement to host the fourth global Al summit in Delhi, and conversations with President Trump and other leaders this week, are steps in the right direction.

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

Palestine in ruins: The unbearable cost of war



As political instability deepens and global powers debate the future of Gaza, millions of Palestinians face an uncertain and harrowing future

n October 7, 2003, Hamas fighters successfully launched a massive attack on Israel, but the price that Palestinians had to pay for it is heartbreaking. It will take three centuries to recover from the destruction caused by this war, which lasted for more than 15 months. According to a United Nations survey, it may take more than 350 years to rebuild Palestine, which has been reduced to rubble. The estimated loss in the first four months of the war was \$18.5 billion. At present, about 69 per cent of the structures in Gaza are either damaged or destroyed. More than 50 million tons of rubble have accumulated in the Gaza region, which may take more than 15 years to remove. Piles of rubble are visible throughout Palestine due to bombings and ground operations.

A United Nations report states that the accumulated rubble is approximately 12 times the size of the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt. According to estimates, even if more than 100 trucks work continuously, it may still take more than 15 years to clear the debris. Three generations born in tents will likely have to make them their permanent homes for a long time. Reconstruction will require billions of dollars, yet no international institution is willing to invest in an ungoverned region that has seen five wars in less than two decades.

Using satellite data, the United Nations estimated last month that 70 per cent of structures in Gaza have been destroyed, including more than 245,000 residential buildings. The World Bank estimated losses of \$18.5 billion in the first four months of the war—an amount nearly equal to the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. Major roads have been turned into deep trenches, essential water and electricity infrastructure has been destroyed, and most hospitals are no longer functional due to being targeted during the bombings. According to the United Nations, more than 50,000 people have died in Gaza, 44 per cent of whom are children. The children who have survived are suffering from sickness, stress, insomnia, depression, and fear. They are terrified of every stranger. The children of Gaza have lost the will to live. Amidst the devastation, 96 per cent of children express a desire not to live, and 49 per cent say they would have preferred to die. Among those who feel this way, 72 per cent are boys and 46 per cent are girls. A Netherlands-based organisation, War Child Alliance, has collected shocking and heartbreaking data. The alliance gathered this information from 500 parents or caretakers, including families whose children were crippled in the war or separated from their families.

Their findings revealed that 92 per cent of the children surveyed are unable to accept the reality of war. The smell of gunpowder lingers in Gaza's atmosphere. The situation is so dire that 79 per cent of children experience nightmares, and 73 per cent have become so overwhelmed that their behaviour has turned aggressive. Many scream and moan in their sleep. These children have witnessed their homes and schools reduced to rubble. Their young minds are shattered, unable to comprehend why they are being punished and what crime they have commit-

Devastated by this horrific situation, the entire Palestinian government, including





MULTIPLE **RESOLUTIONS** CALLING FOR A CEASEFIRE IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ALL PREVIOUS EFFORTS HAD FAILED. ISRAEL WAS EVEN INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF SHAME, A DOCUMENT THAT RECORDS ALLEGED

RIGHTS **VIOLATIONS AGAINST** CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, has resigned. In his resignation letter, he acknowledged that Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are starving. Tensions escalated further when an American airman involved in military operairman involved in military operations set himself on fire outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, repeatedly shouting, "No more involvement in genocide." The United Nations has passed a ceasefire resolution, endorsed by 158 nations, including India

Despite multiple resolutions calling for a ceasefire in the UN General Assembly, all previous efforts had failed. Israel was even included in the List of Shame, a document that records alleged rights violations against children in armed conflict. In this report, Israel is accused of committing severe violations of children's rights. This inclusion has angered Israel and damaged its international reputation. Several key European Union countries, which previously sympathised with Israel, have now condemned its actions. Despite continued American support, Israel's economy has begun to collapse. In recent months, GDP growth has been only 0.7 per cent. The Israeli army has requested \$16 billion, equivalent to 3 per cent of the country's GDP. Even after the ceasefire, the military requires \$8 billion annually to address new

security challenges.
The fiscal deficit has now reached
8 per cent of GDP. Israel is also deeply concerned that fighting has spread to its major business hubs, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.In January, Israel's debt stood at 62 per cent of GDP, which is still lower than the average for most wealthy nations in the OECD. However, prominent credit rating agencies such as Fitch and Moody's have already downgraded Israel's credit rating once this year, with the possibility of further downgrades shortly. Following the Hamas attack last

year, Israel revoked work permits for 80,000 Palestinian workers. No replacements have been hired, leading to a 40 per cent decline in the construction industry. The same trend is observed in the high-tech sector and other industries. Inflation reached an annual rate of 3.6 per cent last month. If the war had continued any longer, the value of the Israeli shekel might have dropped fur-ther, forcing banks to rely on their reserves. Although a ceasefire is in place, this does not mark the end of the war. A recent statement by US President Donald Trump has crushed any hopes of peace efforts. Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is currently visiting the US, where he has been given priority among the to second-class citizenship. foreign guests invited by the President. However, Netanyahu the capital from Tel Aviv to faces growing protests in Israel, driven by both economic instability and widespread public dissent. The situation worsened when Israel's Defense Minister, Benny Gantz, resigned from his position along with other members of his party, putting additional pressure on the government. Both leaders have sparked global controversy following a press conference at the White House, where they announced plans for the US to occupy the Gaza Strip and transform it into a resort city.

The proposed project would turn Gaza into a hub for employment and tourism in West Asia. The entire area would be levelled to develop infrastructure, and the 2.3 million people currently living in Gaza would be relocated to countries such as Egypt and Jordan. However, both Egypt and Jordan have firmly rejected this proposal. Experts argue that international laws and treaties will pose a significant obstacle to

any U.S. attempt to occupy Gaza. Meanwhile, major Arab nations are mobilising against Trump's plan, with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, and Turkey openly opposing it.

Hamas has strongly condemned the proposal, labelling it ethnic genocide. Several US lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, have also voiced their opposition. In the past, Trump had similarly expressed intentions to occu-Greenfield Island, take control of the Panama Canal, and annex Canada as the 51st state of America. The Israeli parliament has enacted several controversial laws that have further inflamed tensions with Palestine and Arab nations. For example, the Jewish State Bill officially declares Israel as a Jewish state, effectively relegating non-Jewish communities Jerusalem is widely seen as an act provocation against Palestinians. Israel also occupies the Syrian territory of the Golan Heights, which has been under Israeli control since the 1967

A massive city, known as Trump City, is currently being developed in the region. The month of Ramadan is approaching, which is likely to bring additional hardships. Tensions surrounding the Al-Aqsa Mosque also intensify during this time, as restrictions are often imposed on Muslim worshippers. At present, the likelihood of renewed conflict appears higher than the prospect of lasting peace. The international community is also deeply concerned about the Trump administration's decision to withdraw US representatives from the United Nations.

(The writer is a former Member of Parliament; views are

India stands on the brink of an AI-driven revolution

By prioritising comprehensive AI education, ethical governance and transparent regulations, India can lead the global AI revolution

ndia is emerging as a dominant force in Artificial Intelligence (AI), shaping its economy, security, and global influence. At the ongoing AI Summit in Paris, India's leadership in AI highlights its commitment to technological advancement and innovation. The Prime Minister's prominent role at the summit underscores the country's strategic focus on AI, positioning it as a counterforce to China's deepfake threats. Whether in AI, digital transformation, or healthcare, India is rapidly evolving into a global technology powerhouse, striving for AI self-reliance and econom-

AI is no longer a futuristic concept-it is an immediate reality reshaping India's digital landscape. Projections sug-

gest that AI will contribute \$500 billion to the Indian economy by 2025, accounting for 10 per cent of the national GDP. The technology is revolutionising industries, from agriculture to healthcare and revitalising cultural and linguistic heritage. India is not merely adopting AI; it is actively leading the revolution through ambitious government initiatives, collaborations with tech giants and extensive investment in AI infrastructure. The Indian government has launched several initiatives to position the country as a leader in AI.

The IndiaAI Mission and the establishment of India's first AI University in Maharashtra reflect a strong commitment to technological leadership. Partnerships with global tech



firms like NVIDIA are helping develop AI solutions tailored to India's unique challenges. AI-driven tools in agriculture, such as CropIn and Intello Labs, assist farmers in predicting weather patterns, optimising irrigation, and detecting crop diseases, thereby boosting productivity and sustainability.

India's corporate sector is also investing heavily in AI.

Companies like Infosys and TCS are deploying AI-driven solutions to streamline business processes, automate customer service, and optimise supply chains. Infosys' Nia platform enhances efficiency and reduces operational costs, while Zoho's AI-powered CRM tools empower small and medium enterprises to compete globally. Generative AI tools like ChatGPT are increasingly being utilised by job seekers, with 87 per cent leveraging them to refine resumes and prepare for inter-

Despite its rapid progress, India faces significant challenges in AI adoption. A critical skills shortage in AI-related professions remains a pressing issue. To address this, the National Programme on AI,



launched by NITI Aayog, aims to train over a million workers in AI skills. Additionally, states like Karnataka and Telangana are establishing AI hubs to nurture innovation and talent development. However, while India produces over 1.5 million engineers annually, only a small percentage have the specialised expertise required for AI development.

Al's rise also brings security concerns. Cyber threats are

growing, with increasing vulnerability to sophisticated cyberattacks. In 2023, a major Indian bank suffered a ransomware attack, disrupting services for millions of customers. AI-powered cyber tools, while beneficial, can be exploited by malicious actors. The dangers of misinformation and AI-generated deepfakes are also becoming more apparent. The viral deepfake video of actor Rashmika Mandanna in 2023 highlighted the risks of AI-driven disinformation. Similarly, AIpowered voice cloning scams are on the rise, posing signif-

icant fraud risks. AI is also playing a crucial role in preserving India's cultural and linguistic heritage. Institutions like IIT Madras are

endangered languages such as Toda and Gondi.

The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute is using AI to digitise ancient manuscripts, ensuring the preservation of India's historical knowledge. AI is further enhancing the entertainment sector through immersive experiences, such as virtual reality tours of historical sites and AI-curated regional literature and music

recommendations. In healthcare, AI-driven tools like Niramai are revolutionising early cancer detection, while telemedicine platforms like Apollo Telehealth are providing medical access to rural communities. The education sector is benefiting from AIpowered platforms. In disaster management, AI is helping developing AI models to revive predict natural disasters and

coordinate relief efforts. The Indian Meteorological Department employs ĂI to analyze weather patterns and issue early warnings for cyclones and floods, thereby minimising casualties.

AI is not merely a technological tool; it is a transformative force shaping India's future. However, the country must strike a balance between innovation and regulation to ensure ethical AI deployment. As AI evolves, India must establish a robust framework to address ethical concerns, security risks, and workforce reskilling. Collaborative efforts between the government, industry, and academia will be key in ensuring AI benefits for the society.

(The writer is an assistant professor at IIIT, Sonepat; views are personal)

MP to dominate drone sector: CM

PNS BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that a comprehensive action plan has been developed to establish Madhya Pradesh as a need for human labor while major drone manufacturing ensuring timely data and technology hub. To collection. support this initiative, the particularly state government approved the Ma has the Madhya Pradesh Drone Promotion and Use Policy-2025, aimed at attracting investment in the drone sector.

The policy focuses on innovation, promoting economic prosperity, and creating opportunities through the safe and efficient use of drones. As part of the policy, a drone data repository will soon be created to enhance the use of drone technology across the state. This repository will serve as a centralized platform for managing the government's drone data and imagery, aligned with the Prime Gati Shakti Minister's initiative.

The drone data repository facilitate crossdepartmental data sharing and collaboration. It will support the development of advanced monitoring mechanisms using GIS-based planning and analytical tools. By providing ica.
date monitoring, the will enable accurate resource allocation enhance decision-making, optimize cost and time management, and streamline

and Technology will ensure the secure management of the drone data repository and maintain proper arrangements with collaborating partners. The government will guarantee that all drone data collected by state agencies is stored in compliance with data protection laws and regulations, as outlined in the National Geospatial Policy-2022 or any subsequent amendments or policies. Advanced secure data storage transmission technologies will be employed safeguard sensitive students and professionals to information.

The use of drones is expected demand.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $T_{\text{on Friday granted a}}^{\text{he Calcutta High Court}}$

qualified permission to the

Rashtriva Swavam Sevak

Sangh (RSS) for holding a rally of its chief Mohan

Bhagwat in East Burdwan.

The rally will be held on

to increase rapidly in the revolutionizing future. various fields with their pilotless nature. Drones offer innovative solutions, significantly reducing the They effective in accessing difficult-to-reach areas with high accuracy and efficiency. By utilizing modern technology, drones are becoming invaluable tools across multiple sectors.

Drones can help assess crop health, detect diseases early, and evaluate crop yields with employment precision. Drones can also spray fertilizers and pesticides accurately, reducing waste minimizing and

environmental impact. Additionally, they can identify areas that require more or less water, aiding in the efficient use of irrigation methods.

Drones are locating affected people in disaster-hit areas using thermal imaging and high-resolution cameras.

Detailed images of affected areas are helping in rescue efforts. Reconstruction efforts and insurance claims are being authenticated. In emergencies, drones are delivering medical supplies and food items to hard-hit

areas.

Calcutta HC okays

Sunday. Sinha granted the saffron The Bengal Police had organization permission to

earlier refused permission organize the meeting but for the public meeting fixed the sound limit set by

Drones are playing a crucial role in inspecting bridges, buildings, and other infrastructure, performing and support infrastructure maintenance and safety development. Additionally, it assessments with greater will improve coordination, efficiency. They provide realtime updates on construction progress. In wildlife conservation, drones are used project review processes.

The Department of Science and ensure their safety without causing disturbance.
They are also deployed for monitoring of forest health, detecting illegal logging, and assessing the impact of forest fires. Madhya Pradesh will establish drone schools under its new drone policy to promote drone technology and develop a skilled workforce for drone workforce for drone operations. These schools will be set up through public-private partnerships The initiative aims to provide comprehensive training and education in drone technology, equipping both

Ram Nath Kovind talks maritime history

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

India's medieval period was characterised by "maritime neglect" which happened due to historical circumstances and as a result its naval prowess began to fade, exacting a "huge toll", former president Ram Nath Kovind

said on Friday.

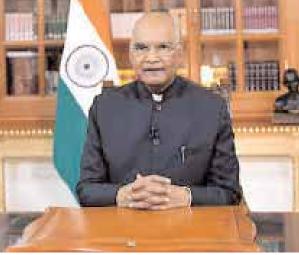
However, the country's maritime heritage was not completely lost even during this "maritime dark age", he said while delivering a lecture hosted by the think-tank National Maritime (NMF) Foundation Manekshaw Centre here.

"India's maritime heritage is a testament to its long-standing relationship with the sea, encompassing trade, culture and naval prowess. This rich legacy has significantly influenced our nation's history and its interaction with the wider world," he said. The roots of India's maritime activities are about 5,000 years old and trace back to the Índus Valley civilisation, Kovind said.

"Our coastal heritage played such a defining role in our civilisation, social culture and economic history. In this light, it is hard to believe that our medieval period was characterised by maritime neglect," he said.

This maritime neglect happened due to "historical circumstances", the former president said, without naming any dynasty or rulers of this era.

"During the medieval period, various land-based empires gained prevalence. Many of such rulers had origins in



land-locked regions and were more focused on managing vast land territories. Our collective consciousness started to overlook the sea as an avenue of power and prosperity. As a result, slowly but surely our naval prowess began to fade," Kovind said.

"For India, a historical maritime nation, this period... Was indeed an anomaly. Nonetheless, this neglect of the maritime domain exacted a huge toll. It was one of the reasons why such huge land empires fell so easily to the European trading

companies," he added. The Vice Admiral K K Nayyar Memorial Lecture 2025, hosted by the maritime thinktank, was attended by Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, former Navy chief and NMF's chairman Admiral (retired) Karambir Singh, senior officials of the Navy, scholars and several college students, besides the family members of the late vice

admiral. In his address, the former president also cited archaeological sites like Lothal, located about 400 km southwest of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, where excavations

"sophisticated dockyard". Archaeologists consider it to be the first man-made dockyard and one of the earliest known dry docks, he said. "We can get a sense of the nautical engineering of that era."

have unveiled an ancient

He also cited the maritime themes prevalent in Vedic literature.

The Rig Veda, one of the oldest known scriptures of India, mentions 'Varuna' -the deity associated with the sea, and alludes to merchants undertaking sea voyages in pursuit of wealth. Epics Ramayana and Mahabharata contain narratives involving ships and sea travel, Kovind said.

"These references indicate the

significance of maritime activities in ancient Indian culture," he added.

Underling the maritime prosperity in ancient India, Kovind said maritime trade increased significantly during the reigns of the Nanda and Maurya dynasties.

The establishment of trade links with regions such as Sri Lanka, South East Asia and West Asia facilitated not only the exchange of wealth but also cultural and religious ideas. This period saw Indian merchants and missionaries traversing sea routes leading to the spread of Buddhism and Hinduism across Asia, he said. In the medieval era, the Chola

dynasty emerged as a "formidable maritime force" and their maritime activities have left a "lasting impact" on the history, art, architecture, and administration of Southeast Asian countries, the former president said.

The Navy Chief in his address said, "With seas on three sides and high mountains to the north, the maritime orientation of our nation is intrinsic to its identity."

"After Independence, our leaders took significant steps to build our maritime capabilities and we are now at the cusp of transforming into a maritime power. There is a firm acknowledgement in the highest echelons of national leadership that our nation's growth would be driven from and by the seas," Admiral Tripathi said.

He also quoted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent statement that 'today's India is emerging as a major maritime power in the world'.

Delhi Police foil robbery attempt, arrests four

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

he Special Cell of the Delhi Police has claimed to have foiled a robbery attempt on a businessman with the arrest of four people.

According to the police, the suspects have a history of violent crimes and were in the advanced stages of planning the heist when they apprehended them.

One of the main conspirators, identified as Satender, had previously been involved in the murder of a policeman," Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pratiksha Godara said in a statement. The accused were identified as

Satender (54), Mohit (28), Rajendra Singh alias doctor (46), residents of Delhi and Monu (28) from Uttar Pradesh. "Our operation prevented

what could have been a highprofile robbery targeting a businessman in the Model Town area after the arrest of Rajendra Singh, an employee of the businessman, who had been leaking information to the gang," Additional CP added. She said that in November

2024, police received information about Satender, a proclaimed offender in cases. Teams multiple discovered his plans to commit a robbery in Delhi.

Satender, along with his accomplices, had acquired weapons and vehicles for the crime. Police teams were deployed to track and locate the suspects. All the criminals were arrested on February 7. With their arrest, police recovered

one .32 bore pistol with three live cartridges, one dagger, two motorcycles and six mobile phones.

"The gang had carried out reconnaissance of the target location and planned an escape route. Their capture prevented a violent crime," she said.

Sharing the profile of the accused, she said that Satender, who studied up to 12th grade, has been involved in over 20 criminal cases in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. He started as a farmer. At the age of 20, he was implicated in a murder case. During a botched robbery attempt, Satender and his gang

killed a policeman.

Mohit, with a history of snatching and robbery, has been involved in over a dozen criminal cases in Delhi and UP. Monu has been involved in at least five criminal cases, including a murder in 2014, she added.

Rajendra Singh, a resident of Kamal Vihar, worked as a driver for a businessman in Model Town since 2020. Through a common friend, he met Satender at a wedding and became aware of his criminal background. Seeing an opportunity for financial gain, Rajendra provided crucial information about his employer's wealth and business activities to the gang, Godara

More deportation flights to arrive

From page 1

Several political leaders in Punjab had questioned the landing of a US aircraft in Amritsar.

"The BJP-led government wants to defame Punjab. Why does it not land in Gujarat, Haryana or Delhi?" Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said on Thursday while replying to a question on the likely arrival of another US plane carrying illegal immigrants.

Notably, the government had recently formed a special investigation team to probe the issue of illegal human trafficking following the deportation of Indian citizens domiciled in Punjab from the US.

10 FIRs against fraudulent immigration consultants on the statements of deportees, said a senior police official.

DMRC installs calorie counters at five stations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to promote both healthy living and environmental consciousness, the Delhi Metro has launched a unique initiative at five stations by installing "calorie counter" signages near stairs, escalators and encouraging commuters to make healthier lifestyle choices, a senior official said meet the growing industry on Friday.

BJP to swear in government in Delhi next week From page 1

Addressing conference headquarters here, the party's national spokesperson Ajay Alok said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is returning (from his foreign visit) by tonight. There will be a of meeting our parliamentary board tomorrow or the day after. Delhi's new CM will be before you."

Rajouri Garden's newly elected MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa said. "The new government will start working around February 19-20," he said. Sirsa said that he expected that the BIP

The new government will be formed, I think, by February 20, after the swearing-in

ceremony. Meanwhile, the newly elected BJP MLAs laughed off any race for the post of Chief Minister of Delhi, saying such talks were merely speculations by the media. "There is no race for the post of Delhi chief minister. In our party the CM or the leader of the legislature party is elected in a meeting of the MLAs," said second-time MLA from Laxmi Nagar seat Abhay Verma.

Verma, a Purvanchali, is also talked about as a prospective candidate for the top post of the public sentiment must be the Delhi government

development, clean water supply and clean air for the people as well as how to free the Yamuna from pollution," he said.

Sixth-time MLA Mohan Singh Bisht said the new chief minister of Delhi will be elected from the 48 BJP legislators. The Mustafabad MLA, also reiterated his proposal for changing the name of the minority dominate constituency to "Shiv Vihar" or "Shiv Puri".

"There are around 42 per cent people of one community (minorities) and on the other hand are 58 per cent people (Hindus)... So, respected," said the senior

the Yamuna by setting up sewage treatment plants (STPs) to tap 28 major drains flowing into the river. The last BJP chief minister of

Delhi was in 1998. Since then, the BJP has been losing elections until it secured a historic comeback on February 5. The BJP MLAs asserted that

as per the prime minister's promise, the Ayushman Bharat health scheme obstructed by the AAP government, will implemented in Delhi in the first meeting of the new Cabinet. The prime minister has already announced that the Ayushman Bharat health | The SIT has so far registered insurance scheme will be legislature party meeting have come to serve the BJP MLA. He also said that implemented through the would be held around people and now thinking the BJP government will first meeting of the new February 18-19 and added about addressing issues like ensure removing pollution in Cabinet.

MHA seeks sanction to prosecute Jain

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The ED's case against Jain stems from a 2017 FIR filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) under Section 13(2) (criminal misconduct by a public servant) read with Section 13(e) (disproportionate assets) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. The ED further claimed that

several companies owned and controlled by Jain received accommodation entries amounting to Rs 4.8 crore from shell companies in exchange for cash routed Kolkata-based through hawala operators. Two other accused, Vaibhav Jain and Ankush Jain, were said to be major shareholders and directors in three of these

companies. The Delhi high court had recently dismissed their default bail pleas on October 1.

Jain walked out of Tihar Jail on October 18, receiving a warm welcome from Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders and supporters. He was granted bail by a city court in a money laundering case being investigated by the federal agency (ED), which said there was "no likelihood" of the trial starting, let alone being completed.

The court highlighted the importance of individual liberty, particularly in cases governed by stringent laws such as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). It relied on the Supreme Court's judgment in the Manish Sisodia case,

which underscored the fundamental right to a speedy trial. Jain's counsel, senior advocate N Hariharan and advocate Vivek Jain, argued that he had spent 18 months in custody, while former Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia, arrested in the alleged excise policy scam, had spent 17 months before being granted bail. They pointed out that the case involves 108 witnesses and over 5,000 pages of documents, making the trial

Opposing the bail plea, the ED contended that Jain could influence witnesses if released. However, the court imposed strict conditions, barring him from travelling India without outside contacting permission,

a lengthy process.

trial in any way. Jain's legal team also cited

previous judgments in interim PMLA cases where bail had been granted despite stringent conditions. They noted that almost all accused in the Delhi excise policy case, which allegedly involves hundreds of crores, have been granted bail.

Last month, Superintendent Jaidev and Deputy Superintendent Parveen Kumar, Tihar Jail, had complained against Jain in an 'incident report' on December 8, 2022, that when they went to serve a Show Cause Notice to Jain as per rule 1272 of DPR, 2018, he threatened them.

Jain has been blatantly intimidating these officers

witnesses, or influencing the and others for their acts trying to prevent him from availing facilities of massage, lavish food and other VIP treatments, that came to the fore recently, said a jail official.

A jail official stated in his complaint that, "at that time he (undersigned), assumed that Satvendar Jain said this because of frustration, but in Assistant view of the latest incident report dated December 8, 2022, he has apprehension that Jain, being a minister may take adverse action against him and other jail officials, once he comes out of the jail." "In view of the above, it is

requested that Satyendar Jain may be transferred to some other jail at the earliest," read the complaint.

India and Modi return with muscle from the USA everything else," Modi said.

organize the meeting but

causing the RSS to move the High Court. The Police Board (WBPCB). should not reach outside the venue.

Bhagwat rally in Burdwan

could not be grant

were sound restrictions.

administration had The RSS advocate however contended that permission argued that there was no

ed considering the fact that within a two-kilometer the State was in the midst of radius of the meeting venue

West Bengal Board of and hence the State's

Bench of Justice Amrita After hearing the two sides

After a detailed hearing, the meeting was baseless.

Education contention that

Secondary Education contention (WBBSE) for which there examines

Sinha granted the saffron the

educational

From page 1

"He is going to be going back to India to face justice," Trump said. "We're giving him back to India immediately" and more such extraditions could follow as we have quite a few requests (from New Delhi)," he added. The US president also noted positive momentum in India-US cooperation in the civilnuclear energy sector.

"In the groundbreaking development for the US nuclear industry, India is also such individual issues," he reforming laws to welcome US nuclear technology to the Indian market," he said.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Modi said cooperation between India and the US can shape a better world.

A defence cooperation framework will be prepared

for next decade, he said. "One thing that I deeply President Trump, is that he along well. keeps the national interest (of the US) supreme. Like him, I

To a question on whether the issue relating to business tycoon Gautam Adani figured in the talks, Modi said: "India is a democracy and our culture ic 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. We consider the whole world as one family. I believe every Indian is mine."

Modi said such individual matters are not discussed in talks between two leaders. "Two prominent leaders of two countries never discuss said.

On ties between India and China following the eastern Ladakh border row, Trump described the "skirmishes" as 'vicious".

"I do see the skirmishes on the border which are quite vicious... If I could be of help," he said.

The US president said he wished China, India, Russia appreciate, and I learn from and the US — all could get

Prime Minister Modi and President Trump also also keep the national answered questions on interest of India at the top of Russia-Ukraine conflict. answered questions on the

"I support Donald Trump's efforts towards finding a possible solution to end the war. The world somehow feels India has been neutral during the war. But I would like to reiterate that India has not been neutral. In fact, India has been on the side of peace," Modi said.
"When I met President

Putin, I had even said that 'this is not the era for war'. I had also said that solutions cannot be found on the battlefield. They can only come when all parties sit at the table for dialogue," he said.

On the ambitious India-East-Europe Middle Economic Corridor, Trump said both sides agreed to work to help build one of "greatest trade routes" in history globally.

Before meeting Trump, Prime Minister Modi held separate talks with US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, billionaire Elon Musk and Republican leader Vivek Ramaswamy.

US clears Rana's extradition

From page 1

Fadnavis said during the investigation, Pakistan's role in the terror attack was exposed and established. He also said "I want to profusely thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his (Rana) extradition. We all wanted that the person who conspired against us, the mastermind of the Mumbai terror attack to be handed over to India," he said.

The chief minister said initially America was reluctant to hand over Rana to India and wanted to protect him but due to the initiative of the Prime Minister, extradition of Tawwahur Rana has been in a way cleared by America and its President Donald

Trump.
"I believe this is very significant for India. Because it is very important that the criminals should get punishment through our judicial and legal process," he said.

Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is currently lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the key conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi and President Trump called on Pakistan to "expeditiously" bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorism must be fought the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. The US president hosted Modi at the White House on corner of the world.

Thursday in their first bilateral meeting after Trump became the US president for a second term. Modi said India and the US have stood "firmly together" in the fight against terrorism and both sides agreed that concerted action is necessary to "eradicate" cross-border terrorism.

A joint statement said the two leaders committed to strengthening cooperation against terrorist threats from groups, including Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Jaish-e Mohammad, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba to prevent heinous acts like the Mumbai attacks.

It said the leaders reaffirmed that the "global scourge" of and terrorist safe havens

"They committed to attacks," it said. strengthen against terrorist threats from groups, including Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Jaish-e Mohammad, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba in order to prevent heinous acts like the attacks in Mumbai on 26/11 and the Abbey Gate bombing in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021," it said.

Recognising a shared desire to bring to justice those who would harm our citizens, the US announced that the extradition to India of Rana has been approved, according to the statement.

"The leaders further called on Pakistan to expeditiously bring to justice the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai, and Pathankot attacks and ensure that its territory is not used to carry out cross-border terrorist actors, the statement noted.

cooperation On November 26, 2008, a group of 10 Pakistani terrorists went into a rampage, carrying out a coordinated attack on a railway station, two luxury hotels and a Jewish centre, after they sneaked into India's financial capital using the sea route in the Arabian Sea. As many as 166 people were

killed in the nearly 60-hour assault that sent shockwaves across the country and even brought India and Pakistan to the brink of a war.

The two leaders also pledged to work together to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to deny access to such weapons by terrorists and non-state

EU commission pledges swift Vance to meet Zelenskyy amid response to Trump's tariffs

AP BRUSSELS

The European Union's executive branch on Friday vowed to "take firm and immediate action" against US President Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum.

The European Commission said in a statement that Trump's proposed "reciprocal" trade policy goes "in the wrong direction." The EU will take firm and immediate action against unjustified barriers to free and fair trade, including when tariffs are used to challenge legitimate and non-discriminatory policies," the Commission said. "The EU will always protect European businesses, workers and consumers from unjustified tariff measures."

The Commission, which negotiates trade relations on behalf of the 27-nation bloc, said the EU has some of the lowest tariffs in the world and sees no iustification for increased U.S. tariffs on its exports.

"Tariffs are taxes. By imposing tariffs, the US is taxing its own citizens, raising costs for business, stifling growth and fuelling inflation," it said.
"Tariffs heighten economic uncertainty and disrupt the efficiency and integration of global markets.

Earlier this week, the Commission said US tariffs on steel and aluminum would not

go unanswered. It is not yet clear what countermeasures would apply. Trump slapped similar tariffs on EU steel and aluminum during his first term, which enraged European and other allies. The EU imposed countermeasures in retaliation at the time, raising tariffs on US-made motorcycles, bourbon, peanut butter and jeans, among other items. The EU estimates that annual trade volume between both sides stands at about \$1.5 trillion, representing some 30% of global trade. While the bloc has a substantial export surplus in goods, it says that is partly offset by the US surplus in the trade of services. The EU says that trade in goods reached 851 billion euros (\$878 billion) in 2023, with a trade surplus of 156 billion euros (\$161 billion) for the EU. Trade in services was worth 688 billion euros (\$710 billion) with a trade deficit of 104 billion euros (\$107 billion) for the EU.

Taiwan pledges to invest more in US after Trump tariff threats

AP TAIPEI

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said Friday he would communicate more with the US over President Donald Trump's concerns over the chip industry and invest more in the US, hours after Trump ordered reciprocal tariffs on trade partners. Trump said on Thursday that Taiwan had taken away the US chip business and said that he wanted it back in the country. Taiwan's TSMC is the world's largest chipmaker and produces chips for companies including Apple, Intel and Nvidia.

In a news briefing after holding a meeting of the National Security Council at the presidential office, Lai said that he was aware of Trump's concerns. He described Taiwan's semiconductor industry as well as the global semiconductor industry is part of an "ecosystem" in which countries specialise in different areas.

The global semiconductor industry is an ecosystem, and it's a division of work," Lai said. "In response to President Trump's latest actions, Taiwan needs to respond calmly, and communicate well with the industries," Lai said.

"We hope to create a win-win scenario, not just to ensure benefit to the US but also to ensure that Taiwans industries has room from growth."

His comments came hours after Trump ordered reciprocal tariffs on trade partners that tax US imports, a move that could threaten a global trade war. The US does not recognise

Taiwan as a country, but is its strongest backer and biggest arms provider. But bilateral relations between the two are less certain amid Trump's seemingly transactional approach to geopolitical relations.

Lai said his government would propose a "global semiconductor democratic supply chain partnership initiative" and said he would be willing to work with partners such as the U.S. to build a more resilient and diversified semiconductor supply chain.

Lai said that Taiwan will maintain communication with the

US to help the new government better understand that Taiwan is an "indispensable partner in the United States' process of rebuilding its manufacturing industry and consolidating its high-tech leadership."

Over the past two years, more than 40% of Taiwan's overseas investments are US bound, Lai said, exceeding that of investments in China.

Lai also said Friday that he would propose a "special budget" to increase defense spending to over 3% of Taiwan's gross domestic product. (AP)

Judge sets 5-day deadline for Trump administration to start lifting its USAID funding freeze

Washington(AP) A federal judge has ordered President Donald Trump's administration to temporarily lift a funding freeze that has shut down US humanitarian aid and development work around the world, and he has set a five-day deadline for the administration to

prove it's complying. The judge's ruling late Thursday cited the financial devastation that the near-overnight cutoff of payments has caused suppliers and nonprofits that carry out much of US aid overseas.

The ruling was the first to challenge the Republican administration's funding freeze. It comes amid a growing number of lawsuits by government employees' groups, aid groups and government suppliers asking courts to roll back the administration's fast-paced dismantling of the US Agency for International Development, or USAID, and US foreign assistance overall. Trump and his aide Elon Musk say the 6decade-old aid agency and much of foreign assistance over-all is out of line with the Republican president's agenda. Administration officials "have not offered any explanation for why a blanket suspension of all congressionally appropriated foreign aid, which set off a shockwave and upended" contracts with thousands of nonprofit groups, businesses and others, "was a rational precursor to reviewing programmes,"
Judge Amir H. Ali said in his

ruling. Contractors, farmers and suppliers in the US and around the world say the Trump administration's funding freeze has stiffed them on hundreds of millions of dollars in pay for work already done, has forced them to lay off staff and is rapidly putting many near the point of financial collapse.

Farmers and other suppliers and contractors describe fortunes in undelivered food aid rotting in ports and other undelivered aid at risk of theft.

The judge ordered the administration to notify every organization with an existing foreignaid contract with the federal government of his temporary stay. He set a Tuesday deadline for the administration to show it had done so and was otherwise complying with the order. There was no immediate public response from the Trump administration.

The judge issued the temporary order in the US in a lawsuit brought by two organisations, the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition and the Global Health Council, representing health organisations receiving US funds for work abroad.

In his order, the judge noted that the Trump administration argued it had to shut down funding for the thousands of USAID aid programs abroad to conduct a thorough review of each program and whether it should be eliminated.

However, lawyers for the administration had failed to show they had a "rational reason for disregarding ... the countless small and large businesses that would have to shutter programs or shutter their businesses altogether," the judge added. The ruling also bars Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other Trump officials from enforcing stop-work orders that the Trump administration and Musk have sent to the companies and organizations carrying out foreign aid orders.

The judge also rejected the Trump administration's argument that it was buffering the impact of the funding freeze, offering waivers to allow funding to keep flowing to some aid

concerns about US-Russia talks

Vice President JD Vance hammered home the US demand that the NATO alliance step up defense spending on Friday, ahead of a security meeting in Europe at a time of intense concern and uncertainty over the Trump admin-

istration's foreign policy.
The future of Ukraine is the top item on the agenda at the Munich Security Conference following a phone call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin this week, when they pledged to work together to end the 3-year-old Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Vance is expected to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later President Friday for talks that many observers, particularly in Europe, hope will shed at least some light on Trump's ideas for a negotiated settlement to the

Germany, Friday.

politicised."

security conference."

sion she called "strange and

US Secretary of State Marco

Rubio was supposed to join Vance and Zelenskyy but was delayed when his Air Force

plane had to return to

Washington after developing a

mechanical problem en route

to Munich. He took a different

aircraft, but it was unclear

whether he would arrive in

time for the meeting. Trump, who upended years of

steadfast US support for Ukraine during his call with Putin on Wednesday, has been

vague about his specific inten-

tions — other than suggesting

that a deal will likely result in

Ukraine being forced to cede territory that Russia has seized

since it annexed Crimea in

'The Ukraine war has to end,"

Trump told reporters Thursday.

'Young people are being killed

at levels that nobody's seen

since World War II. And it's a

ridiculous war."

2014.

Vance started his day in Munich meeting separately with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and British foreign secretary David Lammy. He used the engagements to reiterate the Republican Trump administra-tion's call for NATO members to spend more on defense. Currently, 23 of NATO's 32 member nations are hitting the Western military alliance's target of spending 2% of the nation's GDP on defense.

'NATO is a very important military alliance, of course, that we're the most significant part of," Vance told Rutte. "But we want to make sure that NATO is actually built for the future, and we think a big part of that is ensuring that NATO does a little bit more burden sharing in Europe, so the United States can focus on some of our challenges in East

Rutte said he agreed that Europe needs to step up. "We have to grow up in that sense and spend much more," he said. Hours before Vance and Zelenskyy were set to meet, a Russian drone with a highexplosive warhead hit the protective confinement shell of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Kyiv region, the Ukrainian president said. Radiation levels have not increased, Zelenskyy and the UN atomic agency said.

"very clear greeting from Putin and Russian Federation to the tration provided to Ukraine since Russia's February 2022 invasion.

Chernobyl drone strike is a Democratic Biden adminis-

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Trump has been highly skepti-Peskov on Friday denied Ukraine's claims. And Foreign cal of that aid and is expected to cut or otherwise limit it as negotiations get underway in Ministry spokesperson Maria the coming days. Zakharova said the Munich organizers haven't invited Russia for several years, a deci-

United States Vice-President JD Vance, third left, meets with Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, second right, and

Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, center right, on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in Munich,

Both Trump and US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth this week undercut Ukraine's hopes of becoming part of NATO, which the alliance said less than a year ago was "irreversible," or of getting back its territory captured by Russia, which currently occupies close to 20% including Crimea.

"I don't see any way that a country in Russia's position could allow ... them to join NATO," Trump said Thursday. "I don't see that happening." But British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told Zelenskyy on Friday that Ukraine must be allowed to join NATO.

Trump in recent days said he wants to reach an agreement with Ukraine to gain access to the country's rare earth materials as a condition for continuing US support for Ukraine's defense against Russia. He confirmed earlier this week that aides were working toward striking such a deal.

Asked Friday if a deal might be completed in Munich, Vance responded, "We'll see." Vance, in an interview with the

Trump's musings have left Europeans in a quandary, won-dering how — or even if — they can maintain the post-WWII security that NATO afforded them or fill the gap in Wall Street Journal, said that the US would hit Moscow with sanctions and potentially military action if Putin won't agree to a peace deal with Ukraine Zelenskyy in Munich told the billions of dollars of secuthat guarantees Kyreporters that he thinks the rity assistance that the term independence. that guarantees Kyiv's long-

The warning that military options "remain on the table" was striking language from a Trump administration that's repeatedly underscored a desire

to quickly end the war. The US reassurances may have somewhat allayed Zeleńskyy's fears, although they will not replace any lost military or economic support that President Joe Biden's administration had provided.

The Ukrainian leader conceded Thursday that it was "not very pleasant" that Trump spoke first to Putin. But he said the main issue was to "not allow everything to go according to Putin's plan."

We cannot accept it, as an independent country, any agreements (made) without us," Zelenskyy said as he visited a nuclear power plant in western Ukraine.

The track Trump is taking also has rocked Europe, much as his dismissive comments about France and Germany did during his first term.

French Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Haddad described Europe as being at a turning point, with the ground shifting rapidly under its feet, and said Europe must wean itself off its reliance on the United States for its security. He warned that handing a victory to Russia in Ukraine could have repercussions in Asia, too.

"I think we're not sufficiently grasping the extent to which our world is changing. Both our competitors and our allies are busy accelerating," Haddad told broadcaster France Info on Thursday.



the Oval Office at the White House, Thursday in Washington.

'Russian drone struck Chernobyl reactor shell but radiation levels normal'

Kyiv (AP): A Russian drone with a high-explosive warhead hit the protective containment shell of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Kyiv region during the night, Ukrainian Volodymyr President President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Friday. Radiation levels have not increased, Zelenskyy and the UN atomic agency said. Russian officials made no immediate comment, and it was not possible to independently confirm Ukraine's claim of Russian responsibility. The UN atomic agency did not attribute blame, saying only its team stationed at the site heard an explosion and were informed that a drone had struck the shell.

damaged the structure and started a fire, which has been put out. The strike came two days after US President Donald Trump said he would meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss ending the war, in a move that seemed to identify Putin as the only player that matters and looked set to sideline Zelenskyy, as well as European governments, in any peace talks. Ukraine intends to provide detailed information to US officials about the Chernobyl strike during the Munich Security Conference starting Friday, the head of Ukraine's Presidential Office, Andrii Yermak, wrote on his Telegram channel. The UN International Atomic Energy Agency said the

Chernobyl strike occurred at 1:50 am local time (2350 GMT). It said there was "no indication of a breach in the ... inner containment" shell. The outer shell that was hit is a protective cover built in 2016 over a heavy concrete containment structure. The inner layer was placed on the plant's fourth

reactor soon after the 1986 disaster, which was one of the worst accidents in nuclear history. The containment shells seek to prevent radiation leaks. The three-year Russia-Ukraine war has brought repeated warnings of dangers to Ukraine's four nuclear plants, especially at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, which is Europe's

biggest and one of the 10 largest in the world.

IAEA chief Rafael Rossi said on X that the Chernobyl strike and the recent increase in military activity near the Zaporizhzhia plant "underline persistent nuclear safety risks," adding that the IAEA remains "on high alert."

The IAEA said its personnel at the site responded within min-utes of the strike, adding there were no casualties. "Radiation levels inside and outside remain normal and stable," the IAEA said on X. Zelenskyy claimed on Telegram that the Chernobyl strike showed that "Putin is certainly not preparing for negotiations" — a claim Ukrainian officials have repeatedly made.

London's Lord Mayor to promote capital flows in India

London (PTI): The Lord Mayor of London is on his way to "bang on doors" with the message of free trade and greater two-way capital flows as he begins a week-long visit to India on Saturday.

Alderman Alastair King, who as the 696th Lord Mayor is the global ambassador for the financial hub of the City of London, will be in Mumbai for a wide range of discussions centred around his chosen theme of "Growth Unleashed" for his mayoralty.

Alderman King has meetings scheduled with British government trade officials as well as key Indian banking and financial institutions such as HDFC, State Bank of India (SBI), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

The theme 'Growth Unleashed' is to encourage British businesses to get out to extraordinary growth markets such as India, bang on doors and build their businesses," the Lord Mayor told PTI, ahead of his visit to Mumbai this weekend.

The visit comes ahead of a pro-

posed visit by UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds later this month to formally relaunch the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), stalled by the general election cycle in both countries last vear. "I think the timing is very good. There was a bit of a lull in relation to pushing forward for the Free Trade Agreement, and I'm very pleased to see that Minister Reynolds is off to India as well. "We can [meanwhile] talk about the opportunities to people involved in financial, professional, legal and maritime services that the Free Trade Agreement will present," said King.

Pope Francis hospitalised to treat bronchitis

Rome (AP): Pope Francis was hospitalised Friday to treat a weeklong bout of bronchitis and undergo diagnostic tests, the Vatican said, confirming the latest issues with the 88year-old's pontiff's health that forced him to cancel his agenda through Monday at least. Francis was diagnosed with bronchitis on February 6, but had continued to hold daily audiences in his Vatican hotel suite. He attended his general audience Wednesday and presided at an outdoor Mass on Sunday. But he had handed off his speeches for an aide to read aloud, saying he was having trouble breathing. On Friday, he appeared bloated and pale during the handful of audiences he held before going to the hospital. The bloating appeared to indicate that the medication he was taking to

lems, especially bouts of acute bronchitis in winter. He uses a wheelchair, walker or cane when moving around his apartment and recently fell twice, hurting his arm and chin.

Francis was hospitalised at Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he was last admitted in June 2023 to have surgery to remove intestinal scar tissue and repair a hernia in the abdominal wall. A few months before that, he spent three days in the hospital to receive intravenous antibiotics for a respiratory infection. The Vatican said Francis was admitted after his Friday audiences. In addition to regular Vatican officials, the pope met Friday morning with the Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, and CNN head

Mark Thompson. treat the lung infection was making him retain water.
Francis, who had part of one the audiences, Pope Francis will be admitted to the Agostino

lung removed as a young man, has long battled health probnecessary diagnostic tests and necessary diagnostic tests and to continue in a hospital setting treatment for bronchitis that is still ongoing," a Vatican state-ment said. No details were given about the duration of Francis' hospitalization, but it later announced he was cancelling his participation in Holy Year events through Monday. The pope had a busy weekend agenda planned with an audience with artists in town for the Jubilee on Saturday, a Mass for them on Sunday and a trip to Rome's famed Cinecitta studios on Monday. While a Vatican cardinal would preside over the Mass in Francis' place, the Vatican said the other events were cancelled "due to the impossibility of the pope to participate."
The Vatican announcements,

delivered ahead of Francis' hospitalization, came in sharp contrast to its 2023 hospitalization for bronchitis that caused confusion. Initially, the Vatican had said he had gone in for scheduled tests, but the pontiff later revealed he had felt pain in his chest and was rushed to the hospital where bronchitis was diagnosed.

Zelenskyy said that the strike

He was put on intravenous antibiotics and was released April 1, quipping as he left that he was "still alive." Francis spent 10 days at the

same hospital in July 2021 fol-lowing intestinal surgery for a bowel narrowing. He credited his personal nurse

then with saving his life for having insisted he get the problem checked out. It wasn't the first time he cred-

ited a nurse with saving his life. Francis recounted his neardeath experience with his youthful lung infection in his recent autobiography "Hope," in which he credited his survival to a nurse, an Italian nun named Sister Cornelia

Is AI making us stupider?

AP BRISBANE

There is only so much thinking most of us can do in our heads. Try dividing 16,951 by 67 without reaching for a pen and paper. Or a calculator. Try doing the weekly shopping without a list on the back of last week's receipt. Or on your phone.

By relying on these devices to help make our lives easier, are we making ourselves smarter or dumber? Have we traded efficiency gains for inching ever closer to idiocy as a species? This question is especially important to consider with regard to generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology such as ChatGPT, an AI chatbot owned by tech company OpenAI, which at the time of writing is used by 300 million people each week.

According to a recent paper by a team of researchers from Microsoft and Carnegie Mellon

University in the United States, the answer might be yes. But there's more to the story. The researchers assessed how users perceive the effect of

generative AI on their own crit-

Generally speaking, critical thinking has to do with thinking well.

ical thinking.

One way we do this is by judging our own thinking processes against established norms and methods of good reasoning. These norms include values such as precision, clarity, accuracy, breadth, depth, relevance, significance and cogency of arguments.

Other factors that can affect quality of thinking include the influence of our existing world views, cognitive biases, and reliance on incomplete or inaccurate mental models.

The authors of the recent study adopt a definition of critical thinking developed by American educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom and colleagues in 1956. It's not really a definition at all. Rather it's a hierarchical way to categorise cognitive skills, including recall of information, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

The authors state they prefer this categorisation, also known as a "taxonomy", because it's simple and easy to apply. However, since it was devised it has fallen out of favour and has been discredited by Robert Marzano and indeed by Bloom

himself. In particular, it assumes there is a hierarchy of cognitive skills in which so-called "higherorder" skills are built upon "lower-order" skills. This does not hold on logical or evidencebased grounds. For example, evaluation, usually seen as a culminating or higher-order process, can be the beginning of inquiry or very easy to perform in some contexts.

India, US aim to double bilateral trade to \$500 Billion by 2030

India and the United States (US) have resolved to more than double the two-way trade to \$500 Billion by 2030 and announced plans for a bilateral trade agreement with a view to bringing down duties and increase market access.

According to the joint statement issued after the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump here, the two leaders have also pledged the bilateral trade relationship to promote growth that ensures fairness, national security and job creation.

To this end, the leaders set a bold new goal for bilateral trade - Mission 500 - aiming to more than double total bilateral trade to \$500 Billion by 2030. Recognising that this level of ambition would require new, fair-trade terms, the leaders announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025," it said.

The statement further said that both sides committed to designate senior representatives to advance address these negotiations and to barriers.

relationship fully reflects the aspirations of the Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce and Technology (COMPACT).

To advance this innovative, wide-ranging BTA, the US and India will take an integrated approach to strengthen and deepen bilateral trade across the goods and services sector, and will work towards increasing market access, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and deepening supply integration," it added.

Normally in a free trade agreement, two trading partners either eliminate or significantly reduce customs duties on maximum number of goods traded between them. Besides, they also ease norms to promote trade in investments.

During the first term of President Donald Trump, India and the US had discussed a mini-trade deal. but was shelved by the Joe Biden administration as they were not in favour of a free trade agreement.

The leaders also welcomed early steps to demonstrate commitment to mutual trade bilateral

that the trade In 2023, the US and India



President Donald Trump and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi hold a news conference in the East Room of the White House

bilateral trade in goods and services stood at \$190.08 Billion (\$123.89 goods and \$66.19 services trade). In that year, India's merchandise exports to the US stood at \$83.77 Billion, while imports were \$40.12 Billion, leaving a trade gap of \$43.65 Billion in favour of India.

The country's services exports to America was \$36.33 Billion in 2023, while imports were

aggregated at \$29.86 Billion. The trade gap (difference between imports and exports) was \$6.47 Billion in favour of New Delhi. Further, the statement said

that the US hailed India's recent measures to lower tariffs on American products of interest in the areas of bourbon. motorcycles, and Information Communications Technology (ICT) products and metals, as well as measures to enhance market access for US agricultural products, like alfalfa hay and duck meat, and medical devices.

"India also expressed appreciation for US measures taken to enhance exports of Indian mangoes and pomegranates to the US," it said, adding the two countries pledged to collaborate to enhance bilateral trade by increasing US exports of industrial goods to India and Indian exports of labourmanufactured intensive products to America.

The two sides will also work together to increase trade in agricultural goods. It added the two leaders

agreed to drive opportunities for companies of the two countries to make greenfield

investments in high-value

industries. They welcomed ongoing investments by Indian companies worth about \$7.35 Billion, such as those by Hindalco's Novelis in finished aluminium goods at their state-of-the art facilities in Alabama and Kentucky, JSW in steel manufacturing operations at Texas and Ohio, Epsilon Advanced Materials in the manufacturing of critical battery materials in North Carolina, and Jubilant commerce. Pharma in the manufacturing of injectables in Washington.

over 3,000 high-quality jobs for local families, the statement said. The Modi-Trump meeting came hours after the US president announced a new reciprocal tariff policy to match higher duties charged by all its trading partners. At a joint media briefing with Modi, Trump announced that he and Modi agreed on a deal that would facilitate India to import more US oil and gas to bring down Washington's trade deficit. In his remarks to the press, Trump called import duties imposed by India on certain US products very unfair" and "strong".

These investments support

While announcing the new tariff policy, the president also spoke about how India is

"right at the top of the pack" when it comes to tariffs. Earlier also, he has termed India as "tariff abuser" and

"tariff king".
According to experts, Trump's announcement on imposing reciprocal tariffs has created uncertain trade environment between India and the US, though the plan for a major trade deal could help promote two-way

The bilateral trade between India and the US was around \$130 Billion last year and the trade gap stands at around \$45 Billion in New Delhi's favour. In 2024, India's main exports to the US included drug formulations, biological (\$8.1 Billion), telecom instruments (\$6.5 Billion), precious and semi-precious stones (\$5.3 Billion), petroleum products (\$4.1 Billion), gold and other precious metal jewellery (\$3.2 Billion), ready-made garments of cotton including accessories (\$2.8 Billion), and products of iron and steel (\$2.7 Billion).

Îmports included crude oil (\$4.5 Billion), petroleum products (\$3.6 Billion), coal, coke (\$3.4 Billion), cut and polished diamonds (\$2.6 Billion), electric machinery (\$1.4 Billion), aircrafts, space crafts and parts (\$1.3 Billion), and gold (\$1.3 Billion).

eases to 2.31 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale Price Inflation (WPI) moderated WWPI) moderated marginally to 2.31 per cent in January due to the decline in prices of food items especially vegetables, government data released on Friday showed.

The WPI based inflation was 2.37 per cent in December 2024. It was 0.33 per cent in January 2024.

As per the data, inflation in food items eased to 5.88 per cent in January, as against 8.47 per cent in December 2024. Inflation in vegetables came down significantly to 8.35 per cent, as against 28.65 per cent in December 2024.

In the eggs, meat and fish category inflation declined to 3.56 per cent as against 5.43 per cent last month. Within vegetables, tomato prices declined to 18.9 per cent while inflation in potato continued to be high at 74.28 per cent, and in onion it spiked to 28.33

per cent in January.
The fuel and power category witnessed a deflation of 2.78

December. In manufactured items, inflation was 2.51 per cent as compared to 2.14 per cent in December 2024.

Retail inflation data released on Wednesday showed that Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation eased to a 5month low of 4.31 per cent in January on easing prices of food items. ICRA Senior Economist Rahul Agrawal said, "We project the WPI to average at 2.4 per cent in FY2025 and inch up further to 3 per cent in FY2026, despite expectations of a cooling in the prints for the food segment".

According to CARE Ratings Chief Economist Rajani Sinha, food prices are likely to ease in the coming months driven by seasonal correction in prices. However, there are headwinds as far as global commodity prices are concerned.

neir prices have hardening amid growing uncertainty around the impact of the US protectionist trade policies.

This would exert an upward per cent in January, against a pressure on the WPI non-food deflation of 3.79 per cent in component.

Wholesale price inflation | India-US TRUST initiative to boost NCMM



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The India-United States (US) Transforming Transforming Relationship Utilising Technology Strategic Technology (TRUST) initiative will help in giving a push to the government's National ritical Mineral Mission. which encourages public and sector private companies to acquire critical mineral assets abroad.

National Critical The Mineral Mission (NCMM),

approved by the government for a period of seven years till 2030-31, at an outlay of ₹34,300 Crore, proposes development of stockpiles of critical minerals within the

country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump have agreed on the TRUST initiative, to emphasis on creating strong supply chains of critical advanced minerals, materials pharmaceuticals.

As per a joint statement

issued after the Trump-Modi meeting in Washington, both the countries have decided to launch a recovery and processing initiative for strategic minerals like lithium and rare earth.

National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) aims to build a resilient value chain encompassing mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing and recovery from end-of-life products, Mining body FIMI said.

"NCMM also seeks to encourage Indian public sector undertakings and private companies to acquire critical mineral assets abroad and enhance trade with resource-rich countries.

TRUST will greatly help to achieve the objectives of NCMM," said R'K Sharma, Special Advisor at Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI). The two sides will also work together on economic corridors and connectivity infrastructure under the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and I2U2 meworks.

Centre invites applications for NFRA Chairperson either a consolidated monthly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has invited applications for the posts of chairperson and three full-time members in the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA).

The NFRA is an independent regulatory body overseeing financial reporting and auditing standards in the country.

For chairperson, the applicants will be a person of eminence, ability, and integrity with at least 25 years of expertise in accountancy, auditing, finance, or law and for full-time members, they must have at least 20 years of experience in the same fields, according to a release.

The chairperson will receive a consolidated monthly salary of ₹5.62 Lakh without house and car or the pay and allowances are equivalent to a secretary to the government of India, as per the NFRA's (Manner of Appointment and other terms and conditions of Service of Chairperson and members) rules. For full-time, members will have the option of drawing

salary of ₹5 Lakh or receiving pay as admissible to an

additional secretary.

Those drawing a government pension will have their pay reduced by the gross pension amount. Separate applications must be submitted for the post of Chairperson and members, the release said.

The Chairperson and all members, before being appointed, will have to submit a declaration to the government confirming that they have no conflict of interest, or lack of independence in respect of such appointment as Chairperson or member, failing which their appointment will not be considered.

The appointees cannot be associated with any audit firm, including related consultancy firms during their tenure and for two years after demitting office. The term of office for both Chairperson and full-time members will be three years or until they attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier, with the possibility of reappointment for one more

Girlyveda launches 'Harmo Balancer' for women

PNS NEW DELHI

irlyveda, a brand that has Gcatered to the health and wellness of women, has launched Harmo Balancer, an ayurvedic supplement that assists women in overcoming hormonal imbalance problems.

The new product will help in controlling the symptoms of Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a hormonal condition that affects women of reproductive age.

Girlyveda aims to serve as a reliable, safe, and effective way to assist Indian women in managing this condition. Globally, the prevalence of PCOS ranges from four percent to 21 percent, 20-29 and in India, the prevalence varies from two percent to 35 percent. Harmo Balancer is a unique Ayurvedic blend of powerful herbs like Gudmar. Kachnaar, Shatavari, and Ashoka that balances hormones, regulates

menstrual cycles, and improves insulin sensitivity. Speaking about the new product, Danny Kumar Meena, Founder, Girlyveda, said, "Women's health is often overlooked, and conditions like PCOS are still not widely understood. At Girlyveda, we believe in providing chemical-free, Ayurvedic solutions that empower women to take control of their health naturally. Harmo Balancer is to support designed hormonal balance, promote menstrual health, and help manage the symptoms of PCOS without any harmful side effects.'

Rupee rises 12 paise to close against USD

The rupee extended its recovery and settled 12 paise higher at 86.81

of domestic equities by institutional foreign investors capped a sharp gain in the local unit, forex close. traders said.

Also, they said, the settled almost flat with a

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.86 and touched the (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday amid easing American currency.

However, higher crude oil session at 86.81 dollar declined as President Rough and Rough session at 86.81 (provisional) against the dollar, logging a gain of 12 paise from its previous

aggressive dollar chase was marginal gain of two paise halted after the US at 86.93 against the US government announced the dollar. The unit had closed implementation of 16 paise lower on reciprocal tariffs on April 1, Wednesday, a day after

giving its trading partners surging 66 paise, witnessing some relief.

surging 66 paise, witnessing the highest single-day rise in nearly two years.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee gained on the weak US

Donald Trump delayed the implementation reciprocal tariffs to April 1 calmed market

nerves. "Persistent outflows by FIIs may pressurise the rupee further. However, any further intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may and industrial production data from the US, Choudhary said, adding the "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 86.60 to 87.10".

The domestic unit has been facing extreme volatility for the past few months due to global several m a c r o e c o n o m i c

uncertainties. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the rupee along with other Asian currencies has depreciated against the US dollar on account of uncertainty pervading the global macroeconomy.

RBI supersedes board of New India Co-op Bank

PTI NEW DELHI

Aday after imposing several restrictions on city-based New India Co-operative Bank, the Reserve Bank India (RBI) on Friday superseded its board citing poor governance standards.

A large number of bank's customers had gathered at its branches on Friday following RBI's restrictions, which included a bar on issuing new loans and suspension of deposit withdrawals for six months. The bank has 28 branches, mostly located in the Mumbai region. In a statement, the RBI said it has appointed Shreekant, a former chief general manager of State Bank of India (SBI) as

'Administrator' to manage the affairs of the bank. The Board of Directors of New

India Co-operative Bank, Mumbai, has been superseded for 12 months, the RBI said in a statement. It has also appointed a 'Committee of Advisors' to assist the Administrator in discharging his duties. The members of the Committee of Advisors are Ravindra Sapra (former General Manager, SBI) and Abhijeet Deshmukh (chartered accountant).

The action is necessitated due to certain material concerns emanating from governance standards observed in the bank," it said.

On Thursday, the RBI had imposed several restrictions on the lender including on withdrawal of funds by depositors, amid supervisory concerns.

The restrictions came into force from the close of business on Thursday and would remain in force for a period of six months and are subject to review.

"Considering the bank's present liquidity position, the bank has been directed not to allow withdrawal of any amount from savings bank or current accounts or any other account of a depositor," the RBI said while imposing the restrictions. The lender, however, has been allowed to set off loans against deposits subject to the conditions stated in the RBI directions.

BSES launches toll-free support for consumer issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power discom on Friday reach BSES through multiple channels in case of any disruption or local fault. Ít has issued two toll free numbers and Whatsapp numbers- for BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL).

The toll free numbers and Whatsapp numbers for is 19123 and 8800919123, while for BYPL, the numbers are 19122 and 8745999808, respectively. According to State Load Despatch Centrer (SLDC) data, the city's peak power ensuring an uninterrupted

demand has remained stable, ranging between 4200-4500 MW since February 8. said the consumers can BSES discoms are ensuring a

seamless, reliable and quality power supply, successfully meeting Delhi's winter electricity demand.

BSES is committed to ensure reliable and quality power supply to over 50 Lakh consumers and two Crore residents across south, west, east, and central Delhi. Smart power procurement strategies, including long-term Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), banking arrangements with other states, along with a robust distribution network, are

To maintain a sustainable and eco-friendly power supply, up to 2000 MW of renewable energy is significantly contributing to meeting BSES' winter power demand.

As part of commitment to ensure a reliable power supply, BSES discoms have dedicated war rooms for real-time monitoring of the power supply situation. Led by senior officials, these war rooms enable swift decision-making

response. Additionally, BSES field teams remain on high alert, ready to address exigencies promptly.

Modi, Trump advance India-US civil nuclear cooperation

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and United States (US) President Donald Trump vowed to move forward to facilitate building Americandesigned nuclear reactors in India under the framework of the epochal civil nuclear deal sealed by the two nations over 16 years back.

In their talks at the White House on Thursday, the two leaders decided to significantly expand energy cooperation.
The civil nuclear deal changed India's overall engagement with the US as it paved the way for building the bonds of a strategic partnership, especially in areas of high technology and defence.

"The leaders announced their commitment to fully realise the US-India 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement by moving forward with plans to work together to build US-designed nuclear reactors in India through largescale localisation and possible technology transfer," according to a joint statement.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Union budget on February 1, announced plans to amend India's nuclear liability law as well as the Atomic Energy Act. Certain clauses in India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 have emerged as

hurdles in moving forward in the implementation of the civil nuclear deal.

Both sides welcomed the recent budget announcement by the government of India to take up amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA) for nuclear reactors, the statement said.

It said the two sides further decided to establish bilateral arrangements in accordance with CLNDA, that would address the issue of civil liability and facilitate the collaboration of Indian and US industry in the production and deployment of nuclear

INBRIEF

DMRC'S DIRECTOR DR AMIT JAIN, IRTS CO-AUTHORED A BOOK "LEAD SMART IN THE AI ERA"



NEW DELHI: DMRC's Director (Operations & Services), Dr Amit Kr Jain , IRTS have co-authored a book titled "Lead Smart in the Al Era" which elaborates on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries and leadership paradigm. This book is an important document on Al and its role in shaping

VIT-AP ORGANISES CONFERENCE ON 'INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES'

AMARAVATI: VIT-AP School of Business at VIT-AP University, in collaboration with the University of Newcastle, Australia, organises a two-day International Conference on "Innovation and Sustainable Business Practices in the Digital Era" on February 14-15.





ome stories are meant to be read, some meant to be watched, but the best ones? They are meant to be heard. Words, when spoken the right way, don't just tell a story, they create a world. That's exactly what happened at the Kathakar International Storytellers Festival.

Now in its 18th edition, Kathakar, India's first and Asia's largest oral storytelling festival, was brought to life by the Gahilote sisters, Rachna, Prarthana and Shaguna. Organised by Nivesh, HHACH and Babaji Music and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Delhi Tourism. Three days, countless stories and a sea of people who arrived as strangers but left as part of something bigger.

Day 1: Conversations That Stayed

The festival opened with a speech about something that hit home, how, in a world of 15-second videos and endless scrolling, we are forgetting how to listen. The

morning was reserved for school children honestly? Watching them sit, eyes wide, completely absorbed in stories was proof that no matter how much the world changes, a good story will always find its

The evening, however, was when the magic truly began. Kutle Khan Manghaniyar took the stage, his hypnotic Rajasthani folk beats turning the space into a desert courtyard under the open sky. Then came Mohit Chauhan and Imtiaz Ali, in



Usifu Jaloh from Sierra Leone, a storyteller who lived every word. With every movement, every shift in tone, he pulled people into his world. It didn't matter if you understood the language; you felt it. That's the beauty of storytelling, sometimes, emotions speak louder than words.

Later, Anurag Basu and Mohit Chauhan took the stage, turning a planned talk into an intimate exchange between two artists who just get each other. *Basu* spoke about how streaming platforms are changing the way we consume stories.

Bhupinder Babbal, fresh off the success of Arjan Valley Ve, set the perfect mood before the man everyone had been waiting for, *Lucky Ali*, walked in. The first notes of O Sanam sent a ripple through the crowd. Some people froze, some closed their eyes, others just felt. By the time he sang Dooba Dooba, the audience wasn't singing along, they were reliving something. A road trip, a lost love, a version of themselves from years ago. Day 2 felt like a storm years powerful, unexpected, impossible to ignore. The kind that reminds us why we

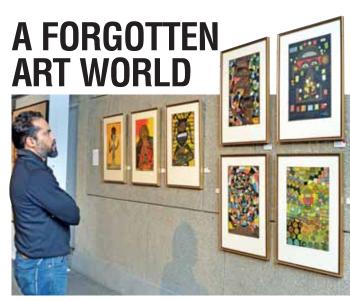
> Day 3: The Last Page Turns Slowly

feel, to belong.

turn to art, to remember, to

The last day of a festival always carries a touch of melancholy, the realisation that this small world, built over three days, is about to fade away. Sajid Ali reflected on how films like Laila Majnu and Chamkila continue to resonate, perhaps because some stories are not just written, they are lived.

As the evening set in, music once again took centre stage. The Niazi Brothers performed Chaap Tilak and something shifted in the air. The claps, the swaying bodies, the voices rising as one, this was not simply a performance; it was a moment shared. The last day was like the final chapter of a book one does not want to finish. It carried joy, even in its farewells. And is that not the best way to conclude a story?



Samvega: Aesthetic Shocks is about artists whose voices have been quiet for too long, now finally heard, says TEAM VIVA

hat does it feel like to stand before a work of art and sense something shift inside you? To encounter colours, patterns and forms that seem to hold centuries of wisdom? To realise that an artist whose name you have never heard has created something that speaks to you across time? Samvega: Aesthetic Shocks is an exhibition that invites this kind of experience. Featuring eleven artists whose works have remained largely unseen, the show brings forward a legacy of brilliance long overdue for recognition. Curated by Minhazz Majumdar.

There is something deeply moving about seeing these works gathered in one space. They hold a quiet urgency, a sense of voices that have waited too long to be heard. Some pieces feel meditative, drawing you in with intricate patterns and balanced compositions. Others disrupt that stillness, shifting perspectives and challenging the way art is traditionally viewed. Some works reveal themselves slowly, while others strike instantly, demanding attention in unexpected ways.

The Sanskrit term Samvega refers to an aesthetic shock, a moment of deep realisation that transforms perception.

Some of the artists in Samvega have inherited these traditions through generations of training, while others have forged their own paths, developing styles in quiet dedication. Their works reflect a world where mathematics and mysticism, structure and spontaneity, come together in visual form. Samvega is the culmination of that journey, ensuring these artists receive the recognition they deserve

This is the kind of exhibition that stays with you. It is a reminder that art is not simply something to be admired from a distance, but something to be felt.



STEP INSIDE AND

LET THE WORKS

SPEAK. THE

ARTWORKS

CAPTURE ESSENCE

THROUGH SACRED

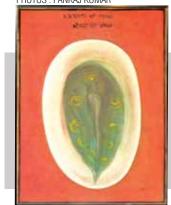
GEOMETRY, COSMIC

SYMBOLISM OR

INVITING

CONTEMPLATION

AND CONNECTION







BY SAKSHI PRIYA

AS LONG AS THERE

WILL BE

ARE STORIES, THERE

STORYTELLERS. AND

AS LONG AS THERE

THE WORLD WILL

ALWAYS LISTEN.

ARE STORYTELLERS

conversation with *Prarthana Gahilote*. The *kissey* felt

like a late-night chat between two old friends, except

the audience got to listen in. Chauhan spoke about

the feeling behind a song, while Ali shared

take shape when you truly see peopl

word felt like a quiet nudge, reminding

everyone that art isn't just about creating, it's about

pages smelled of nostalgia, yet felt fresh.

The first day felt like an old book, one whose

That happens when artists, each with their own vision, style and philosophy. come together under one roof? Forms ////Formation, explores the relationships between artistic practice, collaboration and individual expression. Featuring painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography and printmaking, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to see how different generations of artists engage with shared ideas while maintaining their distinct voices.

At the heart of the show is the exchange of influences, both direct and indirect. Anupam Sud's etching At Sunset presents a quiet, introspective moment, where shadowy figures dissolve into

their surroundings. Madhur Sen's ceramic sculpture Cold Winter Night captures the weight of silence in its smooth, muted textures, evoking a sense of time suspended. Ananda M Banerji's

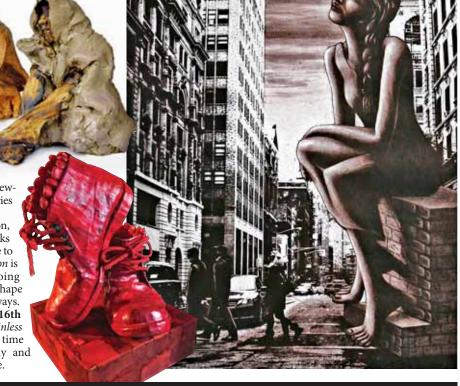
acrylic-on-canvas painting uses deep reds and ochres to create a hypnotic rhythm, while Red Sky, a mixedmedia work on archival material, feels like a fleeting memory made permanent.

Biman Das, a Padma Bhushan awardee, presents a recent sculpture that bridges tradition and contemporary sensibilities, reflecting his mastery of form and material. Meanwhile, photography adds another layer to the exhibition, with Aditya Arya's cyanotype prints, deep blue impressions that carry an almost

in touch at vivacity

dreamlike quality, inviting viewers to reconsider the boundaries between past and present.

Art thrives on conversation, between artists, between works and between those who come to see them. Forms ////Formation is a reflection of this ongoing process, where ideas take shape and shift in unexpected ways. The exhibition runs until 16th February 2025 at The Stainless Gallery, New Delhi. Take the time to step inside, look closely and become part of the dialogue.



Champions Trophy winner to get \$2.24m

inners of the u p c o m i n g Champions Trophy (CT) will walk away with a whopping \$2.24 Million cash reward after the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a 53 per cent hike in its prize money pool for the eight-team tournament starting February 19.

The winners' purse would be close to 20 crore in Indian currency. The runners-up will receive half the amount, \$1.12 Million (INR 9.72 Crore), while each losing semi-finalist will take home \$ 560,000 (INR 4.86 Crore). The total prize pool has increased to \$6.9 Million

increased to \$6.9 Million (₹60 Crore approx).

"The substantial prize pot underscores the ICC's ongoing commitment to investing in the sport and maintaining the global prestige of our events," ICC chairman Jay Shah said in a statement ahead of the tournament which will be tournament which will be held in Pakistan and the

Each group stage win would



be worth over \$34,000 (INR Crore). 30 Lakh) for the victorious

Teams finishing in fifth or sixth place will receive \$350,000 each (INR three Crore), while the seventh and eighth-placed sides will take home \$140,000 (INR 1.2

Additionally, all eight teams will receive a guaranteed \$125,000 each (INR 1.08 Crore) for participating in the

This tournament marks the first time Pakistan will host an ICC event since 1996.

The 2025 edition features eight teams split into two groups of four, with the top two from each group advancing to the semi-finals. "The ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 represents a pivotal moment for cricket, requiring a tournement that pivotal moment for cricket, reviving a tournament that highlights the pinnacle of ODI talent, where every match is critical," the ICC chairman emphasised in his statement. "Beyond the financial incentive, this tournament

Lahore and Rawalpindi. The 2025 edition features

incentive, this tournament ignites fierce competition, captivates fans worldwide, and plays a vital role in fostering the growth and long-term sustainability of cricket for future generations," Shah added. The men's Champions Trophy was held every four years from 2009 to 2017 before a COVID disruption and deliberations on its

and deliberations on its relevance led to it being postponed. The tournament was first introduced as a biennial event in 1998. The women's Champions Trophy will make its debut in 2027 in the T20 format.

Injury rules out Ben Sears from Champions Trophy

PTI CHRISTCHURCH

Pacer Ben Sears has been ruled out of the Champions Trophy (CT) due to a hamstring injury, a significant setback for New Zealand ahead of the ICC event which kicks off on February 19. New Zealand Cricket (NZC)

has named Jacob Duffy as Sears' replacement.

"Sears felt some pain in his left hamstring at the team's first training in Karachi on Wednesday and a subsequent scan revealed a minor tear that would require at least two weeks' rehabilitation," NZC said in a statement.

'The rehabilitation timeframe means that Sears would likely be available for only the team's final Group A match against India in Dubai, and so the decision was made to rule him out." Sears' absence has paved out." Sears absence has paved the way for Duffy, who is currently with the squad for the ODI Tri-Series against Pakistan and South Africa. "We're all really feeling for Ben.

It's always tough being ruled



out of a major event at such a late stage, and it's especially tough in Ben's case given it would have been his first major ICC event," said New Zealand head coach Gary Stead.

The timeframes for Ben to be fit to play again meant he would likely miss the majority of the group stage, and given the short nature of the tournament, we felt it was appropriate to bring in a player who is fully fit and ready to go." "Ben is a player with huge potential and given the short rehabilitation timeframe, we're sure he'll be fit and raring to go for the home series against him."

Pakistan Zealand?

On Duffy's inclusion, Stead said, "Jacob showed with his performances in the recent home series against Sri Lanka that he is more than capable at international level.

"He's been part of the squad for the ODI Tri-Series so he's fully acclimatised and he's got plenty of experience in these conditions and is fit and ready

to go. "He's another player who will be experiencing his first senior ICC event, so it will be an exciting few weeks ahead for



India lose to Japan 0-3 in quarterfinals of BAMTC

PTI ■ QINGDAO

Prannoy H^S Prannoy fought valiantly, but India succumbed to a 0-3 defeat against a second-string Japan in the quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships (BAMTC), ending their campaign on a disappointing note here on

medalists in Dubai, struggled to find their rhythm trailed 0-1 after going down in the mixed doubles.

Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, ranked 37th in the world, showed resilience before going down 13-21, 21-17, 13-21 to world number 12 Hiroki Midorikawa and Natsu

With PV Sindhu sidelined due to a hamstring injury, India faced an uphill task against Tomoka Miyazaki, who has quickly risen to world number 8 following her triumph at the 2022 World Junior unforced errors from

Championships.
World number 31 Malvika Bansod, stepping in for Sindhu, put up a brave fight, especially in the second game, but struggled to match the control and consistency of her younger opponent and lost 12-21, 19-21, leaving India 0-2

It all came down to Prannoy to keep India alive, but despite a allowing her opponent to play determined effort, the 32- her usual drops freely, moving year-old, returning after a long to 17-15.

break and struggling with early-season form, couldn't fought sustain the pressure against India world number 16 Kenta Nishimoto.

The Japanese star sealed the rubber with a 21-14, 15-21, 21-12 victory in 1 hour and 17 minutes.

India will be disappointed with the loss, especially as Japan did not field their full-India, the 2023 bronze strength team, with several top players absent.

pan were the edition champions in 2017 and were runners-up in 2019. Mivazaki vs Malvika

Miyazaki, leading the newlook Japanese team, was sharp and precise, quickly surging to

an 11-3 lead after Malvika hit long. Despite some good net play from the left-handed Indian,

Miyazaki's cross-court drops

and winners kept Malvika on the back foot. Malvika narrowed the gap to

Miyazaki. However, two mistakes from the Indian allowed the

Japanese to take the first game. The second game was more competitive as Malvika took a 5-3 lead, engaging in tight rallies. She managed a slim 11-10 advantage after Miyazaki went long. Malvika stayed sharp, not

Playing 10 months a year will lead to more injuries: Kapil Dev

World Cup-winning Captain Kapil Dev on Friday expressed concern over the rising number of injuries among Indian cricketers, attributing it to the demanding schedule that keeps players in action for keeps players in action for almost 10 months each year. The National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru has turned into a rehabilitation hub, with players spending more time recovering than

training.
The latest casualty being India pace spearhead Jasprit out of the second innings of the final Test in Sydney due to a back injury.

Initially named in the Champions Trophy (CT) squad, Bumrah has now been ruled out.

Mohammed Shami, India's top wicket-taker in the 2023 ODI World Cup (24 wickets), suffered a leg injury post-final and underwent surgery. His 14-month recovery



him out of the BGT series, which India lost for the first time in a decade. Shami's absence left Bumrah without

However, India will play all their matches in Dubai owing

to security concerns related to travelling to Pakistan. Rohit Sharma's men will

begin their campaign on February 20 against Bangladesh. The Pakistan leg

will feature games in Karachi,

a reliable bowling partner.
"The only thing that worries me is that they play for 10 months a year -- injuries will be much more common," the 1983 World Cup-winning skipper said at the Tata Steel Golf prize distribution ceremony here.

Asked whether Bumrah would be missed in CT, Kapil urged players to focus on

supporting each other rather than dwelling on injured players.

Why talk about someone who is not in the team? It's a team game, and the team has to win, not individuals. This is not badminton, tennis, or golf; we are playing a team sport in the Champions Trophy. If we play as a team, we will definitely win," said the 66-year-old.

"You never want your main players to get injured, but if it vou can't do

anything about it. Good luck to my Indian team -- go and play well," he added.

India will begin their Champions Trophy campaign against Bangladesh in Dubai on February 20.
Kapil said he's excited to see

so much rising talents in the Indian cricket team these

"When you see the youngsters, their confidence is unbelievable. We didn't have this much confidence when we were young. Good lluck to them."

A known golf enthusiast and the current PGTI president, Kapil also made a playful

pitch for the sport. pitch for the sport.
"Tell everyone to play golf. If they are not playing cricket, they should come and play golf. If they do, their performance will be better. There is a lot of fun in golf." Emphasising on the importance of infrastructure for young golfers he said: "If for young golfers, he said: "If

young players get the right facilities, they will improve. We are trying our best

We trained plenty for India tour: McCullum

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

England's head coach Brendon McCullum has dismissed suggestions that his team did not prepare adequately during their white-ball tour of India, calling such claims "factually incorrect". The New Zealand great was

responding to criticism that emerged during TV commentary for the third ODI, where Ravi Shastri and Kevin Pietersen suggested that, apart from Joe Root, England's players had not McCullum, who took charge trained during the ODI series of the white-ball side before that India swept 3-0. "Firstly, it's factually incorrect,

the whole statement that we don't train," McCullum told 'talkSPORT' after England's third ODI defeat here on

Wednesday. "We've trained plenty right throughout, and guys have come from a lot of cricket as well. I think it's an easy thing to have as a throwaway line that guys don't train enough

when the results aren't right." While England had trained before the first match in Nagpur, they opted against formal sessions ahead of the second and third ODIs in Cuttack and Ahmedabad. England suffered a 142-run

defeat to India in their final ODI before the Champions Trophy slated in Pakistan and Dubai next week. The ODI series loss came after

a 1-4 drubbing by India in the T20I rubber. McCullum also pointed out

Bethell (hamstring) and Jamie Smith (calf).

"We've got a style and a method that we believe in. We've got guys who are battling injuries and trying to make sure that we've got enough bodies out on the field, knowing that we've got a huge assignment coming up in a week or two.

"Ultimately it's factually incorrect what's been said and we'll stay true to what we believe in," he asserted.

England's Test coach the India series, also stressed the importance of fostering a positive team environment despite recent setbacks.

"Ultimately, you're judged on results... From our point of view, we've got to strip away the fear of failure that results can bring," he said.

"Guys are fiercely determined and competitive... How do you allow an environment to provide the freedom and clarity of thought to go out there and allow your talent to come out?" he asked. England will be in UAE for a

short break before beginning their Champions Trophy campaign against Australia in Lahore on February 22. McCullum said the squadbuilding will continue over the next week as well.

"We'll give the guys a freshen-up in Abu Dhabi, make sure all the bodies are fit and ready to go, and have a full squad to pick from come that first game against Australia," he said.

We want to win every FIH Pro League match: Harmanpreet the national side. 'We have seen some good

PTI BHUBANESWAR

▼ndian men's hockev team Lcaptain Harmanpreet Singh on Friday said his team's target is to win every FIH Pro League match and finish on top of the league to earn a direct ticket to the 2026 World Cup.

India will open their FIH Pro League campaign against Spain on Saturday Bhubaneswar.

They will next play Spain again the next day, followed by matches against Germany on February 16 and 19 in the opening leg of the India tour. "Our training is going well from Hockey India League, we have been preparing for months, have learnt a lot from HIL. We have been able to maintain our fitness as well," Harmanpreet said ahead of the



FIH Pro League opener. We just wan to play good hockey, all players in good shape and the target is to win every game (in Pro League) looking at the World Cup," he added.

The 2026 men's hockey World Cup will be held from August

14 to 30 in Wavre, Belgium and Amstelveen, Netherlands. Harmanpreet, regarded as one of the best dragflickers in the world currently, praised HIL's top-scorer Jugraj Singh for his flicking abilities and said the rise of next generation of

domestic players augur well for

an opportunity for youngsters and they performed well," he "Jugraj was the top-scorer and he was brilliant. I am happy for him and it is beneficial for the

national team as well." Harmanpreet, however, was in no mood to take Spain lightly. "Spain is a good team, we can't take them lightly. Our focus is to give our best and win the match," he said.

domestic players in HIL. It was

India's chief coach Craig Fulton said the FIH Pro League is a "building phase" for the side. "It's a building phase for us. We will look to try out things and see what best suits us. We will like to use our players' HIL experience and integrate their learning into the team," he said.

the injury setbacks to Jacob

player to score in a knockout ever goalscorer in a European

Mourinho's Fenerbahce beats Anderlecht 3-0 in Europa League playoff goal for the club.

PTI ■ LONDON

behind.

Tosé Mourinho's Fenerbahce might have only just squeezed into the Europa League knockout playoff round but it is already on the brink of the round of 16. Fenerbahce dominated to beat Anderlecht 3-0 on

Thursday and take a comprehensive lead Belgium for the second leg next week. Two of Mourinho's former clubs, Porto and Roma, drew

1-1 in Europe's second-tier competition. Fenerbahce only just reached the playoffs by placing 24th in the new 36-standings

tiebreaker of goal difference. Anderlecht had finished 10th, only missing out on automatic progression to the last-16 by goal difference. Fenerbahce took the lead in the 11th minute Thursday.

Anderlecht failed to clear a corner and the ball was put back to the area where Yusuf Akçiçek nodded it on for Dusan Tadic to head into the net. Edin Dzeko doubled his

team's advantage shortly before halftime following good work from Filip Kostic down the left flank. Dzeko's initial shot was blocked by Anderlecht defender Lucas Hey but the veteran forward format — the last fired home the rebound.
qualification place, and on a Youssef En-Nesyri added a agony when his knee felt the

third with a powerful header in the 57th minute and Fenerbahce missed several chances to extend its advantage. Notably, Yusuf Akçiçek's header was deflected onto the

post — it would have been the 19-year-old's first career goal, after recording his firstever assist in the first half. Dutch club AZ Alkmaar also has a healthy advantage to take into next week's second leg after it beat 10-man Galatasaray 4-1. Dybala injured:

Key Roma forward Paulo Dybala limped off in the first half of the match in Portugal with a knee injury.



full force of Porto midfielder Alan Varela's boot in the 20th minute but the Argentina World Cup winner had of the first half, with defender played on for another 15 Zeki Celik scoring his first

minutes before admitting defeat. Roma took the lead with practically the last kick Porto leveled against the run of play in the 67th minute through Francisco Moura's deflected shot. Roma midfielder Bryan

Cristante was sent off five minutes later following a second booking.

Teenager scores for Ajax

Ajax won 2-0 at Union Saint-Gilloise, with 16-year-old Jorthy Mokio netting his side's second goal.

Mokio scored in the 71st

minute. A corner was cleared but only as far as the Belgium Under-21 international on the edge of the area and he volleyed it in for his first goal for the senior Ajax team. Mokio, aged 16 years and 350

stage match in the Europa League, UEFA said. Christian Rasmussen had

netted the opener in 59th. Elsewhere, Real Sociedad won 2-1 at Midtjylland and Ferencearos beat Viktoria Plzen 1-0. Romanian team FCSB came from behind to win 2-1 at PAOK and a stoppage-time penalty saw Twente beat Bodo/Glimt by the same scoreline. Another

youngest goalscorer record Šixteen-year-old Michael Noonan netted on his Shamrock Rovers debut to help the Irish team win 1-0 at 10-man Molde.

That made Noonan, at 16 days, became the youngest years, 197 days, the youngest-

club competition, his team Noonan scored from close

range in the 57th minute. He also forced a red card for Molde defender Valdemar Lund for a last-man foul, three minutes halftime.

Víkingur Reykjavík became the first-ever Icelandic club to win a European knockout match by upsetting Panathinaikos 2-1. The match was held in Helsinki as no stadium in Iceland met the requirements to host the game.

Armandas Kucys scored twice but also missed a late penalty as Celje drew 2-2 against 10-man APOEL.

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