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BJP leader and Delhi Chief Minister-designate Rekha Gupta after BJP legislature party meeting, at the Delhi BJP party office Photos Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

Rekha Gupta is Delhi Chief Minister

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The suspense over Delhi's new chief minister ended on Wednesday as the BJP on Wednesday named first-time MLA Rekha Gupta, 50, as the new chief minister of Delhi, marking the BJP's comeback in the national capital after 27 years. She will be the fourth chief minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraaj, Sheila Dikshit and Atishi and the only woman chief minister among the states being ruled by the BJP at present. Gupta is an old Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), hand who was part of the Sangh's students' wing Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad. The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's legislature party on Wednesday evening in the presence of Central observers Ravi Shankar Prasad and O P Dhanraj where she was chosen as the Leader of the House in the Delhi Assembly. The new BJP government, led by Gupta, will be sworn in at a grand ceremony at the Ramlila Maidan on Thursday afternoon in the presence of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, chief ministers from the party-ruled states and many celebrities. The formal announcement came from the X handle of the Delhi BJP. "Hearty congratulations and best wishes to Mrs. Rekha Gupta ji on being elected the leader of the Delhi BJP Legislative Party. We have full faith that the state will progress under your leadership," read a rough translation of their Hindi post. After appointed as the Leader of the House of the BJP's legislative party, Chief Minister designate Gupta along with six ministers went to Raj Niwas to stake claim to form the government. She was accompanied by state BJP observers Ravi Shankar Prasad and OP Dhanraj along with city BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, and Delhi MPs including Bansuri Swaraj, Praveen Khandelwal and Kamaljeet Sehrawat. BJP national vice-president Baijayant Jay Panda was also present at the Raj Niwas. Wishes poured in from across the political spectrum for the 50-year-old advocate, with Union ministers and

political rivals extending their regards. Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated Gupta, backing the BJP government under her leadership to "work day and night to fulfill the hopes and expectations with which the mothers and sisters of Delhi have blessed the BJP". The senior BJP leader also reposed full faith that she will "work with dedication in the direction of the resolution taken by Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji to make Delhi one of the top capitals of the world". Soon after the announcement, Gupta thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said she would work with full honesty, integrity and dedication for the welfare, empowerment and overall development of every citizen of Delhi. "I am fully committed to this important opportunity to take Delhi to new heights," Gupta said in a post on X. "I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the top leadership for trusting me and entrusting me with the responsibility of the post of chief minister. This trust and support of yours has given me new energy and inspiration." Continued on page 9

Trump bellows at India



President Donald Trump speaks at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla. PTI

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has said that he made it clear to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India will not be spared from Washington's reciprocal tariffs, emphasising that "nobody can argue with me" on tariff structure. Trump made these remarks during an interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity recently. Fox News aired a joint television interview with President Trump and billionaire Elon Musk on Tuesday night. On February 13, hours before Prime Minister Modi's bilateral meeting with Trump in the White House, the US President announced reciprocal tariffs. Under the plan, the Trump administration "will work strenuously to counter non-reciprocal trading arrangements with trading partners by determining the equivalent of a reciprocal tariff with respect to each foreign trading partner." During the interview with Hannity,

Trump reiterated his stance on existing tariff structures between the US and its partners, including India. "I told Prime Minister Modi yesterday - he was here - I said, 'Here's what we're going to do: reciprocal. Whatever you charge, I'm charging,'" President Trump said. "He (Modi) goes, 'No, no, I don't like that.' No, no, whatever you charge, I'm going to charge. I'm doing that with every country." India has very strong tariffs on certain imports from the US. Like in the automobile sector, India charges 100 per cent. Musk said, "It's 100 per cent - auto imports are 100 per cent." "Yeah, that's peanuts. So, much higher. And - and others too. I said, 'Here's what we're going to do: reciprocal. Whatever you charge, I'm charging,'" Trump said. Under the reciprocal tariff system, the US would impose the same level of tariffs on Indian imports as India does on American goods.

"Nobody can argue with me," President Trump insisted. "If I said 25 per cent, they'd say, 'Oh, that's terrible.' I don't say that anymore... Because I say, 'Whatever they charge, we'll charge. And you know what? They stop.'" During Modi's visit to the US, while responding to a question on reciprocal tariffs on India, Trump said, "India has been, to us, just about the highest tariffed nation anywhere in the world. They've been very strong on tariffs, and I don't blame them, necessarily, but it's a different way of doing business. It's very hard to sell to India because they have trade barriers and very strong tariffs." "We are right now a reciprocal nation. We are going to - if it's India or if it's somebody else with low tariffs, we're going to have the same. We're going to have whatever India charges, we're charging them. Whatever another country charges, we're charging them. So, it's called reciprocal, which I think is a very fair way. We didn't have that. During his first term as the US president, Trump described India as a "tariff king" and in May 2019, terminated India's preferential market access - Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) - to the US, alleging India has not given the United States "equitable and reasonable access to its markets." Also, during the interview, Musk claimed that two NASA astronauts, including Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams, currently stuck in space, had been left there by the Biden administration "for political purposes." SpaceX, also founded and owned by Musk, has been contracted to bring Williams and Butch Wilmore home. Musk said the rescue attempts would be being made in less than a month. "They were left up there for political reasons, which is not good," he said. "Okay, it's not good... Well, we don't want to be complacent, but we have brought astronauts back from the space station many times before, and always with success." Trump chimed in "They didn't have the go-ahead with Biden. He was going to leave them in space."

Yogi counters pollution board claims of Ganga water unsafe

BISWAJEET BANERJEE/PNS ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

Amid claims by Central government pollution body that the present condition of Ganga water in ensuing Maha Kumbh may contain high levels of faecal bacteria, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday countered by assuring the Sangam water in Prayagraj is safe for bathing and other rituals. A sort of controversy erupted over the claims by Central government pollution body which reported the Ganga water at Triveni Sangam, where lakhs of people are taking a holy dip every day during the ongoing Maha Kumbh, is currently unsafe for bathing. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data informed the National Green Tribunal that Sangam water at Maha Kumbh exceeds the prescribed limit for biological oxygen demand (BOD), a key parameter to determine water quality. BOD refers to the amount of oxygen required by aerobic microorganisms to break down organic material in a water body. A higher BOD level indicates more organic content in the water. River water is considered fit for bathing if the BOD level is less than 3 milligrams per litre. In a report submitted to the NGT the CPCB said the river water quality did not meet bathing standards during monitoring on January 12-13 at most locations in Prayagraj. According to Uttar Pradesh government officials, 10,000 to 11,000 cusecs of water is being released into the Ganga to



Puja material and other waste being collected at the Sangam for their disposal, during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj PTI

ensure it meets bathing standards. Mahakumbh Nagar is the world's largest temporary city, accommodating 50 lakh to 1 crore devotees at any given time. These pilgrims generate at least 16 million litres of faecal waste and 240 million litres of greywater daily from activities like cooking, washing, and bathing. Yogi during the Budget Session in UP assembly countered and said water at the Sangam is fit for both bathing and ritual drinking (aachman) as confirmed by some recent reports. He informed the Uttar Pradesh Control Board and the CPCB are continuously monitoring the water quality at the Sangam. He also trained his guns at Opposition Samajwadi Party, saying the condition of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers was so poor

while it was in power that the Prime Minister of Mauritius refused to take a dip during the 2013 Kumbh. "This time, 81 drains have been tapped, treating 261 MLD (million litres per day) of sewage. In January and February, fecal coliform levels at the Sangam nose were found to be within the acceptable range, below 2,500 MPN per 100 ml, according to the UP Pollution (Control) Board," he said, according to an official statement. "The Central Pollution (Control) Board has also confirmed this in its report. The UP and Central Pollution Control Boards are continuously monitoring water quality, and recent reports confirm that the water at the Sangam is now fit for both bathing and ritual use," Adityanath told the state Assembly.

CBI arrests five rail officers in job bribery case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested five railway officers, including two of the Indian Railway Personnel Service posted at the Vadodara Division, for alleged bribery in favouring candidates in departmental examination, officials said Wednesday. The federal probe agency seized 650 grams of gold and Rs 5 lakh cash during its searches at 11 locations, including in Gujarat's Vadodara, a CBI spokesperson said. The CBI has arrested 2008-batch IRPS officer Sunil Bishnoi posted as a senior divisional personnel officer in Vadodara, 2018-batch IRPS officer Ankush Wasan, posted as divisional personnel officer there, Deputy Chief Commercial Manager Sanjay Kumar Tiwari posted at Mumbai's Churchgate, Deputy Station Superintendent Neeraj Sinha and Nursing Superintendent Dinesh Kumar posted at Divisional Railway Hospital in Ahmedabad, officials said. The agency has also arrested Mukesh Meena in the case, they said. The CBI swung into action after registering an FIR on Tuesday against Wasan, Tiwari, Sinha and Meena on allegations that these officials in conspiracy with a private person.

Continued on page 9

HC slams railways over ticket sales

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Questioning the rationale of selling excess tickets, the Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the response of Indian Railways on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking safety measures to prevent stampedes similar to the one which happened recently at New Delhi Railway Station. During the hearing of the PIL, the Bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyay and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela questioned the Railways for selling tickets in excess of the number of passengers that can be accommodated in a coach. "If you fix the number of passengers to be accommodated in a coach then why do you sell, why the number of tickets sold exceed that number? That is a problem," the Court said. The Judges also referred to Section 57 of the Railways Act which mandates that the administration shall fix the maximum number of passengers which may be carried in a compartment. "If you implement a simple thing in a positive manner in letter and spirit, such situation can be avoided. On rush days you may increase that number to accommodate the rush depending on exigencies which keep on arriving from time to time. But not fixing the strength to be accommodated in a coach, this provision appears to have been neglected all along," Observed the Court. The Court was hearing a petition moved by Arth Vidhi, an organisation of a group of lawyers, entrepreneurs and others professionals, in the backdrop of



Passengers at ticket counters of the New Delhi Railway Station PTI

the recent stampede which resulted into death of at least 18 people at New Delhi Railway Station, overcrowded due to the ongoing rush of people to take part in the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. The PIL filed through advocate Aditya Trivedi said that various legal provisions and rules under the Railways Act should be implemented properly to prevent such incidents in future. "This petition highlights mismanagement, gross negligence and complete failure of administration that caused the stampede that occurred on February 15 at New Delhi Railway Station," the counsel told the Court. Justice Gedela pointed out that measures have been taken subsequently. "Are you aware of how many lakhs of people were at the station that day? Infrastructurally it may not be possible to control that kind of crowd. The subsequent measures

were taken. It is not something like a railway accident to claim negligence." The petitioner's counsel insisted on the seriousness of the issue and highlighted the failures of Railways. "We highlight Section 57 and 157 of Railways Act. Airports have mechanisms to know how many people are there. Indian Railways has no such mechanism. There is no notification or circular for unreserved class. If Railways is not following its own rules, then how can we expect security," he said. "If we go to station right now, we will see a lot of crowd without platform ticket and train ticket. We don't see any compliance with the Railways Circular requiring platform ticket. If Railways had complied with its own rules, a lot of things could have been prevented. We have come in larger public interest. I am not commenting on infrastructure or any policy," he argued. Continued on page 9

Maha economic Sangam at Kumbh raises UP's revenue

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Maha Kumbh festival in the holy city of Prayagraj is estimated to have generated over Rs 3 Lakh Crore (\$360 Billion) in business through goods and services, making it one of India's largest economic events. According to the Uttar Pradesh government, more than 53 Crore devotees have already taken a holy dip in the sacred waters, with millions continuing to visit daily. It is projected that nearly 60 Crore people will participate in the ritual by February 26. The Mahakumbh, which occurs once every 144 years, is being held in

Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26, attracting millions of devotees over the six-week period. According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Secretary General and Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal, the Mahakumbh is boosting local trade with a surge in demand for Maha Kumbh-themed products such as diaries, calendars, jute bags, and stationery. "Due to the unprecedented enthusiasm across the country, it is now expected that nearly 60 Crore people will participate in the Maha Kumbh by February 26, leading to a massive business turnover

exceeding Rs 3 Lakh Crore. Sales are reported to have increased due to meticulous branding. It also proves that India's sanatan economy has deep-rooted strength, playing a significant role in the country's overall economic framework," Khandelwal added. This has provided a significant boost to Uttar Pradesh's economy and created new business opportunities. Before the commencement of the Maha Kumbh, initial estimates was projected the arrival of 40 Crore people and business transactions worth around Rs 2 Lakh Crore. According to the Uttar Pradesh government, over 53 Crore



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath speaks during the Budget session of the state Legislative Assembly, in Lucknow PTI

devotees have already taken a holy dip in the sacred waters, with millions continuing to visit daily. Highlighting the economic impact of the Mahakumbh, Khandelwal noted that several business sectors have witnessed large-scale economic activities, including hospitality and accommodation; food and beverage sector; transport and logistics; religious attire; puja samagri, and handicrafts, textiles, apparel and other consumer goods; healthcare and wellness services; media, advertising and entertainment; civic services; telecom, mobile, AI-based technology, CCTV cameras, and

other equipment. Khandelwal further pointed out that the economic benefits of Mahakumbh are not limited to Prayagraj. Cities and towns within a 150 km radius have also experienced a significant business surge, strengthening local economies. Additionally, Ayodhya, Varanasi, and other religious destinations have seen an increase in pilgrim visits, as devotees travel for the darshan and worship of Lord Ram in Ayodhya, Lord Shiva in Varanasi, and others in the nearby districts. This has further fueled massive economic activities in these areas.

Nirmala Sitharaman, several prominent leaders take a dip

Mahakumbh Nagar (PNS): Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Bharatiya Janata Party MP Tejasvi Surya, Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, and Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde were among those experiencing the sanctity of the Maha Kumbh event by taking a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam on Wednesday. Expressing her joy, Sitharaman described the experience as a "profound moment" in the Sanatan tradition. She was welcomed in Prayagraj by Uttar Pradesh Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi', who extended his greetings on her arrival. Accompanied by her family, she participated in the sacred ritual at the Sangam. BJP MP Tejasvi Surya highlighted the global significance of Maha Kumbh, stating, Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu shared his deep reverence for the occasion. Shinde expressed his gratitude for being part of the once-in-a-lifetime event. The Maha Kumbh has sparked immense enthusiasm in Nepal, the birthplace of Maa Janaki. More than 50 lakh devotees from Nepal have taken a holy dip in the Sangam.

Maha Kumbh a gateway to spiritual awakening

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The grand spectacle of Maha Kumbh 2025 continues to attract a steady stream of devotees and tourists from across the world. Pilgrims from various parts of India and abroad have been taking holy dips at the Triveni Sangam, immersing themselves in the spiritual essence of the sacred event while exploring the vast expanse of the Maha Kumbh fair. Interestingly, several international tourists have also participated in the Bird Festival, a special event organised as part of Maha Kumbh. They have shown keen interest in learning about conservation efforts for birds and wildlife, appreciating the initiative as an extension of the festival's spiritual and ecological significance.



Devotees use a cord to stay connected as a group as they arrive to take a holy dip at the Sangam during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj, on Wednesday

PTI

CM maintains close connect

Mahakumbh Nagar (PNS): As Maha Kumbh 2025 draws to a close, it stands as a vibrant testament to India's rich culture, traditions and spiritual grandeur. This Maha Kumbh has become a historic and unforgettable experience for devotees worldwide, setting new global benchmarks with seamless technology, security and world-class facilities. According to the official spokesman of the government, from launching the Maha Kumbh logo, website and mobile app on October 6, 2024, to visiting Prayagraj 16 times, Chief Minister Yogi has visited Prayagraj 16 times, including eight visits since the event's commencement. During these visits, he reviewed the preparations and conducted on-site inspections to ensure seamless execution. Engaging directly with saints, he sought their valuable suggestions to enhance the grandeur of Maha Kumbh and won hearts by honouring spiritual leaders across all sects. Beyond his presence on the ground, Chief Minister Yogi has also held multiple high-level meetings in Lucknow, providing strategic guidance for the event. He remained consistently informed about the ground reality through real-time monitoring, reinforcing his commitment to making Maha Kumbh 2025 a truly historic and well-organised spiritual gathering, the spokesman said. He has kept monitoring all amrit snan and snan festivals real-time from his official residence, issuing necessary directives to senior officials to ensure smooth execution of the mega festival.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I Atul Kumar Army No. 15678680F son of Ram Padarath Patkhal resident of Village-Patkhal Post-Sanethu Darshan Nagar Faizabad District-Ayodhya. Army No. 15678680F serving as Havildar in Signal Corps. In my army records, the date of birth of my wife Seema is mentioned as 15.01.1985 which is wrong. My wife's correct date of birth is 9.02.1989 which is also recorded in her Aadhar Card No. 2830, 8781 0207.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mohammad SAHKEEL Ahmad To SHAKEEL Ahmad, Shakeel Ahmad S/o Mohd Yunus R/o 113/3, Babu Purwa Colony Kanpur

NOTICE

Inform all, I Prabhakar Verma S/o Late Kali Shankar Verma Permanent R/o 176, Nasirpur Road, Distt. Fatehpur U.P. declare that by mistake my name has been recorded as Prabhakar Patel in my son's (Shri Shubham Patel's) educational and employment records and my correct name is Prabhakar Verma. I have sworn an Affidavit before Notary Public on 15.02.2025. Please Note & change all concerned For All Future Purpose.

NOTICE

I am Ravindra Kumar Dubey, son of late Vishwanath Dubey, resident of 4/48, Virat Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. My son's name is Dakshesh Dubey and he is a student of Class 9 at Seth MR Jaipuria School, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. His name has been erroneously recorded as Dakshesh Dubey in the school records. The correct name of our son is 'Dakshesh Dubey' and this is the name which should be written, read and understood in all educational records and the correct name Dakshesh Dubey should be recorded.

सूचना

संसाधारण को सूचित करना है कि मेरी पुत्री शिवन्या सिंह राठौर के आधार कार्ड संख्या 685688336914 पर जूटिका जन्मतिथि 01-10-2013 अंकित हो गया है। जबकि वास्तविक जन्मतिथि 01-10-2014 है जो कि सही है। हनुमन्त सिंह राठौर 147, पटेल नगर इंदिरा नगर लखनऊ

NOTICE

I Monika Wife of Lekh Ram ARMY No. JC-523449X Residing at Vill Bhavarta. Po. Chunahan, Teh- Balh. Distt Mandi (H.P) Pin Code-175027 Have Changed My Name From Monika To Monika Devi. Vide Affidavit DT. 21/05/2025 Before Distt Mandi The Balh (H.P) Pin Code-175027

NOTICE

I am Ravindra Kumar Dubey, son of late Vishwanath Dubey, resident of 4/48, Virat Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. My daughter's name is Lucksit Dubey and she is a student of class 7 at Seth MR Jaipuria School, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. Her name has been erroneously recorded as Lakshita Dubey in the school records. The correct name of our daughter is Lucksit Dubey and this is the name that should be read and understood in all educational records and the correct name should be recorded as Lucksit Dubey.

NOTICE

Inform all, I Vimla Verma W/o Prabhakar Verma Permanent R/o 176, Nasirpur Road, Distt. Fatehpur U.P. declare that by mistake my name has been recorded as Vimla Patel in my son's (Shri Shubham Patel's) educational and employment records and my correct name is Vimla Verma. I have sworn an Affidavit before Notary Public on 15.02.2025. Please Note & change all concerned For All Future Purpose.

NOTICE

It is informed to all that I am TARIK HUSAIN KHAN son of IZHAR HASAN resident of village Nusratpur Badi village, Shahjhanpur. My name has been written as TAREEKH HANAN by mistake in my account number 26990100020213 of Bank of Baroda branch Roza Mandi, Shahjhanpur. My name is TARIK HUSAIN KHAN in my Aadhar card, PAN card and other documents. Hence both the names belong to the same person. If TARIK HUSAIN KHAN and TAREEKH HANAN are written anywhere, then it should be considered as SUNITA Hussain Khan son of Izhah Hasan resident of - Village Nusratpur Badi village, District - Shahjhanpur (U.P.)

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Meraj Ahmad to Mohd Meraz S/o Ishrafil Ahmad R/o 21 J, pokharpur A B A compound jaimau Kanpur NAGAR, for all future purpose.

Information

My father Ramesh Kumar's date of birth is written as 20/05/1971 in my service record which is wrong whereas my father's correct date of birth is 04/05/1971 as also mentioned in his Aadhaar card. My father's correct date of birth should be mentioned as 04-05-1971 in my service record. My mother Sumita's date of birth is written as 24/12/1973 in my service record which is wrong whereas my mother's correct date of birth is 06/07/1973 as also mentioned in the Aadhaar card. My mother's name is written as SUNEETA in my service record whereas it is written as SUNITA in the Aadhaar card whereas both the names belong to the same person. I'm mother's correct name should be mentioned as SUNITA and correct date of birth should be mentioned as 06/07/1973 in my service record. Ranjeet Kumar son of Ramesh Kumar resident of Village Pabho, Post Pabho, Thana Kheerori Tehsil Lalgaon, District Raebareilly

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MOHIUDDIN KHOSRO to MOHUDDIN KHOSRO S/o MUKHTAR AHMAD R/o 2/19, New Idgah Colony Colonel Ganj Kanpur Nagar, for all future purpose.

आवश्यकता है

इरम कालेज, कुसी रोड, गुड़म्बा, लखनऊ, (सम्बद्ध-लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय) में प्राचार्य 01 पद हेतु योग्य अभ्यर्थी की आवश्यकता है।

NOTICE

I have changed my Son's name from Vibhav Rajpoot To Deepesh Singh for all future purposes, Neetu Singh W/o Vivek Kumar R/o 231-A, Safipur 1st Harjinder Nagar Kanpur

आवश्यकता है

इरम कालेज, कुसी रोड, गुड़म्बा, लखनऊ, (सम्बद्ध-लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय) में प्राचार्य 01 पद हेतु योग्य अभ्यर्थी की आवश्यकता है। 15 वर्ष का शैक्षिक अनुभव, मानदेय एवं योग्यता एन०सी०टी०ई०/राज्य सरकार /यू०जी०सी०/ लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के मानकानुसार। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी विज्ञापन के प्रथम प्रकाशन के 21 दिन के अन्दर दो रंगीन पासपोर्ट साइज फोटो एवं समस्त शैक्षिक अभिलेखों की प्रमाणित छायाप्रति सहित प्रबंधक, इरम एजुकेशनल सोसाइटी सी०-ब्लॉक, इन्दिरानगर, लखनऊ-226016 के पते पर प्रेषित करें। 0522-2310712 Email: info@eramedu.org or eramedu@gmail.com प्रबंधक

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Meena Kurel To Meena Singh W/o Late Chhotay Lal R/o Flat no.403 Compund 104A/261, flat no.108, Rambagh, R.K.Nagar Kanpur

NOTICE

I Reena Devi W/o No. JC-775282X SUB Anant Lal Residing at Village & Post Bausar Tehsil Narwal Distt Kanpur Nagar State Uttar Pradesh Pin-209401. I have changed my name from Rina Devi to REENA DEVI vide affidavit No.44A938193 dated: 19.02.2025.

organised and smooth experience for the visitors. For Sumita Wahi, a devotee with a strong spiritual inclination, Maha Kumbh was an incredibly special moment. "Despite the immense crowd, everyone here radiates positive energy. That's what makes Maha Kumbh an extraordinary event where one can feel an overwhelming sense of divine positivity," she remarked. International visitors have also found Maha Kumbh to be a unique and profound experience. Emma from the UK, visiting India for the first time, was fascinated not only by the divinity of Maha Kumbh but also by the Bird Festival held alongside it. She praised India's efforts in environmental conservation and biodiversity protection, calling them commendable. Another foreign tourist recalled his interaction with Indian conservation experts at the Bird Festival as a truly memorable experience, lauding Prayagraj as a city rich in both spirituality and ecological consciousness.

INDIA POISED TO RECLAIM STATUS OF VISHWAGURU: MANJHI Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi took a holy dip at Triveni Sangam during the ongoing Maha Kumbh 2025.

The minister reflected on India's rich cultural and spiritual heritage, emphasising its legacy as a Vishwaguru. Calling Maha Kumbh a symbol of unwavering faith and unity, Manjhi said, "Today, some forces are trying to undermine our faith, but the presence of crores of devotees here proves that Indian culture remains resolute and eternal." Before the holy dip, Manjhi highlighted the global significance of this massive spiritual gathering, saying, "The faith of devotees at Maha Kumbh is showcasing India's strength to the world." After taking the dip, he expressed his deep spiritual fulfillment, describing the experience as a grand manifestation of India's rich traditions and cultural grandeur. Following his Maha Kumbh snan, the Union minister took to social media platform X to take a jibe at opposition leaders. He wrote, "Well brother, I have also taken a holy dip at Kumbh. If this causes unease for some, there's nothing I can do about it. I suppose Lal Prasad Yadav and Mamata Didi might have a bigger issue with it." His remarks triggered political reactions, with many seeing it as a direct attack on the opposition.

Free breakfast for dialysis patients at RMLMS

Lucknow (PNS): A newly-constructed cold room in the Rogi Aahar Kitchen was inaugurated by Director Professor (Dr) CM Singh at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences on Wednesday. With the establishment of this cold room, greens, vegetables, and fruits will remain fresh and can be stored at an optimal temperature, allowing fresh produce to be distributed to patients. Additionally, as per the director's guidelines, a joint initiative between the Rogi Aahar Department and the Nephrology Department will serve breakfast served free of charge to dialysis patients at the institute.

FRES fellowship to Geetanjali Mishra

Lucknow (PNS): Professor Geetanjali Mishra, from the School of Entomology, Department of Zoology, University of Lucknow, has been awarded the prestigious Fellowship of the Royal Entomological Society (FRES), UK. "She is the first faculty member from LU to receive this distinguished honour," the University spokesperson said.

CII expectations from UP Budget

Lucknow (PNS): CII Uttar Pradesh chairperson Smita Aggarwal on Wednesday laid out her expectations from the UP Budget for 2025-26 which will be presented on Thursday. "As Uttar Pradesh stands at the brink of a new phase of economic growth, this upcoming state Budget is a crucial opportunity. We are hopeful that it will prioritise strengthening the manufacturing and defence sectors which are vital for state's continued progress. We expect a focus on enhancing industrial infrastructure, boosting local manufacturing capacities and incentivising women-led enterprises. These measures will be pivotal in creating a more inclusive and competitive economy, positioning UP as a leader in these sectors. CII UP vice-chairperson Dr Upasana Arora, said, "As we approach the UP Budget for the upcoming fiscal year, we hope for a progressive approach that will support industrial growth, infrastructure development and enhanced healthcare services. We expect the Budget to prioritise policies that foster ease of doing business, promote sustainability and invest in skill development." A stronger focus on healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, would be critical in ensuring that quality medical services are accessible to all citizens," she added.

Mayor: Ensure cleanliness in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In order to improve Lucknow's ranking in the Cleanliness Survey 2025, Mayor Sushma Kharkwal chaired a meeting on Wednesday at the municipal corporations conference hall. The meeting was attended by Municipal Commissioner Inderjeet Singh, all additional municipal commissioners, zonal officers, chief engineer and other senior officials and staff members. During the meeting, the mayor issued several directives to the officials. She made it clear that if Lucknow's ranking dropped in the Cleanliness Survey, action will be taken against the officers responsible for it. The mayor said that the cleanliness of the city was their responsibility, and if it was not being maintained properly, actions would be taken. She emphasised that there should be no open garbage anywhere in the city and all garbage transfer stations should be completed as soon as possible. The mayor strictly instructed all additional municipal commission-

ers and zonal officers to start their inspections from 6 am in their respective zones. "These inspections should be carried out until 9 am. If any zone is found with garbage or dirt, its responsibility will fall on the officer of that zone," she said. The mayor ordered that all commercial areas of the city should be cleaned twice a day. She mentioned that there are over 30 markets in the city, and therefore, sweeping will be done twice - once in the morning and once at night. The mayor instructed the Jal Kal general manager to ensure that no sewer overflows are seen in the city. She also ordered that blocked drains should be cleared immediately. The Mayor directed the chief engineer to ensure that there was no garbage on the roads or vacant plots anywhere in the city. She also ordered action against individuals or groups who were making the city unclean. All zonal officers were instructed to take strict action against those putting up illegal banners and posters. The mayor said that all garbage transfer stations, material recovery facilities in every ward of the city were completed by March 30. The tender for these works was released in December and work orders have already been issued. The mayor instructed all agencies to ensure that no sanitation worker is seen working without a uniform in the city. If any worker is found working without a uniform, action will be taken against the agency, she added. The mayor said that starting Monday, she and the municipal commissioner would personally inspect the entire city. They will visit each ward and check every lane thoroughly, she added. "If any shortcomings are found, strict action will be taken," she warned. Municipal Commissioner Inderjeet Singh instructed all officials to ensure that the salaries of all municipal corporation employees and workers from agencies were deposited in their accounts before Holi. QILA MOHAMMADI DRAIN Meanwhile, the LMC will soon redevelop the Qila Mohammadi drain in Sarojininaragar under the storm water drainage project to resolve the issue of waterlogging in Zones 5 and 8 of the city. The drain will be redesigned, restructured and remodelled. Municipal Commissioner Inderjeet Singh said that Qila Mohammadi drain was serving areas which extended from the airport and included Ashiyana, Kanpur road, Vrindavan colony, Geetapali etc. "The water from all these colonies goes through the Qila Mohammadi drain to the Sai river which is 58 kilometres away from the city. When this drain is remodelled, it will help in easing out the waterlogging which takes place in these areas," he said. He said the drainage system of the city had been constructed in two parts. "There is one part where the water goes to the Sai river while in the other part water from six zones goes to the Gomti river. Work has not been carried out on this drain although work has been carried out in the six zones where flood pumping stations pump back the water into Gomti river and when the gates are closed the water flows away," he said.

Form no. URC-2
Advertisement giving notice about registration Under part 1 of Chapter XXI
(Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies act, 2013 and rule 4 (1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014)

01. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of subsection (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013 an application has been made to the ROC, ICA, Plot no. 6, 7 & 8, Sector 5, IIT Mansarovar, Gurugram, Haryana 122050 that M/S MORUS HEALTH CARE a partnership may be registered under part 1 of Chapter XXI of the companies act 2013, as a Company Limited by shares.

02. The principal objects of the Company are as follows:
i) To carry on the business of running firm M/S MORUS HEALTH CARE.
ii) To formulate, manufacture, refine, import, export, wholesale and/or retail trade all kinds of pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, drugs, medicines, biologicals, nutraceuticals, healthcare, ayurvedic, nutraceuticals and dietary supplement products, medicinal preparations, vaccines, chemicals, chemical products, dry salters, mineral waters, wines, cordials, liquors, soups, broths and other restoratives or foods and also to deal in medicinal goods for agricultural and animal products such as surgical and medical instruments, contraceptives, photographic goods, oils, perfumes, cosmetics, patent medicines, soaps, artificial limbs, proprietary medicines, veterinary medicines and tinctures extracts and to carry on the business of vialling, bottling, repackaging of tablets, capsules, syrups, injections, ointments, etc. through offline or online and also to carry on the business of hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centres, chemists, druggists, buyers, sellers, agents, distributors, stockists and marketing of all kinds of pharmaceuticals and allied products.

03. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at FLAT NO. 3A-104 1ST FLOOR, LUVNEST APARTMENT 11/GH-3, VRINDA VAN COLONY, LUCKNOW, LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA, 226029.

04. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar, 37/17, Westcott Building, The Mall, Kanpur-208001 Uttar Pradesh within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.

Dated this 17th day of January 2025
FOR M/S MORUS HEALTH CARE
(GAURAV KUMAR SINGH)
PARTNER

Youth held for sexually exploiting girl

Lucknow (PNS): A 35-year-old native of Ballia district was arrested for near his house on Wednesday morning on charge of sexually exploiting a girl living in Chinhat area of the city for two years on the promise of marriage. He was identified by police as Ajay. The police said while working in a multinational company in Chinhat area on contractual basis, Ajay lured the girl and established physical relation with her after promising to marry her. When the girl used to ask him about their marriage, he would make some excuses. When the girl realised that he would not marry her, she filed a complaint at Chinhat police on January 25 this year. On coming to know about the complaint, Ajay escaped to Ballia. On the tip of an informer, his location was traced in Ballia and he was arrested on February 17.

He went to his sister's house which is located nearby after attending the reception. As per family members, the deceased left for his house in the wee hours. The father tried to contact him on his mobile phone two or three times but the call was not received. Police claimed that the youth met with an accident and was flung in the canal by the impact of the vehicle which hit him. However, the family members alleged that he was killed following the conspiracy hatched to eliminate him. They claimed Deepu had a dispute with some youths of the village.

HDFC BANK Department for Special Operations : HDFC Bank Ltd, 2nd Floor, Experio Building, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010. We understand your world.

"APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of HDFC Bank Ltd, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 16-04-2025, for recovery of Rs. 10,11,432/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs Eleven Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty-Two Rupees Only) o/s as on 04-11-2019 along with further interest and charges applicable due to the HDFC Bank Ltd, Secured Creditor from (i) M/S IFDC KRISHAK SEVA KENDRA THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR MR. ARUN KUMAR SINGH (BORROWER), (ii) MR. ARUN KUMAR SINGH S/O SH. RAM LAKHAN SINGH (GUARANTOR & MORTGAGOR) & (iii) MRS. ANJANA SINGH W/O MR. ARUN KUMAR SINGH (GUARANTOR). The reserve price will be Rs.22,73,500/- and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 2,27,350/-

Short description of the immovable property
Plot Of Land Of Old Gata Num 286 And New Gata Num 539 Measuring Area 0.666 Hect Situated At Village Shahpur Tonda Pargana -Auras, Tehsil- Hasanagar, District- Unnao, U.P.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in HDFC Bank Ltd, Secured Creditor's website <https://www.hdfcbank.com/personal/resources/important-notices>.

Date: - 20.02.2025, Place: - Lucknow Authorised Officer, HDFC Bank Ltd.

Won't tolerate disrespect to Maha Kumbh, Sanatan Dharma: CM

PNS/PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday asserted that neither the opposition's attempts to "malign the Maha Kumbh with false narratives" nor any disrespect toward Sanatan Dharma will be tolerated. Speaking in the state assembly on Wednesday, he said the Maha Kumbh Mela was not just a religious event but a symbol of India's cultural and spiritual heritage. Accusing the opposition of spreading misinformation about the event, he said, "Sanatan Dharma is the soul of India, and it is our duty to uphold its dignity. The opposition's attempts to malign the Maha Kumbh with false narratives will not be tolerated." Chief Minister Yogi said that making baseless allegations or circulating fake videos against Sanatan Dharma, Maa Ganga, India or the Maha Kumbh was like playing with the faith of the crores of people who had taken a holy dip at the ongoing mega religious event in Prayagraj.



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath speaks during the Budget session of the state Legislative Assembly in Lucknow on Wednesday PTI

He said the water at the Sangam was fit for both bathing and ritual drinking (aachman) as confirmed by some recent reports, amid claims it may contain high levels of faecal bacteria.

He told the assembly that the Uttar Pradesh Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board were continuously monitoring the water quality at the Sangam.

He also trained his guns at Samajwadi Party, saying the condition of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers was so poor while it was in power that the Prime Minister of Mauritius refused to take a dip during the 2013 Kumbh.

Chief Minister Yogi said, "This event is not organised by any particular party or organisation... This event is of the society, the government is there as a servant to complete its responsibilities... It is our good fortune that our government got the opportunity to associate with the Maha Kumbh of this century... The country and the world have participated in this event and have taken it to new heights of success, ignoring all the false campaigns."

With seven days left for the Maha Kumbh to end, more than 56 crore devotees have taken a holy dip till Wednesday afternoon, Yogi pointed out.

Offering condolences to the victims of the Maha Kumbh stampede that took place on January 29, Chief Minister Yogi said, "Our sympathies are with all those who were victims of the stampede... and those who lost their lives in road accidents while travelling for Kumbh. Our condolences are with the family members, the government stands with them, the government will help them in every possible way but how appropriate is it to politicise this?" He

Opposition language unfit for civilised society: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath hit out at the opposition parties' propaganda on Maha Kumbh in the assembly, saying their language was unfit for a civilised society. Chief Minister Yogi said that an infected person could be treated, but infecting thinking had no cure. He said the Maha Kumbh symbolised the pride of Sanatan Dharma and Indian culture. Citing opposition leaders' statements to substantiate his argument, Chief Minister Yogi reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to making Maha Kumbh a historic and grand success. He said the language of the Samajwadi Party was inappropriate for a civilised society. He accused them of spreading confusion and misleading the public instead of engaging in constructive discussions. Chief Minister Yogi condemned the opposition for making baseless statements, stating that they falsely labelled Maha Kumbh as a waste of money. He cited social media posts from opposition leaders to highlight their negative rhetoric, which, according to him, reflected their mindset. "You may have your values and behaviour, but no civilised society can ever accept such remarks," he stated. He emphasized that Maha Kumbh is not a new event but a centuries-old tradition rooted in the Vedic heritage. Citing references from the Rigveda, Atharvaveda, and Shrimad

Bhagwat Mahapurana, the chief minister described Maha Kumbh as the soul of Indian culture, asserting that it should not be viewed through a narrow political lens. He pointed out that as soon as preparations for the Maha Kumbh began, opposition leaders started spreading rumours and propaganda. He criticised the Samajwadi Party president for questioning the necessity of allocating significant funds and expanding the event. The chief minister also criticised Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, and Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Lalu Prasad Yadav, accusing them of making irresponsible statements. He particularly criticised Mamata Banerjee for calling Maha Kumbh as "Mrityukumbh" and Jaya Bachchan for alleging that dead bodies were thrown into the Ganges. He condemned these remarks as direct attacks on Sanatan Dharma and its traditions. The chief minister condemned the opposition for disrespecting Sanatan Dharma. He asserted that Sanatan Dharma is the soul of India and that every citizen has a duty to uphold and respect it. He reiterated that his government is determined to protect and glorify this sacred tradition. He pointed out that people from all backgrounds participated in Maha Kumbh with devotion, questioning why opposition leaders were against it. Chief Minister Yogi also targeted the opposition for their stance on the Ram mandir in Ayodhya. He reminded the House that when the

Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favour of Ram Jannabhoomi, parties like the Samajwadi Party and Congress opposed the verdict. He further criticised them for boycotting the pran pratishtha of Ram Lalla and refusing to visit Ayodhya when all MLAs were invited. Criticising the corruption and mismanagement of the 2013 Kumbh under Samajwadi Party rule, Chief Minister Yogi highlighted its severe financial irregularities. In contrast, he emphasised that Maha Kumbh 2025 is being organised with world-class infrastructure and meticulous planning to provide devotees with a seamless and enriching experience. Criticising the opposition, he remarked that those responsible for the chaos in 2013 are now questioning Maha Kumbh 2025. He recalled the tragic stampede at Prayag station in 2013, following which the then chief minister directed his ire at the Central government. He said that the then state government failed to procure adequate funds from the Central government and accused of large-scale corruption in the allocated budgets. He also referred to the 2014 Comptroller and Auditor General report, highlighting large-scale expenditure corruption. Drawing a comparison between the two events, Chief Minister Yogi stated that religious traditions determined the duration of Kumbh, and this time, it was being organised for 45 days instead of 55 days in 2013. The scale of the event has also significantly expanded - while the 2013 Kumbh was held across 1,936 hectares (less than 5,000 acres), Maha Kumbh 2025

spreading rumours on Maha Kumbh. The chief minister delivered a sharp rebuttal to opposition allegations surrounding Maha Kumbh. Targeting the Samajwadi Party and other opposition leaders, he underscored his point with a couplet - "Bada hasen hai inki zuban ka jadu, lagakar ke aag baharo ki baat karte hain. Jinhone raat mai chun-chun ke bastiyon ko loota, vahi naseebo ke maaro ki baat karte hain". He targeted the opposition, criticising their attempts to spread baseless claims and misleading videos targeting Sanatan Dharma, Maa Ganga, India's faith and the Maha Kumbh. The chief minister asserted that such actions are not just an attack on Sanatan beliefs but a direct affront to the faith of 56 crore devotees and the spiritual essence of India itself.

"The Maha Kumbh is not an event tied to any particular party or government but a grand celebration by the society," he said, adding that the government's role is that of a humble facilitator, dedicated to fulfilling its responsibilities with utmost sincerity.

"We see ourselves as servants entrusted with this duty and will discharge it with complete commitment. Our deep reverence for India's eternal traditions makes

spans over 10,000 acres, he added. Additionally, sectors in the mela area increased from 14 in 2013 to 25 in 2025, he pointed out. Chief Minister Yogi remarked that infrastructure has also seen a major upgrade, particularly in parking facilities. In 2013, only 635 hectares were designated for parking, whereas the area has been expanded to 1,850 hectares, accommodating over six lakh four-wheelers, he added.

He pointed out that in 2013, Prayagraj lacked permanent ghats, a riverfront, or even a ROB. However, by 2019, nine ROB and six underpasses had been constructed. He said, "For Maha Kumbh 2025, the government has built 14 flyovers, nine permanent ghats and seven riverfronts. The length of temporary ghats, a mere four kilometres in 2013, has now been extended to 12 kilometres," he added. Addressing transportation improvements, Chief Minister Yogi highlighted that in 2013 there were no shuttle bus services for devotees, whereas 550 shuttle buses have been deployed this time. "The number of roadway buses has also seen a massive jump from 2,300 in 2013 to 7,000 in 2025. Additionally, the number of bus stands in Prayagraj has increased from three to seven, and extensive work has been done on road expansion. While only 55 km of roads were widened in 2013, in 2019, 125 roads were upgraded from 2-lane to 4-lane and from 4-lane to 6-lane. For 2025, more than 200 roads have been widened to ensure smooth traffic flow," he said.

assured the House that the government would stand firmly with the affected families and extends all possible assistance.

However, he questioned the ethics of politicising such tragic incidents. Chief Minister Yogi slammed

the Samajwadi Party for running a vicious campaign on social media platforms by posting misleading videos and

it our responsibility to honour and uphold them," he said. Calling it a privilege for the government to be associated with

Council witnesses noisy scenes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council witnessed noisy scenes on the second day of the Budget session. The situation escalated so much that leader of opposition Lal Bahari Yadav was taken out forcibly by the marshals after he and other Samajwadi Party members came into the Well of the House.

The uproar started when the opposition asked for more time to discuss incidents in the ongoing Maha Kumbh and leader of the House Keshav

Prasad Maurya opposed it. When Chairman Manvendra Singh refused to give time citing the rules, Lal Bahari Yadav and other SP leaders sat in the Well of the House. After this, Chairman Manvendra Singh commented that all limits were being crossed. He asked the SP members sitting in the Well to leave the House and when they did not comply with his order, he directed the marshals to take them out. The marshals lifted Lal Bahari Yadav and took him out of the House. Earlier, Lal Bahari Yadav said in the House that people had lost

their lives in the Maha Kumbh and this should not have happened. He said a condolence motion should be passed in the House. The SP MLC said money was being arranged for the Maha Kumbh for two years and the government had announced Rs 100 crore for the arrangements but proper arrangements were not made in the Maha Kumbh. He said the government was not able to give the figures of the people who died in the stampede at the Maha Kumbh. Yadav alleged that there were stampedes at three places and

fire incidents occurred at four places but complete figures were not given. He charged that the death figures were suppressed so that compensation would not have to be given. Another SP MLC Mukul said that the flaws in Maha Kumbh this time were worrying. He said Kumbh was for saints, it was not a government event. Later, talking to media persons, Lal Bahari Yadav later said the government wanted to kill democracy. "We are not allowed to speak even on the road or in the House," he said.

Yogi govt's reforms drive social change

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government's welfare schemes for women and girls are driving a significant societal transformation. The Kanya Janmotsav initiative, launched as part of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign, has set a national example. This initiative aims to celebrate the birth of girls as a festival and foster a positive mindset towards them in society. So far, 3,822 programmes have been organised across the state, celebrating the birth of 35,489 newborn girls. The Central government has commended the Women and Child Development Departments' initiative, describing it as a model for other states to follow. More than just spreading awareness, this programme is actively

reshaping societal perspectives and advancing gender equality. The Yogi Adityanath government has launched multiple schemes to ensure the education, health and safety of girls. One of the most significant initiatives is the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana, which has benefited 23.10 lakh beneficiaries to date. This scheme provides financial assistance from a girl's birth to her higher education. Director of Women and Child Development Department, Sandeep Kaur, said that under Kanya Sumangala Yojana financial aid was provided at various stages of a girl's life, including ₹5,000 at birth, ₹2,000 upon complete vaccination within one year, ₹3,000 at admission to classes 1 and 6, ₹5,000 at admis-

sion to class 9, and ₹7,000 for enrollment in graduation or a diploma after passing the 10th or 12th grade. In total, ₹25,000 is granted per beneficiary, ensuring their education and a secure future. The Kanya Janmotsav initiative was introduced as a social movement to curb female foeticide, eliminate child marriage and promote gender equality. By celebrating the birth of newborn girls, the government aims to instill a sense of pride and acceptance in families and society at large. These celebrations are not just symbolic but involve active participation from fathers, brothers, other family members, public representatives and respected figures in the community. The programme is organised at the district, block

and village levels on the first and third Mondays of every month, ensuring sustained awareness about the importance of the girl child. To make this initiative more impactful, the state government has made arrangements to give girls special gifts. Each newborn girl is welcomed with congratulatory cards, baby kits, woolen clothes, sweets and even birthday cakes, making the event a joyous occasion. Chief Minister Yogi has transformed Kanya Janmotsav from a government initiative into a large-scale social movement. This programme brings together various government departments, including the Women and Child Development, Health, Education, and local administrative bodies, ensuring a comprehensive approach.

the Maha Kumbh of the century, the chief minister highlighted how, despite all negative propaganda, the nation and the world embraced the event, elevating it to unprecedented success. The chief minister also acknowledged assembly member Manoj Pandey for bringing up the

issue of misinformation. He pointed out how deliberate attempts were made to spread rumours by falsely linking accidents in Cairo, Nepal, Jharkhand and other places to Maha Kumbh and Jhusi, questioning the motives of those responsible for such misleading narratives.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)

CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) The loans of the below-mentioned borrowers and co-borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited), amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice
1	38652443 & 41565642	HOME LOAN	24.08.2024	15,90,913.07/-

NAME OF BORROWERS AND CO-BORROWERS : 1. GOVINDA YADAV 2. PRIYA BANODIYA

PROPERTY ADDRESS : ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF IMMOVABLE RESIDENTIAL PLOT ADMEASURING 76.486 SQ. MTS., HOUSE NO. 545 -KA/ NK-455/007, LAND KHASRA NO 2357, VILL PARA, WARD AALAM NAGAR, MOHALLA NARPAT KHERA, (PARA) AALAM NAGAR, LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH - 226009, AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST: HOUSE PUSHPA GOSWAMI, WEST: 18 FT. WIDE ROAD, NORTH: REST OF THE LAND, SOUTH: PROPERTY OF PANKAJ SHARMA

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited). Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise.

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Date : 20.02.2025 IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)
Place : LUCKNOW

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)

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Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice
1	60714483	HOME LOAN	27.11.2024	29,04,791.24/-

NAME OF BORROWERS AND CO-BORROWERS : 1. DHARMENDRA KUMAR JAISWAL
2. NILAM DHARMENDRA JAISWAL

PROPERTY ADDRESS : ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF HOUSE NO.1, CONSTRUCTED ON PART OF PLOT NO.53, GATA NO. 419 MIN., HAVING AREA 1000 SQ. FT. I.E. 92.936 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT GRAM: MADHYAN, ADARSH COLONY, PARGANA: MAHONA, TEHSIL: BAKSHI KA TALAB, DISTRICT: LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH-226021, AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST: PLOTNO.56&57, WEST: RASTA 24 FT. WIDE NORTH: HOUSE NO.2/53, SOUTH: PLOT NO.54

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited). Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise.

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Date : 20.02.2025 IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)
Place : LUCKNOW

बड़ौदा यू.पी. बैंक
Baroda U.P. Bank

Branch: Main Branch, Abdul Gani Katra, Fatehpur
Ph.: 9151056456, 9151056457
E-mail: fatehp@barodauprb.co.in

Public Auction/Sale Notice
(for Immovable Properties)

Public Auction/Sale Notice For Immovable Assets

Whereas, The Authorised Officer of Baroda U.P. Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rules 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to borrowers and Authorised Officer has taken possession of the Properties described herein below. Offers are invited by the Authorised Officer under the said Act by holding Auction on the date, place and time mentioned. Public at large and borrowers and guarantors in general is being informed hereby that Auction under SARFAESI Act 2002 in respect of Under noted properties will be conducted for sale on the terms and conditions specified herein stated on the basis of "AS IS WHERE IS" & "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS" at Baroda U.P. Bank, Fatehpur. For realization of debts/dues to Bank. The sale is subject to the conditions mentioned in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions. Notice is again hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) that the Authorised Officer has decided to invite BID/tenders for the immovable properties mentioned below under SARFAESI Act 2002. So, the interested persons/Bidders are invited to submit their BID, by fulfilling all terms & conditions mentioned below, in a sealed envelope on or before Date 18.03.2025 at Baroda U.P. Bank, Fatehpur. BID will be opened on Date 20.03.2025, Time: 12.00 PM. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrowers/ Mortgagors/Guarantors/ Legal Heirs & Address	Details of Property/ Name of the Owner	Demand Notice Date/ Possession Date/ Possession Type	Due amount/ (Rs.)	Reserve Price (INR) / EMD
1.	Borrower (s): M/s Shri A.K. Enterprises, Prop. Mr. Kuldeep Kumar Gupta Guarantor (s): Mr. Anil Kumar S/o Shyam Gopal, Mrs. Shanti Devi W/o Ram Khelawan and Mr. Ram Khelawan S/o Shreepal Gupta, All R/o: House No. 376/337, Mohalla: Abunagar, Tehsil & Distt. - Fatehpur, Pin Code - 212601.	Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building in the name of Smt. Shanti Devi W/o Sri Ram Khelawan Gupta & Sri Ram Khelawan S/o Sri Shreepal, Situated at - House No. 376/337, Mohalla: Abunagar, Tehsil & Distt. - Fatehpur, Pin Code - 212601, Area: 27 Sq. Mtr. at present Area: 9.43 Sq. Mtr., Boundary of Property : East- House of Ramkhelawan, West- Vikrit House Door after Gali T/A House of Vishal Singh, North- Vikrit House Door After Road, South- House of Ramkhelawan	07.06.2024 22.08.2024 Symbolic Possession	Rs. 29,33,392.00/- + Interest from 31.05.2017 & other expenses	6,47,000.00
2.	Borrower (s): Mr. Sunil Kumar Gupta S/o Sri Ram Kumar Gupta and Smt. Shashi Kiran Gupta W/o Mr. Sunil Kumar Gupta Guarantor (s): Shri Gulab S/o Shri Ram Das and Shri Awadesh Kumar S/o Shri Ram Dayal, All R/o: Gram: Jhampur, City, Pargana & Distt. - Fatehpur, Pin Code - 212601.	Equitable Mortgage of Open Land with Boundary in the name of Sri Sunil Kumar Gupta S/o Sri Ram Kumar Gupta, Situated at - Gram- Jhampur, City, Pargana & Distt. - Fatehpur, Pin Code - 212601, Area: 28 Sq. Mtr. + 95 Sq. Mtr. + 84 Sq. Mtr. + 105 Sq. Mtr. = 312 Sq. Mtr., Boundary : East- 12 Feet Wide Rasta, West- House of Gupta Ji & Others, North- House of A. Singh & Others, South- House of Sahu Ji & Others.	28.06.2023 17.10.2023 Symbolic Possession	Rs. 19,99,182.00/- + Interest from 31.05.2023 & other expenses	96,72,000.00 9,67,200.00

Terms & Conditions of Sale- 1. Interested Bidders have to submit their BID in sealed envelopes (Clear & Readable BID Serial number & Date of publication should be mentioned over the envelope). 2. Bidders have to submit/attach 10% of Reserve price as earnest money deposit in form of DD/Bankers Cheque favoring "Authorised Officer, Baroda U.P. Bank" & payable at Fatehpur, in advance along with the BID. The Highest BID value (should not be less than the Reserve price) will be considered as successful Bidder & rest EMD of unsuccessful Bidders will be refunded without interest within a week. 3. Successful Bidder will have to deposit 15% of the BID amount (excluding EMD) on the same day in form of Cash and rest amount will have to be paid strictly within 15 days of confirmation of the sale. If he fails to do so, the amounts previously deposited by him will be forfeited. 4. Authorised Officer reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel/suspend any BID/High bid one without intimation about any reason or prior notice. Authorised Officer reserves the right to extend the date of Sale/Auction. 5. Authorised Officer will not be held liable for any type of charges, lien/encumbrances/taxes/Govt. dues and other party claims & dues. 6. Property will not be sold on amount less than the Reserve Price. The successful Bidder will have to entertain all stamp duties & registration Fee at self. 7. If it is found that two or more bidders have the same Bid Amount, the Authorised officer reserves the right to invite fresh Bid among them. 8. BID/Sale will be subject to confirmation by Bank. Properties will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "whatever there is" basis. 9. If any Borrower/ Guarantor repays full dues to the bank before the Auction then the Auction will be deferred. Thus Borrowers/ Guarantors have chances to release the secured assets before the auction subject to he repays the full amount & charges due to the Bank under sub section (8) of Sec 13 of Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 (By the Security Interest (Enforcement) Amendment Rules, 2002). 10. This is the sole responsibility of the Bidders to be satisfied & confirmed about the properties. They can verify/inspect the properties by seeking time from the respective branches on any working day from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm. 11. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagors. 12. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Secured Creditor's website, i.e. <https://www.barodaupbank.in/sarfaesinotice.php>

30 Days notice to Sale under SARFAESI Act 2002
Notice is hereby given to Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Legal Heirs/Mortgagors to repay all due amounts mentioned above to the Bank before the Auction. If they fail to do so the mortgaged property would be sold out on the date mentioned and if any dues are left, will be recovered from them with due interest, charges & expenses.

Date : 19.02.2025 Place: Fatehpur Authorized Officer : Baroda UP Bank

Rekha Gupta to take oath at Ramlila Maidan

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As the new Chief Minister of Delhi Rekha Gupta prepares to take the oath at the iconic Ramlila Maidan on Thursday, this will be the second time the ceremony is held at this historic ground. Previously, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal was the first and only Delhi Chief Minister to choose Ramlila Maidan for his oath-taking ceremonies. On December 28, 2013, he took the oath for the first time at this historic venue.

For the BJP, selecting this location signifies a revival of traditional political engagement while positioning itself as a party deeply rooted in Delhi's cultural fabric. Asserting that a new chapter of the national capital's progress was unfolding, Delhi BJP on Wednesday invited the people for the 'Viksit Delhi Pledge Ceremony' at Ramlila Maidan where the Chief Minister and the rest of the cabinet will take oath.

In a post on social media platform X in Hindi, the Delhi BJP said: "A new chapter of Delhi's progress is about to begin. With the 'Viksit Delhi Pledge Ceremony', we all together will move towards new heights of development in Delhi. Come to Ramlila Maidan and witness this historic moment!" Interestingly, the BJP has named the oath-taking ceremony 'Viksit Delhi Pledge Ceremony'.



Following its promise of putting the national capital back on track for development. Meanwhile, preparations are in full swing for the oath-taking ceremony of the BJP government at the historic Ramlila Ground in Delhi on Thursday.

Interestingly, from Queen Elizabeth and Eisenhower to the Soviets, from the Jayaprakash Narayan movement to Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement, the historic ground has been at the center of several key political events, including rallies, protests, and major gatherings. Its historical relevance dates back to numerous occasions when leaders have made significant political announcements.

Once upon a time there was no Ramlila Maidan. The whole area was a keekar jungle teeming with gedar. This is the inherited memory of one Old Delhi dweller. Another dweller's story talks of a garden called Shahji ka Baag, which was later turned into a vast ground, which at some point started to stage the Ramlila. The Ramlila Maidan was originally a large pond before 1930. It was filled up in the early 1930s so that annual Ramlila, held in October, could be shifted here from the reti (sandy) floodplains of Yamuna River behind the Red Fort, where Hindu soldiers of the Mughal army first started staging the Ramlila in the 1800s.

During British rule, it was used for various events, including military drills and public gatherings. The ground was the venue for Jayaprakash Narayan when he addressed a 100,000-strong rally in June 1975 just before then prime minister Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency rule. And shortly before the historic 1977 election that for the first time ended Congress rule in India, another massive rally at the ground brought together a galaxy of opposition leaders who were to unseat Gandhi. The venue has also been the site of several historic speeches, including one by Queen Elizabeth II in 1961, where she addressed the crowd alongside then PM Jawaharlal Nehru.

Playback singer Lata Mangeshkar performed here after the Indo-China war, and Lal Bahadur Shastri delivered his iconic slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' from this venue. The ground is set to host another historic event on coming February 20, as the new Delhi CM from the BJP will take the oath of office at the venue. Ramlila Maidan has been long associated with the historic 'Ramlila,' the reenactment of the epic Hindu story of Ramayana. This open ground has been the venue for one of the largest cultural performances in India during Dussehra. Thousands of people gath-

er here annually to witness the dramatic depiction of Lord Rama's battle with the demon king Ravana, culminating in the effigy burning on Dussehra night.

Ramlila Maidan was also used for Swami Ramdev for his indefinite hunger strike on 4 June 2011 to bring back the black money stashed in tax havens abroad, which saw 65,000 odd supporters. However, the event came to highlight when Delhi Police on 6 June along with a large police force lobbed tear gas shells, burned the place and lathi charged the crowd at 1 am (IST) to evict them. One of the most notable movements held here was the 2011 anti-corruption protest led by Anna Hazare, which drew thousands of people who camped at the Maidan in support of the Jan Lokpal Bill. The site has thus become a symbol of political activism and social change in modern India. Ramlila Maidan serves as a melting pot of various communities, religions, and groups. It is a place where people from all walks of life converge—whether to enjoy cultural events, voice their political opinions, or participate in social movements. This diversity adds to its appeal and importance as a unifying space in the heart of the capital. Whether it's a religious festival or a secular protest, Ramlila Maidan has become a symbol of unity amidst diversity.

Wait for new CM ends in Delhi

Government prepare drafts of schemes centered on women

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi's wait for the new chief minister ended on Wednesday with the announcement of a new chief minister, bureaucrats working in the Delhi government have been instructed to prepare drafts of schemes centered on women and maintaining welfare schemes while managing the finances to develop the national capital's infrastructure. The BJP wooed Delhi voters with its ambitious pre-poll promises including those of freebies, which it once slammed including Mahila Samridhi Yojna and Mukhya Mantri Matritva Suraksha Yojana (MMMSY).

However, under the newly proposed MMKY scheme, girls from underprivileged backgrounds will also receive Rs 50,000, the sources explained. Additionally, the department is working on nutritional charts to prepare kits for pregnant women under the Mukhya Mantri Matritva Suraksha Yojana (MMMSY). As per the BJP's manifesto, under MMMSY, all pregnant women will receive financial assistance of Rs 21,000 along with six nutritional kits. The officer said, "We have been directed to submit the reports to the chief secretary by February 20. Further changes will be made in the final report based on their



New Chief Minister Rekha Gupta with other party leaders at the BJP office in New Delhi on Wednesday. Photo: Ranjan Dixiri

cleaning of river Yamuna, garbages and air quality issues, water-logging and infrastructure, law and order, drinking water and slum dwellers issue are other challenges before the BJP government.

Sources in the Delhi government said, Delhi Women and Child Development Department has been instructed to prepare drafts by Thursday for schemes on providing Rs 2,500 monthly to all women, financial aid to pregnant women and assistance to poor families for their daughters' marriages. Putting in place a proper mechanism for this in the next few weeks is going to be a major challenge for the new BJP government, coming to power after 27 years. Sources said that the Mahila Samman Yojana would be renamed Mahila Samridhi Yojana and beneficiaries will now receive Rs 2,500 per month, up from Rs 1,100 given by the previous government under AAP. Additionally, the department is working on nutritional charts to prepare kits for pregnant women under the Mukhya Mantri Matritva Suraksha Yojana (MMMSY).

In its poll manifesto, the BJP also promised to launch the Mukhya Mantri Kanyadan Yojana (MMKY), which will provide financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to poor families for their daughters' marriages. "Earlier, only widows received financial assistance of Rs 30,000 under the Widow-Daughter Marriage Scheme to marry off their daughters.

instructions." To raise public awareness, the department plans to advertise the schemes, their benefits, and the registration procedures through radio jingles, metro station displays and announcements, and hoardings, he said. On the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8, the department will hold a media briefing to announce the schemes and provide related details, the official said. Besides, Delhi's hazardous air quality remains a serious concern, especially during winter due to stubble burning, vehicular emissions, and industrial pollution. Implementing sustainable solutions, including expanding green cover, promoting electric vehicles, and improving waste management, will be crucial for the BJP government in Delhi. Delhi continues to struggle with water shortages and an irregular supply in many areas, further exacerbated by Yamuna's pollution. Clean drinking water and uninterrupted electricity supply, particularly during peak summer months. Law and order is another issue which needs immediate redressal. Strengthening policing measures and improving coordination with the Delhi Police will be a challenge.

BJP returns to power after 27 years

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Capital's victory, the BJP is set to return to power in Delhi after 27 years. The last time BJP had a Chief Minister in Delhi was between 1993 and 1998, securing a one-sided victory with the tide of Ram Mandir movement on their side. During this period, the capital saw three different BJP leaders take charge. However, challenges were galore during the regime, as the party changed the CM thrice in the five-year term.

Before assembly elections were held. The Congress not only snatched powers from BJP in 1998, but went on to rule for 15 years at a stretch. Led by Sheila Dikshit, Congress formed government in Delhi and remained in power for 15 consecutive years. After Congress, AAP took over the reins. Remaining out of power for 27 years, BJP announced its comeback in the national capital in 2025 with a decisive win, clinching 48 of 70 seats. Interestingly, even in the assembly elections of 1993, BJP had not declared its candidate for the post of Chief Minister early. It is being said that Delhi was run by Khurana, Vijay Kumar Malhotra and Kedar Nath Sahni. There were 58.50 lakh voters during the 1993 Delhi elections, with voter turnout recorded at 61.5 percent. In 1995, his name was linked to the infamous Hawala scandal, and he stepped down after 27 months due to corruption allegations. On the advice of veteran leader LK Advani, Khurana resigned on February 22, 1996. After his resignation in 1996, Sahib Singh Verma replaced as the Chief Minister for more than 31 months and forced to step down just months before the 1998 elections due to controversy over onion price hike.

Sushma Swaraj took over as a third BJP Chief Minister but the party's poor show in the subsequent elections paved way for Congress. Swaraj became the CM of Delhi for a mere 52 days

before assembly elections were held. The Congress not only snatched powers from BJP in 1998, but went on to rule for 15 years at a stretch. Led by Sheila Dikshit, Congress formed government in Delhi and remained in power for 15 consecutive years. After Congress, AAP took over the reins. Remaining out of power for 27 years, BJP announced its comeback in the national capital in 2025 with a decisive win, clinching 48 of 70 seats. Interestingly, even in the assembly elections of 1993, BJP had not declared its candidate for the post of Chief Minister early. It is being said that Delhi was run by Khurana, Vijay Kumar Malhotra and Kedar Nath Sahni. There were 58.50 lakh voters during the 1993 Delhi elections, with voter turnout recorded at 61.5 percent. In 1995, his name was linked to the infamous Hawala scandal, and he stepped down after 27 months due to corruption allegations. On the advice of veteran leader LK Advani, Khurana resigned on February 22, 1996. After his resignation in 1996, Sahib Singh Verma replaced as the Chief Minister for more than 31 months and forced to step down just months before the 1998 elections due to controversy over onion price hike.

PIRAMAL CAPITAL & HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office Address: Unit No.603, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kuria (West), Mumbai- 400 070. CIN: L65910MH1984PLC032639, Website: www.piramalfinance.com
Branch Address: Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) – 400 602.

DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act and Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with this notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amount indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Loan Code	Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA Date	Property address	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Loan Code	Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA Date	Property address
(LC No. 1330000284 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Lata Gaur (Borrower) Rajesh Kumar Gaur (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2270508 /- (₹ Twenty Two Lakh Seventy Thousand Five Hundred Eight Only) NPA (09-12-2022)	Unit No. 1404, 14th Floor, Tower B5 Eco Village, Plot No. 08 Sector-1, Greater Noida District Noida Uttar Pradesh - 201308	(LC No. M0208282 of Kanpur Branch) Sam Wu (Borrower) Marina Chen (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1682068 /- (₹ Sixteen Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Sixty Eight Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Flat No. 101 On First Floor, Prem No.11/22, Souterganj, Near Souter Ganj Kanpur Utter Pradesh - 208005
(LC No. 1190001001 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Vivek Mittal (Borrower) Jaya Agarwal (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 7673724 /- (₹ Sixty Seven Lakh Three Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Four Only) NPA (05-04-2018)	Unit No 0501 5th Floor Tower N14 Aman Jayees Greens Sector 51 Dist Gautam Budh Nagar Noida Gautam Budh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201301	(LC No. M0208282TU of Kanpur Branch) Sam Wu (Borrower) Marina Chen (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 226124 /- (₹ Two Lakh Twenty Six Thousand One Hundred Twenty Four Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Flat No. 101 On First Floor, Prem No.11/22, Souterganj, Near Souter Ganj Kanpur Utter Pradesh - 208005
(LC No. 2660000051 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Manoj Bajpai (Borrower) Anuradha Bajpai (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 7561060 /- (₹ Seventy Five Lakh Sixty One Thousand Sixty Only) NPA (05-04-2019)	Unit No 1805 18th Floor, Lower C V 7 Capetown Plot No G8 01/A Sector 74 Noida Gautam Budh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201301	(LC No. HLSA0005074 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Shivprasad Yadav (Borrower) Sheela Devi (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 632487 /- (₹ Six Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Seven Only) NPA (08-11-2024)	Plot on Khasra No.633, Min Situated At Village Kamalabad Badhuali, Pargana - Mahona, Tehsil - BLT, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226201
(LC No. 15000001209 of Haldwani Branch) Paras Mani (Borrower) (Co Borrower 1) Ashish Bhardwaj (Guarantor 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 656466 /- (₹ Six Lakh Fifty Six Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Plot No.222/232 Part Of House Koharpeer Bareilly Bareilly Bareilly Uttar Pradesh - 243001	(LC No. M0204433 of Agra Branch) Ravendra Singh (Borrower) Surajmukhi (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 998771 /- (₹ Nine Lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Five Hundred Seventy One Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Plot No.23, Kharsa No.1871, Rahul Residency Colony, Near R.B Degree Collage, Mauza Narayach, Agra, Uttar Pradesh - 282001
(LC No. 15000002066 of Haldwani Branch) Paras Mani (Borrower) (Co Borrower 1) Ashish Bhardwaj (Guarantor 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 118561 /- (₹ One Lakh Eighteen Thousand Five Hundred Sixty One Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Plot No.222/232 Part Of House Koharpeer Bareilly Bareilly Bareilly Uttar Pradesh - 243001	(LC No. M0204433TU of Agra Branch) Ravendra Singh (Borrower) Suraj Mukhi (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 188818 /- (₹ One Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Eight Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Plot No.23, Kharsa No.1871, Rahul Residency Colony, Near R.B Degree Collage, Mauza Narayach, Agra, Uttar Pradesh - 282001
(LC No. 15000002830 of Haldwani Branch) Paras Mani (Borrower) (Co Borrower 1) Ashish Bhardwaj (Guarantor 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 208050 /- (₹ Two Lakh Eight Thousand Five Hundred Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Plot No.222/232 Part Of House Koharpeer Bareilly Bareilly Bareilly Uttar Pradesh - 243001	(LC No. M0052675 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Shiksha Verma (Borrower) Sachin R (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 975318 /- (₹ Nine Lakh Seventy Five Thousand Three Hundred Eighteen Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Part of Plot No.13, Kharsa No.1012 Min, Basant Men Parfour, Situated at Halbatmau Khasra No. Ward Ibrahimpur, Tehsil - Sarojini Nagar, Dist Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226014
(LC No. 2400000062 of Kanpur Branch) Paras Ram (Borrower) Vijay Laxmi (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 396553 /- (₹ Three Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Three Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Plot No 28 B Part Of Arazi No 257 Min Saniganwan Kanpur Rural Uttar Pradesh - 208021	(LC No. M0066915 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Gourav P (Borrower) Geeta P (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 550159 /- (₹ Five Lakh Fifty Thousand One Hundred Fifty Nine Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Plot No.20A, Kharsa No.306, Shalok Colony, Village Chhapraul, Dist Gautam Budh Nagar, Ghaziabad-201009
(LC No. 24000000810 of Kanpur Branch) Paras Ram (Borrower) Vijay Laxmi (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 239184 /- (₹ Two Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Four Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Plot No 28 B Part Of Arazi No 257 Min Saniganwan Kanpur Rural Uttar Pradesh - 208021	(LC No. M0078263 of Aligarh Branch) Sam Bhatnagar (Borrower) Tabassum Begum (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 959001 /- (₹ Nine Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand One Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Kharsa No.73, Rowarw, Near Abadi, Pargana & Tehsil Koli, Aligarh-202001
(LC No. 06000002618 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Sanjay Kumar Saroj (Borrower) Renu Saroj (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 415515 /- (₹ Four Lakh Fifteen Thousand Five Hundred Fourty Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	H No E -1/212 Vinay Khund 1 Gomti Nagar Yojana Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. M0104188 of Jhansi Branch) Wasim Khan (Borrower) Muhammad Haneef (Co Borrower 1) Nasreen (Co Borrower 2)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 730211.4 /- (₹ Seven Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Two Hundred Eleven Only and Forty Paise) NPA (03-01-2025)	Residential House No.1207/10, Old House No. 458, Near House No.665, Deen Dayal Nagar, Near Bharat Mata Mandir, Jhansi-284003, UP
(LC No. 06000002893 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Praveen Kumar Agarwal (Borrower) Preeti Agarwal (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 238966.3 /- (₹ Two Lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Six Only and Thirty Paise) NPA (08-01-2025)	Ward No.83, Kharsa No 600, Village- Gehru, Wards-Sarojani Nagar Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226001	(LC No. M0108325 of Meerut Branch) Alisher Alisher (Borrower) Sameem Sameem (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1351235 /- (₹ Thirteen Lakh Fifty One Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Five Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	752, Adash Nagar, Billi Masjid, Patti Ahiran, Bhaqpat-250101, UP
(LC No. 15000001892 of Haldwani Branch) Sameer Singh (Borrower) Pancham Sagar (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1496938 /- (₹ Fourteen Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Eight Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Part Of Kharsa No 563 Min Mohalla Branch Colony Shahpur Tigi Moradabad Moradabad Uttar Pradesh - 244001	(LC No. M0133113 of Agra Branch) Abdul Jabbar (Borrower) Ameena (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2318960 /- (₹ Twenty Three Lakh Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Prop. Kharsa No.579, Nali Basti (Keshopura Manoharpur, Infront of Madina Masjid, Tehsil & Distt. Mathura, Mathura-281001, UP
(LC No. 06000004377 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Brajesh Kumar Singh (Borrower) Annu Singh (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1553605 /- (₹ Fifteen Lakh Fifty Three Thousand Five Hundred Five Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Ibrahim On Plot Of Ward Of Kharsa No 413, Gram - Ibrahimpur, Ward- Ibrahimpur Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. M0147816 of Kanpur Branch) Irfan Ahmad (Borrower) Raziya Begum (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2713671 /- (₹ Twenty Seven Lakh Thirteen Thousand Six Hundred Seventy One Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Flat No.100 A, 1st Floor, Prem No.327/304-A, Ehsan Enclave, Near Nasir Hospital, Kanpur Nagar-208010, UP
(LC No. 26600000630 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Sudhir Kumar (Borrower) Rupam Kumar (Co Borrower 1) Usha Kiran (Co Borrower 2)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 34204209 /- (₹ Twenty Four Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Two Hundred Nine Only) NPA (04-06-2024)	Unit No 1,2nd Floor Front Rhs While Facing The Building,mig Flat,h No 109 Df Ankur Vihar Road Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201102	(LC No. M0148354 of Gurgaon Branch) Sheela Singh (Borrower) Sushel Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2361509 /- (₹ Twenty Three Lakh Eight Thousand Five Hundred Nine Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Flat No A-1403, 14 Floor, Grandeur Homes, Block-A Bhiwadi, Near Omx Panorama City Alwar Bhiwadi, Tehsil-Tijara, Distt- Alwar-301019, Rajasthan
(LC No. 27900001324 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Surendra Sharma (Borrower) Renu Devi (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 865717 /- (₹ Eight Lakh Sixty Five Thousand Seven Hundred Seventeen Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Flat No 307, Ground Floor Sector Mu-01 Greater Noida Gautam Budh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201308	(LC No. HLSA0000561 of Aligarh Branch) Asha (Borrower) Jaiprakash (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 5701626 /- (₹ Five Lakh Seventy Thousand One Hundred Sixty Three Only and Twenty Six Paise) NPA (03-01-2025)	Ward No 7, Mohalla Shivpur Kasba Charra Pargana, Teh-Atrauli, Districtt- Aligarh, Aligarh-202001
(LC No. 19000001404 of Ghaziabad Branch) Ravindra (Borrower) Sangeta (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1004967 /- (₹ Ten Lakh Four Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Four Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Flat No. F-1 Plot No-39, kharsa No 1461/2 Bahaji Enclave, Govind Puram 20101 Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201013	(LC No. M0176564 of Sitapur Branch) Avansh Kumar (Borrower) Sanju Shukla (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 210248 /- (₹ Two Lakh Ten Thousand Two Hundred Forty Eight Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Plot Made, On Portion Of Kharsa No.7, Dalda Mini, Sitapur-261001, UP
(LC No. 28600001183 of Haridwar Branch) Pankaj Kumar (Borrower) Arun Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1310443 /- (₹ Thirteen Lakh Ten Thousand Four Hundred Forty Three Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Part Of Plot No 28 Kharsa No 119 Gram Sunehre Pargana Rookeer Haridwar Haridwar Uttar Pradesh - 247666	(LC No. M0213918 of Moradabad Branch) Rakesh (Borrower) Manju (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1255689 /- (₹ Twelve Lakh Fifty Five Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Nine Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Gata No.667, Rishpal Ki Taal, Bilari-202411, Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 06000006407 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Riwan Ahmad Khan (Borrower) Azra Parveen (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 10322421.44 /- (₹ One Crore Nine Lakh Two Thousand Two Hundred Twenty One Only and Fourty Four Paise) NPA (08-01-2025)	Commercial Plot No. B-40 & B 41 Vibhuti Khand Gomti Nagar Ward Chhatra Chhatra Nagar Lucknow - 226010	(LC No. M026710 of Moradabad Branch) Shaheen (Borrower) Sweety (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 439115.56 /- (₹ Four Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand One Hundred Fifteen Only and Fifty One Paise) NPA (03-01-2025)	Kharsa No.183/1A, Gali No.2, Near Bhola Colony, Shani Devi Mandir, Moradabad-244003, Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 20000042490 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Momi Roy Pradhan (Borrower) Subrat Kumar Pradhan (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1201560 /- (₹ Twelve Lakh One Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Unit No T -7 191 19th Floor Tower 7 Kvd Wind Park Plot No- Gh-09 B Techzone-4 Greater Noida West G B Chhatrabundh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201305	(LC No. HLSA0000442 of Kanpur Branch) Hiral Hasan Zaidi (Borrower) Rukhsana Begum (Co Borrower 1) Hasan Faraz Zaidi (Co Borrower 2) Syed Sameer Zaidi (Co Borrower 3)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1506749 /- (₹ Fifteen Lakh Six Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Nine Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	House No.19/2C, Fifth Floor, Amber Hotel, Musical Market, Situated at Parkapur, Kanpur-208001, Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 19300043027 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Naveen Kumar (Borrower) Kanchan Lata (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2118147 /- (₹ Twenty One Lakh Eight Thousand One Hundred Forty Seven Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Part Of Plot At Part Of Kharsa No 1492 Gram-Amsi, Ward- Sarojinagar Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh - 208001	(LC No. HLSA0000593 of Aligarh Branch) Vazrudini (Borrower) Reshma (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1271852 /- (₹ Twelve Lakh Seventy One Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Two Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Part Of Khet Kharsa No.103, Near Pipal Bhujipura, Mullapara Bhujipura, Nali Abadi, Near Kwall Wali Gali, Aligarh-202001, Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 29200000627 of Yamunanagar Branch) Ashish Pal (Borrower) Neelam Pal (Co Borrower 1) Munesh Pal (Co Borrower 2)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 554723 /- (₹ Five Lakh Fifty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Three Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Kharsa No 309, 1st Rookeer Road Primary School Solaipuram Adash Nagar Rookeer Rookeer Haridwar Uttaranchal - 249403	(LC No. HLSA0002C1F8 of Lucknow - Gomti Nagar Branch) Abhay Raj Singh (Borrower) Sheela Singh (Co Borrower 2)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1915034 /- (₹ Nineteen Lakh Fifteen Thousand Thirty Four Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Plot on Part of Kharsa No.273, Kalli Paschim Police Chauki, Situated at Gram Kalli Paschim, Lucknow-226025, UP
(LC No. 28600002044 of Haridwar Branch) Kamlesh Kumar (Borrower) Geeta (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 964321 /- (₹ Nine Lakh Sixty Four Thousand Three Hundred Twenty One Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Bhukhand Plot No-105 A, Kharsa No- 166, Dayal Enclave, Vill- Jwalapur, Pargana- Jwalapur Haridwar Haridwar Uttar Pradesh - 249407	(LC No. HLSA0002C9B4 of Lucknow - Gomti Nagar Branch) Vineet Yadav (Borrower) Vinay Yadav (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2509919 /- (₹ Twenty Five Lakh Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Nineteen Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Plot of land being portion of Kharsa No.408, Bajrang Chauraha, Situated At Village Goyla, Lucknow-226016, UP
(LC No. 24000003375 of Kanpur Branch) Sandeep Bhatra (Borrower) Preena Batra (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 3420460 /- (₹ Thirty Four Lakh Two Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Flat No 301, Third Floor, Shivalkshelter 117/H No Paudar, Nagar, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh - 208001	(LC No. HLSA0000E41 of Delhi - Dwarka Branch) Vakil (Borrower) Mohd Sarif (Co Borrower 1) Yasia (Co Borrower 2)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1471856 /- (₹ Fourteen Lakh Seventy One Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Six Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Kharsa No.492, Village Chamri Nagar Palika Hapur, Pargana & Tehsil & Distt- Haridwar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 29400001202 of Prayagraj Branch) Mohammad Sheraan Ayubi (Borrower) Mariya Riz (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1387839 /- (₹ Thirteen Lakh Eighty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Nine Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	House On Part Of Arazi No. 291, Mauza Anundpur Pargana & Tehsil Sanda Near Karamat Ki Chowki Allahabad Allahabad Uttar Pradesh - 211016	(LC No. HLSA000382C0 of Agra Branch) Pradeep Baghel (Borrower) Shantukta (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 550820 /- (₹ Five Lakh Fifty Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	House No.19/2C, Fifth Floor, Amber Hotel, Musical Market, Situated at Parkapur, Kanpur-208001, Uttar Pradesh
(LC No. 19300044986 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Pooja Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 795769 /- (₹ Seven Lakh Ninety Five Thousand Hundred Sixty Nine Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Unit No 225 On Part Of Kharsa No 458/A Village Mandi, Mauja Nogaon Tehsil Chatta and District Mathura, Uttar Pradesh - 226020	(LC No. HLSA00016556 of Agra Branch) Giridhar Rathore (Borrower) MAMTA RATHOR (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1205163 /- (₹ Twelve Lakh Fifty Thousand One Hundred Sixty Three Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	Waka Mauja Bilram Aander (Nagar Panchayat) Pargana Bilram Kasganj Near Maa Durga Devi Village Near Mohalla lakhpura Meerut Uttar Pradesh 208004
(LC No. 23400003410 of Agra Branch) Aditosh (Borrower) Mohini Jaiswal (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 2209444 /- (₹ Twenty Two Lakh One Thousand Four Hundred Forty Four Only) NPA (08-01-2025)	Flat No 605, Six Floor Ruby Tower, Ganpati Aditosh Shastri Ram Prasad Road Mauza Bajpur Agra, Agra Uttar Pradesh - 282007	(LC No. HLSA0001749F of Meerut Branch) Imran (Borrower) AFROZ (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 788621 /- (₹ Seven Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Six Hundred Twenty One Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	House No.39/3/277 old House no.9/3/147 Situated at Vill Bhairav Near Bhairav Temple Rebaggan/ faizabad Uttar Pradesh 224001
(LC No. 2000033026 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Vivek Agarwal (Borrower) Aastha Agarwal (Co Borrower 1)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 8212852.51 /- (₹ Eighty Two Lakh Two Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Two Only and Fifty One Paise) NPA (07-07-15)	FLAT NO-B-701, 9TH FLOOR JAIPURIYA APARTS, CROSSING REPUBLIC GHAZIABAD Uttar Pradesh - 201010	(LC No. HLSA0000083 of Etawah Branch) Sanju Yadav (Borrower)	24-01-2025 / ₹ 1915034 /- (₹ Nineteen Lakh Fifteen Thousand Thirty Four Only) NPA (03-01-2025)	House Bearing Municipal no 504 37 Plot bearing no 04, Minjuniyeh Kharsa no 3426 Revdenue village Near Mohalla lakhpura Meerut Uttar Pradesh 208002
(LC No. 193LUX2064 of Lucknow - MMM Marg Branch) Pranav Sharma (Borrower) Kirti Sharma (Co Borrow					

'Kashi has become global centre of knowledge & innovation'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Artificial Intelligence (AI), alongside technology and other spheres of education will be instrumental in shaping the innovation and creativity of the future. This was the essence of the enlightening session on the role of education in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat when Banaras Hindu University (BHU) played host to the Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) 3.0 delegation comprising students and members of the academic fraternity from Tamil Nadu.

The delegates arrived at the Pt Omkar Nath Thakur auditorium of the Faculty of Performing Arts to a rousing welcome here on Tuesday. The academic session titled 'Academics for Viksit Bharat' saw a vibrant exchange of ideas on the transformative role of education in scripting India's future. The event began with a formal welcome address by Prof V Ramanathan from the Department of Chemistry, IIT-BHU, followed by a floral tribute to the bust of Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, founder of BHU. Former Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Bihar (Gaya) Prof HCS Rathore felicitated the distinguished guests, recognising their significant

contributions to academia. A documentary highlighting the cultural and historic relationship between Kashi and Tamil Nadu was screened, emphasising IIT-BHU's commitment to holistic education.

The session featured insightful presentations from distinguished academics and industry experts. Dr Lavanya from the Department of Mathematical Sciences, IIT-BHU, discussed the transformative aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises multidisciplinary and holistic education, the integration of technology in teaching, promotion of Indian languages for equity and accessibility and governance reforms to foster innovation and accountability. Dr Lavanya highlighted the importance of engineering and technology in advancing the country and explained how IIT-BHU has been actively contributing in this regard. She shared various measures taken by the institute to implement NEP and achieve its objectives. She added that IIT-BHU continuously strives to create a flexible educational framework that encourages creativity, interdisciplinary learning and innovation.

Prof Sanjay Kumar from the Department of English, BHU, presented his thoughts on the



KTS participants during their academic interaction with a BHU professor in Varanasi

role of education in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat. Quoting Nelson Mandela's famous words, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world," he emphasised education as the cornerstone of national progress. He underlined that development of a country is not just about economic parameters, but also about capabilities, well-being and happiness of its people too. He explained how investment in education can fuel economic growth,

entrepreneurship, innovation, poverty reduction, social equality, gender inclusivity and an overall improvement in the quality of life.

Dr KM Sushindran, Head of the TCS Academic Alliance Group, spoke on the historical and academic significance of Kashi and the Kashi-Kanchi connection. He noted that Kashi, enriched by institutions like BHU and IIT-BHU, has become a global centre for knowledge, innovation and interdisciplinary research. He

emphasised that the intersection of AI, engineering, technology and other spheres of education will drive future creativity and innovation. He underlined the growing importance of AI as a critical skill for students, shaping future employment and transforming academic disciplines.

Dr Darshani George from the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT-BHU, spoke about various government schemes like Nipun Bharat and the Prime Minister's

Research Fellowship (PMRF) that support students. BHU student Shubhangi discussed India's demographic dividend as a valuable asset, emphasising the transformative power of education and highlighting initiatives like NEP, Digital India, Skill India, and Swayam aimed at empowering the youth.

Jai Singh, a research scholar from the Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (ICAR-IIVR), underscored the mission of ICAR-IIVR to enhance agricultural productivity while maintaining nutritional quality, thereby contributing to India's food security. Satyaprakash Malviya, a specially-abled research scholar from the Department of History, shared his journey of becoming a successful entrepreneur, inspiring others with his resilience and achievements. Ratan Singh, a BHU student, also shared his views about the role of youth.

Students and scholars from various central universities actively participated in the session. A student from the Central University of Kerala expressed gratitude to BHU for hosting such an enriching event, while Vaishnavi from the Central University of Karnataka praised the smooth

coordination by IRCTC and the university administration. The session concluded with final remarks by Prof Shanmuga Sundaram from the Department of Commerce, who appreciated PM Narendra Modi for initiating the KTS and acknowledged the support of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath. He reiterated the conference's core message that education, driven by innovation, technology and cultural values, is fundamental to realising the vision of Viksit Bharat.

After the academic proceedings, the delegates visited Bharat Kala Bhawan, the CDC building and various key infrastructural highlights of IIT-BHU, including the Central Instrumentation Facility (CIF), the Sports Complex and the Precision Engineering Hub. These visits provided the participants with a deeper understanding of the university's cultural heritage and its advancements in scientific and technological research.

The conference successfully reinforced the vital role of education in shaping India's future, emphasising the importance of holistic learning, technological integration, and national development driven by innovation, inclusivity and cultural pride.

Strategies to promote Indian languages discussed

Varanasi (PNS): On the third day of the five-day workshop on 'Training of Trainers: Promoting Indian Languages and Integrating Indian Knowledge Tradition in Higher Education Curricula' being organised in the Inter University Centre for Teacher Education (IUCTE) campus under the joint aegis of IUCTE BHU (Varanasi) and Vidya Bharati Higher Education Institute (Tamil Nadu) and Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (New Delhi), three lectures and a brainstorming session were organised on Wednesday. The first lecture of the day was delivered by Dr R Ramachandran, former Professor and Head, Department of Sanskrit, RKM Vivekananda College, Myslapore, Chennai. He discussed strategies for preservation and promotion of Indian languages. In the second lecture, Dr Raja Pathak, IUCTE, explained that technology plays a vital role in promoting language and Indian knowledge system education. He explained that cultural and linguistic heritage can be preserved, enhanced and shared globally.

Tamil Nadu professionals, entrepreneurs accorded grand welcome at Banaras stn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A third group comprising professionals and entrepreneurs from Tamil Nadu received a grand welcome at Banaras station here on Tuesday evening by District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and others. They arrived here to participate in the third phase of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS). The group was welcomed at the station with *tilak* and garland of flowers amidst the beating of drums and shower of flowers.

KTS 3.0 is being organised by the Union Ministry of Education to realise the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. This group from Tamil Nadu will visit various religious



District Magistrate S Rajalingam welcoming Tamil guests at Banaras railway station

places for four days and will get acquainted with the culture of Uttar Pradesh. In four days all

the delegates will visit Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Annapurna Temple, Nam

Ghat, Ramnagar, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and also famous poet Subramania Bharati's residence at Hanuman Ghat. After the academic programme, all the delegates will go for taking a holy dip in Maha Kumbh. From there they will go to Ayodhya for *darsan* and worship of Lord Ram Lalla. After returning from there, they will leave for Tamil Nadu from Banaras station.

The group that reached the Banaras station accepted greetings with great joy. They looked very happy after coming to Kashi city. The sound of "Vanakkam Kashi" was resonating all around and the group looked happy amidst the drums. This third event of KTS is also proving to be enjoyable for people of Kashi.

Work on towards making panchayats TB free

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Work is being done towards making the gram panchayats TB free under the joint aegis of the Health department and the Panchayati Raj department as part of the National Tuberculosis Eradication Programme (NTEP). The work of on-site verification is being done in all the blocks of the district. This verification work will be completed this month. As many as 264 gram panchayats of the district have applied to the district tuberculosis officer (DTO) for declaring TB-free gram panchayat. This information was given by Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary here on Wednesday.

The CMO said in compliance with the guidelines issued from the state level, a joint team of representatives of the Health and Panchayati Raj departments has been formed, which



will verify the claims of these gram panchayats and each team will verify only 8 to 10 gram panchayats. "Verification of TB-free gram panchayat is done on the basis of the claims received, the data uploaded on the Nikshay portal as per the requirement, the lab register and notification register kept in the TB unit and by meeting the patient by visiting the field," the

CMO added. DTO Dr Piyush Rai said there are a total of 694 gram panchayats in the district. Out of these, 46 gram panchayats have been declared TB free in the year 2023 itself while in the year 2024, now 264 gram panchayats have taken steps in this direction. After verification, the list of TB-free gram panchayats found eligible will be

handed over to the CMO. Thereafter it will be sent to the District Magistrate (DM) by the CMO for information, Dr Rai said. He added that as per the information received so far on World Tuberculosis Day on March 24, the DM will honour all eligible gram panchayats with a statue of Mahatma Gandhi and a certificate. Dr Rai informed that these gram panchayats will be monitored for three years.

On remaining TB free for the second consecutive year, the gram pradhans will be honoured with a silver coloured statue of Mahatma Gandhi and on being declared TB free for three consecutive years, the gram pradhan concerned will be honoured with a golden coloured statue of Mahatma Gandhi. In the year 2023, out of these 46 declared gram panchayats, 21 have claimed to be TB free gram panchayat this year as well.

32-year-old woman found murdered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 32-year-old woman was found murdered in Azad Nagar area under Jhansi police station, on Wednesday. Her throat was slit and body was found in the bathroom. Blood stains were found in room. The man who had come with the woman is absconding. Police said that Police said that at 9 o'clock on Tuesday they had taken a room in Jhansi area by introducing themselves as a married couple. When the tenants went to the bathroom on Wednesday morning they were shocked to find the body there. On getting information the police and forensic team reached the spot. Jhansi inspector Upendra Singh said the woman and the man had said

on Tuesday night they had come to take a holy bath in Maha Kumbh and need a room for night. The woman's body was found on Wednesday morning. The police searched the room and found woman's belongings missing. Singh said it seems an attempt was made to conceal the identity. That is why the accused ran away with all the belongings. The police have started searching for the murderer on the basis of CCTV footage. The deceased could not be identified.

Meanwhile the body of a teenager youth was found lying near Boudai Lanka canal in Phulpur tehsil area here on Wednesday. Villagers spotted the unidentified body with serious injury marks were found on the head around 10

am and alerted the police. On getting information police and field unit reached the spot. According to the police, the age of the deceased is around 17 years. The forensic team has collected samples from the spot. Police is investigating every possible aspect. Phoolpur Inspector Deendayal Singh said that efforts are being made to identify the youth.

In yet another incident, the body of Kewla Devi (70) found under mysterious circumstances in a thatched roof of a cattle shed in Tikri village, Nawabganj. On being told police reached the spot, took the body into possession and after 'panchnama' sent it for post-mortem examination. Station House Officer Ajay Pal said investigation is underway.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti was observed at North Central Railway (NCR) headquarters on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (P C M E) Animesh Kumar Sinha. Thereafter, tree plantation was done. A total of five saplings planted on the occasion included mainly mango, jackfruit and Ashoka. In the end, cloth bags were distributed by the chief mechanical engineer to reduce the use of single-use plastic. More than 50 officers and employees participated in the programme. Chief Environment Manager (CEM) Shivaji Kadam threw light on the thoughts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Two killed as truck hits pickup

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two persons died and over a dozen injured when a speeding truck hit their pickup on Kanpur-Etawah highway under Rania police station of Kanpur Dehat early on Wednesday morning. As a result the pickup climbed the divider and overturned injuring all the pilgrims. Police sent them to the district hospital where two of them were declared dead.

According to reports, 15 people of Nagloi, Chhajuram Colony, Delhi, had gone to take a holy dip in Maha Kumbh. When they were returning to Delhi the speeding truck hit their pickup around 5 am near Khanchandrapur, Rania, Kanpur Dehat from behind which overturned on the divider. In the incident, Arvind Mandal (38), Manisha (27), Golu (8), Anshika (4), Ramesh (38)

and wife Sonam (32), daughter Riya (12), son Nilesh (10), Aarti (15), Manju Devi (28), Savitri Devi (40), Daya Devi (50), Ambawati (35) and pickup driver Dhyan Sahu (48) were injured. On being informed police rushed to the spot and rescued the pickup driver trapped in its bonnet with the help of a crane and sent all the injured to the district hospital where Daya Devi and Dhyan Sahu were declared dead by the doctors. The bodies both the deceased were sent for an autopsy. Station Officer (SO) Mukesh Kumar Solanki said the injured were undergoing treatment. Raids are being conducted in search of the absconding truck driver. A first information report (FIR) will be lodged and action will be taken in this connection on receipt of complaint, he added.

In another incident, half-a-dozen people when their auto rickshaw

overturned after being hit by a car near Paras village on Mughal Road under Ghatampur Kotwali police station area on Wednesday morning. The mishap took place when the passengers were going to Fatepur on the auto rickshaw. The injured include Ajay alias Pintu (35) of Shihpur, Manorama (60) of Devmanpur, Sajeti, Neetu Tewari (33) of Barimetaint village and her son Shivansh (12), Shiv Singh (45) of Dharchhua, Fatepur, and Lakhnail (50) of Manglapur, Chandpur. On getting information police rushed to the spot and sent all the injured to Ghatampur Community Health Centre (CHC). Ajay, Manorama and Shiv Singh were referred to the UHM Hospital, Kanpur, in view of their serious condition. Station House Officer (SHO) Dhananjay Kumar Pandey said further action will be initiated in the matter on getting a complaint.

Dilip Vengsarkar lauds Divyang cricket players

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A colourful closing and prize distribution ceremony of the three-day day-night Divyang Premier League (DPL) organised by the All India Divyang Cricket Association (AIDCA) was held at Sampurnanand Sports Complex, Sigra here on Tuesday night. Former captain of Indian cricket team, veteran international cricket player, Padma Shri and Arjun Awardee Dilip Vengsarkar who was the chief guest said Divyang cricket players are in no way inferior and an inspiration for society. He assured to provide all possible support for the uplift of Divyang cricket.

AIDCA president Dr Uttam Ojha also spoke on the occasion. General secretary Dr Sanjay Chaurasia said that history of day-night match has been created in Divyang cricket and soon the 'Maha Kumbh' (big tournament) of Divyang cricket players from all over the world will be organised in Kashi. The programme was



mainly addressed by Kripnanand Maharaj, Chandramouli Upadhyay, Chief Priest of Kashi Vishwanath Temple Shrikant Mishra and Praveen Vasani. The closing ceremony was attended by organising committee chairman Dr Tulsi, My Master11 COE Dr Rajesh Pandey, Dr Alok Bhardwaj, Media in charge Dr Manoj Tiwari, Dr RA Joseph, Dr Sweta Chaurasia, Pankaj Srivastava, Father Chetan, Kamaljit Kaur, Abhijeet Vishwas, Pradeep Soni, Dheeraj Chaurasia, Pradeep Rajbhar and Mahendra. The programme was conducted by Dr Sunita Tiwari while the guests were welcomed by Dr Uttam Ojha and Dr Sanjay Chaurasia proposed the vote of thanks.

'UPMRC has always adhered to environmental regulations'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC) participated in the fifth International Conference on Green Metro Systems: The Future of Urban Mobility, organised by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) in Delhi in collaboration with Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). The conference focused on shaping future cities and developing eco-friendly metro systems. Apart from UP Metro, Bengaluru and Kochi Metro also participated in discussions on green metro initiatives. Speaking at the event, UPMRC Managing Director (MD) Sushil Kumar emphasised that UPMRC has always adhered to environmental regulations and implemented measures to reduce ecological impact and promote sustainability. After Delhi Metro, UPMRC is India's second metro to participate in the Energy Exchange Programme. Under the Open Access Model, power for Lucknow Metro's operations and maintenance is purchased through the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), where electricity prices are determined in 15-



minute blocks throughout the day. UPMRC strategically buys electricity at lower rates and sources the remaining power from UP Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) at standard rates. This model has resulted in energy savings of up to ₹45 lakh per month. For the first time in the country, Kanpur and Agra Metro have used special inverters with the third rail DC system as an innovation for energy conservation. This special inverter is making the energy generated from the brakes used in trains reusable by feeding it back into the system. The energy efficiency of Kanpur Metro and Agra trains will be around 40-45 per cent, meaning that for every 1,000 units of energy consumed, 400-450 units of energy will be conserved and reused in the metro system. No metro

project in the country operating on the third rail DC system has such a system so far. Similarly, in Lucknow, regenerative braking technology is being used in metro trains and lifts to generate and conserve energy through regenerative braking. At the CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) IGBC fifth international conference, Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Power, Government of India, Manohar Lal, attended the inaugural ceremony. Minister of State, Tokhen Sahu, was also present. Speaking at the conference, Manohar Lal said, "As humanity progresses, our innovations often come into conflict with nature, bringing both advancement and risk. The rise in global temperatures beyond 1.5°C has become a major global concern, compelling nations to unite under initiatives like the Paris Agreement to com-

bat climate change." **Knj Metro corridor:** In approximately five-kilometer-long Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section under Kanpur Metro Corridor-1 (from IIT to Naubasta), all five stations — Baradevi, Kidwai Nagar, Vasant Vihar, Buddhist Nagar and Naubasta, are now rapidly taking their final shape. The construction of the entrances of all five stations in the section has now been completed. After the station boxes from Baradevi to Naubasta have been prepared, doors, stairs and pathways for accessing the stations from the road are also ready. The construction of technical rooms in all stations has also been completed. Following this, the work of flooring, finishing, and system installation at the stations is progressing rapidly. Notably platform-level casting work of all stations in the Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section was completed last September. Subsequently, the construction of pre-rigged building structures for platform roofs was completed in January. Along with these works, construction of technical rooms on concourse level or first floor of stations was also progressing which has now been completed.

Seminar on evolving dimensions of museums tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Department of Museology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) will organise a one-day national seminar on 'Expanding Dimensions of Museums and Museology: Realities, Possibilities and Challenges' on February 21 at the Centre for Vedic Sciences, BHU, from 10 am onwards. It will be inaugurated and presided over by Dr Ashish Bajpai, Director, Institute of Management Studies, (IM) BHU. Prof Manvi Seth, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the Department of Museology, Indian Institute of Heritage, Noida, will be the chief guest and deliver the keynote address, and Prof Kalyan Krishna, former Head of the Department of History of Art, BHU, will grace the occasion as the guest of honour.

The event will feature engaging panel discussions with distinguished experts, which include Dr Shefalika Awasthi (Curator, Junagadh Museum), Dr R Ganeshan (Photographer & Artist, Varanasi), Dr Vidhi Nagar (Head, Department of Dance, the Faculty of Performing Arts, BHU), Amitabh Bhattacharya (senior journalist and an expert on Banaras Art, History, and Culture), Ajay Srivastava (Curator In-charge, Crafts Museum, Varanasi), and Prof Achal Pandya (Head of Division [Conservation & Cultural Archives], IGNC, New Delhi).

In this seminar Head, Department of Museology, BHU, Prof Usha Rani Tiwari said we are bringing together over 100 participants from the field of museology and other disciplines across India. With participation from esteemed scholars, museum professionals, researchers and students, this seminar aims to foster meaningful discussions on the evolving role of museums and museology in contemporary society.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Towards strategic partnership

Qatar, India sign historic agreements to strengthen cooperation in trade, energy, investments, technology and culture

Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, recent two-day official visit to India marks a significant milestone in the bilateral relations between the two nations. During this visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Emir Al-Thani agreed to elevate their ties to a 'strategic partnership,' focusing on key areas such as trade, energy, investments, technology, food security, culture and people-to-people connections. India and Qatar have maintained a robust relationship for decades, characterised by strong economic, cultural and diplomatic ties. The Indian expatriate community in Qatar, is 830,000 strong and plays a pivotal role in the country's development and serves as a vital bridge between the two nations. A primary outcome of the Emir's visit is the ambitious goal to double bilateral trade to \$28 billion within the next five years. Both countries are exploring the possibility of signing a free trade agreement to facilitate this growth. Energy cooperation



remains a cornerstone of the India-Qatar relationship. The discussions during the visit emphasised broadening energy ties, which could involve increased supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar to India, thereby enhancing India's energy security.

The visit underscored the importance of cultural exchange and strengthening people-to-people connections. Initiatives in this area are expected to foster mutual understanding and goodwill between the populations of both countries. But the biggest takeaway from this visit is the security cooperation. By elevating their relationship to a strategic

partnership, India and Qatar have committed to a more structured and comprehensive engagement, addressing regional and global issues of mutual interest. This strategic alignment is anticipated to enhance their collaborative efforts on various fronts. Besides, both countries have agreed to take their trade to next level. The targeted increase in trade volume and potential free trade agreement are expected to stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities and attract investments in both nations. For India, securing a stable and diversified energy supply from Qatar is crucial for its growing energy needs. For Qatar, strengthening ties with a major economy like India offers new markets and investment opportunities. Enhanced cultural exchanges will promote mutual respect and understanding, enriching the social fabric of both societies. A closer partnership between India and Qatar can contribute to regional stability, with both countries collaborating on security and diplomatic initiatives. The Emir of Qatar's visit to India has set the stage for a deeper and more multifaceted partnership between the two nations. By focusing on strategic areas India and Qatar are poised to reap significant benefits, reinforcing their longstanding ties and contributing to regional and global stability.

PICTALK



A black-naped oriole bird perches on a bloomed cotton tree, in Birbhum

Confronting the escalating migration and refugee crises



SUDHIR HINDWAN

The refugee crisis is a perplexing issue for governments, requiring a delicate balance between maintaining national security and extending compassion to those in need

The paradoxes of rapid global changes are proving to be a contemporary reality, one that sheds light on the philosophical aphorism proposed by Samuel P. Huntington, that of "Political Decay." This concept is becoming increasingly evident in highly developed societies, particularly in the face of numerous challenges concerning security. The issue of illegal migration, human trafficking, and the plight of refugees has become a significant concern, with its implications stretching across borders, creating tension among nations, and fueling rising anxieties about national security.

A few years ago, the discovery of fifty refugees dead near eastern Austria, along the Slovakia-Hungarian border, prompted widespread discussion on the issue of illegal migration and related crimes. This tragic event highlighted a larger issue facing European countries-illegal migration and the security risks that come with it. Many individuals from underdeveloped regions, in their search for survival and opportunities, attempt to migrate to European countries, often taking illegal routes. The tragic drowning of more than 80 illegal migrants in a boat off the coast of Libya is just one example of the deadly risks faced by those desperate for a better life. In light of these challenges, it is imperative that European nations develop more sophisticated mechanisms to address this issue, one that has already caused significant tension between countries.

The broader problem of migration and refugees, particularly in regions such as Afghanistan and Central Asia, has created a complicated and often violent dynamic. As refugees flee war and persecution, they find themselves subject to not only economic exploitation but also social discrimination. According to reports, over 70 per cent of the 26 million refugees worldwide are women and children. These individuals are uprooted and displaced due to wars, ethnic conflicts, political instability and religious persecution. Since the mid-20th century, the number of



refugees has dramatically increased, driven by factors such as civil wars, regional conflicts, and natural disasters. The refugee crises have been particularly severe in regions like Africa, Southeast Asia and the West Asia, with countries such as Afghanistan, Rwanda, Vietnam, Bosnia and Iraq seeing millions displaced. These refugees often seek shelter in neighbouring countries, adding pressure to already fragile systems. While refugees are often subjected to exploitation and abuse, the refugee crisis has also attracted the attention of illegal and anti-social actors who exploit the vulnerability of displaced populations. The rise of global connectivity and the post-modernisation phase calls for new frameworks and models of governance to address these challenges.

The world is increasingly interconnected, and young generations must be equipped with the tools and understanding to overcome divisive and biased perceptions that arise from ignorance. It is essential that global societies shift their focus to new models that emphasise reforms in democracy, the environment, globalisation, and governance. These reforms should prioritise finding solutions that reduce manipulation and nepotism, addressing the core needs of vulnerable populations. The refugee problem is a complex and multifaceted issue, and efforts have been made to create legal definitions and frameworks for addressing the crisis. The United Nations has provided a general consensus on defining refugees as individuals who are forced to leave their country due to war, foreign invasion, or other forms of aggression. However, individual nations often adapt this definition to suit their national interests, leading to inconsistencies in refugee treatment. For instance, Uganda's President Idi Amin's expulsion of foreign nationals in 1972 resulted in the displacement of over 38,000 people, highlighting the role of political instability in driving refugee crises. Several key factors contribute to the refugee crisis, including atrocities, civil wars, and regional conflicts. Over time, efforts have been made to improve the situation, with various organisations and countries attempting to address the economic and social needs of refugees. To address the refugee crisis, it is crucial to develop local infrastructure that promotes refugees' self-sufficiency and to involve NGOs more extensively in the solution. Comprehensive training for staff involved in rescue operations and coordination between local governments and the UNHCR will enhance effectiveness. Increased financial support is needed to



THE TRAGIC DROWNING OF MORE THAN 80 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IN A BOAT OFF THE COAST OF LIBYA IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF THE DEADLY RISKS FACED BY THOSE DESPERATE FOR A BETTER LIFE

implement new programmes for refugees. Challenges persist in addressing the refugee crisis, particularly due to inadequate infrastructure and logistical support in host countries. A global burden-sharing approach is needed to prevent undue strain on any single nation. Refugees often face detention based on illegal immigration suspicions, and camps are sometimes attacked, increasing their vulnerability. Governments, NGOs, and international bodies must ensure refugee protection, especially for women and children, while fostering long-term solutions like job creation and education. Though eliminating illegal migration entirely may not be possible, nations must manage migration while safeguarding refugees' rights. The rise in human trafficking and exploitation adds complexity, requiring swift action from governments. In regions like South Asia, the Rohingya refugee crisis has intensified security and humanitarian concerns, with policies often facing international criticism. A coordinated, inclusive approach is vital to meeting the needs of displaced populations without compromising national interests. (The author, a recipient of Bharat Gaurav award is a professor and an expert on strategic affairs; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SAM PITRODA SPARKS CONTROVERSY

Madam — The latest controversial statement of Indian Overseas President Sam Pitroda negating Chinese threats to India has stoked a fierce controversy. Though Congress has distanced himself, very obviously his statement is in tune with the Congress line on China and statements of Rahul Gandhi praising and advocating China. His statement may be seen in the light of the recent successful visit of PM Modi to the US, causing heartburn and discomfort in Congress leadership. His timing of the pro-China statement is very conspicuous and contradicts the foreign policy of India. The security threats from China need no elaboration. Sam Pitroda is no stranger to controversies. Sam Pitroda had ignited a firestorm while speaking on the diversity of India, referring to how people in the South "look like Africans and those in the East look like Chinese and those in the East look like Arabs."

In June 2023, amid anticipation for the grand opening of the Ram Mandir, Sam Pitroda sparked controversy by asserting that temples wouldn't address India's pressing issues such as unemployment, inflation, education, and health. In May 2019, Sam Pitroda drew ire by dismissively remarking, 'hua to hua, so what,' when questioned about the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. During the aftermath of the Pulwama attack in February 2019, Sam Pitroda ignited controversy by questioning the efficacy of retaliatory airstrikes conducted by the Indian Air Force on Balakot. His remarks stirred debate on India's response to terrorist incidents and the appropriate diplomatic approach to such crises. Despite all controversies, he continued to be Indian Overseas President. Congress is experimenting through Sam Pitroda but his controversies are maligning the country.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

INDIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY FAILS

Madam — Refers to the article 'Bangladesh wipes out history, shuns India at its own peril.' India's neighbour first policy is a

Gyanesh Kumar is new CEC



This refers to the main page headline "Gyanesh Kumar is the 26th CEC." Notwithstanding a dissenting note from the LoP Rahul Gandhi, Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has been appointed as the CEC by a three-member panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, comprising Home Minister Amit Shah and LoP

Rahul Gandhi. The reason behind Gandhi's dissent was that the matter is still pending before the court, raising the question of why the appointment was rushed.

Previously, the Chief Justice of India was part of the selection panel; however, this changed after the NDA government passed the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act, 2023. Keeping this in mind, the Vice President recently voiced his support for excluding the CJI from the selection process. It appears that the power to choose the next CEC and other election commissioners is now tilted entirely in favour of the central government.

Aarohi Gupta | Ujjain

MAMATA SLAMS KUMBH MANAGEMENT

Madam — West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has asserted that the Maha Kumbh has turned into a "Mrityu Kumbh" due to incidents of stampede, claiming that the actual toll at the mega religious gathering was suppressed by authorities. At least 30 people died and 60 were injured in a stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, while 18 people lost their lives in a recent stampede at an overcrowded New Delhi railway station. More than 54 crore people had so far taken a dip at the Sangam. During Maha Shivrathri, a further surge of crowd is expected. More than half the total population of India, by that time, should have taken a dip. The indiscipline of the people, coupled with poor crowd management, led to the stampede. But her comment that it is a mirthy Kumbh is unwanted and uncalled for. It is an attack on sanatana dharma and people's belief and faith. It is an attack on Hindus.

N R Ramachandran | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Faith's double-edged sword: Reflections on the Mahakumbh



ASHA IYER KUMAR

The Mahakumbh presents a profound paradox: can a moment of divine immersion truly cleanse years of sin, or have we reduced the quest for spiritual evolution to mere ritual

In the predawn darkness, millions of pilgrims converge at the sacred confluence of the Ganges, their faith burning brighter than the stars above. The Mahakumbh, humanity's largest gathering of spiritual seekers, presents a profound paradox of our times — the sublime beauty of collective devotion juxtaposed against the perils of unquestioning faith. What compels ordinary men and women to undertake arduous journeys, risking life and limb in pursuit of divine grace?



are poignant reminders of how religious fervour, when unchecked by reason, can transform the path to salvation into a road to suffering. There is something deeply moving about the unwavering conviction that draws millions to these sacred waters. Yet, as I watch the faithful immerse themselves in the river's embrace, I cannot help but wonder: Can the complex tableau of human actions, choices, and consequences truly be undone by a moment's submersion? Does spiritual transformation work in such absolute terms, where years of misconduct can be erased in an instant? The Ganges itself presents another layer of this spiritual paradox. In our rush to cleanse our souls, have we forgotten our duty to preserve the very source of that purification?

The question that haunts me is not whether faith has value — it undoubtedly does — but whether we have reduced the profound journey of spiritual evolution to mere ritual. True transformation, I believe, lies not in momentary acts of devotion but in the sustained practice of compassion, integrity and mindful living. The real pilgrimage is not to a geographical location but to the depths of our consciousness, where we confront our shadows and choose, day after day, to act with kindness and purpose. What if the purest form of spiritual practice is simply this: to live each day with such awareness and empathy that we leave every person and place better than we found them? To cultivate a heart so clear that no wily thought finds root there, to build relationships so genuine that they become temples of mutual growth? Perhaps this daily practice of goodness is the true holy dip our souls need. None of this is to diminish the power of faith or the beauty of religious tradition. The Mahakumbh remains a remarkable proof of human spirituality, a mirror reflecting our deepest yearnings

for connection with the divine. But perhaps its greatest lesson lies not in the promise of instant release but in showing us how collective faith can move millions to action. Imagine if this same power could be channelled into sustained ethical living, into creating communities of care and consciousness.

As the sun sets over the Mahakumbh, casting long shadows over the devoted masses, I am reminded that faith, like the Ganges itself, must flow between the banks of reason and compassion. When it overflows these boundaries, it risks becoming a force of destruction rather than salvation. The challenge before us is not to abandon faith but to evolve it — to transform it from a series of external rituals into an internal compass that guides us toward genuine goodness. The true miracle, perhaps, is not in the holy dip but in the daily choice to live with such purity that our very existence becomes a prayer, our actions a continuous act of worship. (The author is a Dubai-based columnist and children's writing coach. Views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

True forgiveness requires honesty, self-awareness, and the willingness to release resentment



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

People across the globe, from all cultures and traditions, embrace love and forgiveness in daily life. These values are universally viewed as central to the fabric of humanity. But is it as easy to forgive as it sounds to be? Forgiveness, like so many other things in life, is easier said than done. We all seek forgiveness when we do something wrong right? But our stance is quite different when someone seeks forgiveness from us. We find it hard to let go of what's happened to us. The ability to forgive others depends on how honest we are with ourselves. We must remember that forgiveness can only occur because we have been given the gift of the ability to make choices. Hence, if we want to forgive someone, no one can stop us, no matter how poorly they may act, because ultimately, it's our choice to forgive or not to forgive. This ability to forgive is a manifestation of the personal control we have over our lives. Hence each one of us should ask this question to ourselves: Have we journeyed through life pure, perfect, and clean, with never a wrong thought, a wrong word, or action? If we look at ourselves honestly, then how can we not forgive another? Most of us regret many



things that we have said or done in the past. It's a fact that we all have acted wrongly, either because of not knowing what is right, or out of fear or misunderstanding. However, with time and knowledge, we realize what is right and begin to make amends. Just by having this desire to change ourselves, we begin the process of forgiving ourselves, which in turn helps us to forgive others. If this process is to progress, we have to forgive others. We just cannot condemn others and excuse ourselves. This is cheating, and the universally applicable Law of Karma will not allow it. Remember! If we do not learn to forgive, resentment will poison us, and we will end up carrying a double burden: both the resentful thoughts of others' injustice and the hidden reality of our injustice. The power to forgive comes from compassion, which means we should compassionately and peacefully move forward with what is good, towards what is better. Forgiveness dissolves the compulsive need to prove ourselves right. It removes the indignation we feel at imagined injustice. It melts the hardness of another's heart. Our forgiveness, at first, may puzzle them. To forgive and forget is love in action. But we must first learn to forgive ourselves, as well as others, otherwise, the process of releasing this burden neither begins nor progresses.

Forgiving ourselves means letting go of the past. But it also means not making the same mistakes again and again; not inventing convenient ways to excuse ourselves. Remember! A person who has hardened his own heart against others cannot feel even God's forgiveness and compassion. Hence, if we want to be forgiven, then we must be willing to forgive first because the one who forgives first not only proves his justice but especially proves his love. That is why it is said that 'A life well lived is your best revenge.' So, instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain the power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty, and kindness around you. This will make the world a better place to live in.

A tribute to my Guru Dr Nalini Didi

With profound grief, I share that Rajyogini Brahmakumari Dr Nalini Didi, a Senior Functionary of the Brahma Kumaris and my revered teacher, passed away in Mumbai on February 9, 2025. A renowned columnist and spiritual mentor, she dedicated 66 years to the service of humanity, spreading spiritual wisdom to millions. Her journey began at 16 after a transformative lecture by Prajapita Brahma, inspiring her lifelong mission of world transformation through Rajyoga education. A gifted speaker, writer and artist, she tirelessly promoted social harmony and earned numerous accolades, including an honorary D.Litt. Her guidance profoundly shaped my spiritual path.

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

Lord Dannatt's Chagos proposal: A testament to imperial arrogance



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

In a stunning display of imperial indifference, a former British Army chief has urged Keir Starmer to abandon plans to return the Chagos Islands to Mauritius and instead hand them over to the US



The call made by Lord Dannatt, former British Army chief, as reported by The Independent (UK), urging Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to abandon plans to cede control of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius and instead consider handing the islands to the United States under the leadership of Donald Trump, is a moment of brutal clarity in the ongoing saga of colonial legacy, imperial arrogance and military hegemony. It is, perhaps, the most unambiguous and openly cynical articulation of an attitude that has plagued British foreign policy for decades: indifference to justice when the imperial or military agenda is at stake. In this shocking proposal, Lord Dannatt not only trivialises the long-standing historical injustice suffered by the Chagossian people but also reveals a chilling truth about the global order — one in which the rights of dispossessed peoples are inconsequential when the might of military power is involved.

The Chagos Islands, particularly Diego Garcia, remain a crucial outpost for both British and American military operations in the Indian Ocean, a key region for global military and economic dominance. The brutal truth is that the displacement of the Chagossians, the abduction of their homes, their lands, and their futures, was merely a strategic calculation by the British government, sanctioned and enabled by the United States.

These islands have been stripped of their rightful inhabitants, and instead of facing international condemnation, they remain a linchpin in the projection of military power. Lord Dannatt's proposal that the UK should relinquish control of the islands not to Mauritius, but directly to the US, serves as a blunt reminder that this military realpolitik is not just a policy but an ideology — one that continues to shape decisions about sovereignty, justice and human lives in ways that are both morally



THE TRUTH IS THIS: THE CHAGOS ISLANDS ARE NOT JUST A STRETCH OF LAND — THEY SYMBOLISE EVERYTHING THAT IS CORRUPT IN THE GLOBAL ORDER. A SYSTEM WHERE POWER ECLIPSES JUSTICE, AND HUMAN LIVES ARE SACRIFICED FOR THE SAKE OF GEOPOLITICAL DOMINANCE

bankrupt and legally indefensible. The truth is that the Chagossians were forcibly displaced, their lives uprooted, their families scattered across the world, and their right to return systematically denied. These are not mere footnotes in a distant history; this is an ongoing systematic injustice that has been buried beneath the murky layers of military necessity and imperial prerogative.

The United Nations and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) have ruled unequivocally that the separation of the Chagos Islands from Mauritius was illegal, that the Chagossians' forced expulsion violated fundamental human rights and that their right to return to their homeland must be respected. These rulings are binding principles of international law, upheld by the court of global conscience. Yet the British government, in collusion with the United States, has continued to flout these legal rulings, with a callousness that is matched only by the complicity of global institutions that have failed to hold them to account.

The UK and its allies continue to demonstrate a dissonance between the legal obligation to return the islands to Mauritius and the military significance of Diego Garcia. The £18 billion (approximately \$22.52 billion USD) leaseback deal designed to ensure that the UK retains control of the islands is a financial burden, a sum that could instead be better spent on bolstering Britain's own defence capacity. But here's the crux: the Chagos Islands, specifically Diego Garcia, are not just a military base. They are a symbol of the power dynamics that have defined the post-war world order — a world where military interests, not

human dignity or sovereignty, govern the actions of nations. It is worth noting that Lord Dannatt's rhetoric is not an anomaly.

He is merely the latest in a long line of British military and political figures who have justified colonial dispossession in the name of military expediency. Diego Garcia, a military outpost of unparalleled strategic importance, is where American bombers take off for strikes in the West Asia, where naval forces project power across the Indian Ocean, and where the surveillance apparatus of the global superpowers monitors and controls vast swathes of the world. In short, Diego Garcia is a symbol of global military dominance — a fortress built upon the foundation of historical dispossession, suffering, and legal nullification. The fact that the Chagossians' right to return to their homeland is still not respected is a contemptuous affront to international law. The UK government's refusal to comply with ICJ rulings, while continuing to enjoy a special relationship with the US, sends a clear message to the world: law and justice are subordinate to power and strategy.

The international legal community can issue as many judgments as it likes, but it is all for naught when the major powers choose to ignore or bypass those rulings in favour of military interests. The declassified documents from the 1960s and 1970s reveal the collusion between the US and the UK to create a military enclave on Diego Garcia, with the forcible removal of the Chagossians merely an administrative detail to be swept under the carpet. In those documents, we see the foundations of a dirty deal that placed

geopolitical strategy above the basic human rights of a people. It is colonialism dressed as military necessity, and those who challenge this narrative are dismissed as idealists, outliers, or irrelevant. This is not just a matter of the Chagossians' rights; it is a fundamental crisis of the global legal and moral order.

It is a scandal that has gone largely ignored, an injustice that has been swept under the rug of strategic necessity, and an entire people's history erased in the name of military convenience. How can anyone with even a hint of conscience ignore these flagrant breaches of international law, perpetrated by those who claim to champion human rights while posing as defenders of democracy? Our complicity, fuelled by willful indifference, contributes to the erosion of international law and the degradation of fundamental human dignity.

The truth is this: the Chagos Islands are not just a stretch of land — they symbolise everything that is corrupt in the global order. A system where power eclipses justice, and human lives are sacrificed for the sake of geopolitical dominance. The silence that surrounds this injustice is as damning as the apathy that sustains it.

The Chagossians have been denied their homeland for over half a century. It is high time that the world demands the return of their land, not just out of legal obligation, but out of a moral imperative to right the wrongs of the past and give these forgotten people the future they have been denied for so long.

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

Empowering India's workforce: The crucial role of upskilling and inclusive hiring

With evolving industry demands and a rising need for skilled labour, organisations must bridge skill gaps and create sustainable employment opportunities

In today's rapidly changing job market, skill development and inclusive hiring are more critical than ever, particularly for the blue-collar workforce. As industries evolve and the demand for skilled labour increases, organisations must focus on bridging skill gaps and creating pathways to meaningful employment. By prioritising upskilling and inclusive hiring practices, companies can empower individuals, enhance service quality, and contribute to the overall growth of the economy.

Investing in Skill Development Continuous learning is essential for the blue-collar workforce, where technological advancements and changing industry standards require a skilled and adaptable labour



DHIRAJ SINGH

pool. According to a report by the Global Labor Market Conference (GLMC), 55 per cent of professionals fear their skills may become partially or fully obsolete within the next five years, prompting many to consider reskilling. Organisations are increasingly offering a variety of skill

development programmes tailored specifically for their blue-collar employees. These programs encompass technical training, crisis management, digital security and leadership development, equipping workers with the expertise necessary for career advancement. In recent years, many companies have implemented structured upskilling initiatives that have led to significant improvements in service quality, efficiency and employee satisfaction. **Empowering the Grassroots Workforce** Blue-collar workers, who make up over 80 per cent of India's non-agricultural workforce, are essential to the country's economic growth across various sectors. According to McKinsey and Company, by 2030, 70 per cent of the 90 mil-

lion new jobs expected in India will be blue-collar positions. These roles account for about 80 per cent of jobs in both the organised and unorganised sectors, acting as the primary engine of the economy. Their fulfilment is crucial for the growth of key sectors such as manufacturing and logistics. Recognising the unique challenges faced by grassroots workers, many organisations have developed targeted skilling initiatives that address the specific needs of this demographic. These programs are designed to empower individuals at the community level, providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in their roles. Through hands-on training and mentorship, companies are fostering a cul-

ture of skill enhancement that encourages employees to take ownership of their career paths. **Success Stories:** Behind every blue-collar worker is a story of ambition and determination. Many individuals have experienced transformative career journeys through upskilling initiatives. For instance, frontline workers have advanced to supervisory

roles after completing leadership training, while others have gained expertise in emerging technologies, securing higher-paying positions. However, a report by WorkIndia reveals that more than 40 per cent of blue-collar workers are employed but actively seeking new job opportunities. The drive for better salaries, career growth, and personal motivations are leading factors. Concerns over layoffs and financial instability also prompt job searches. **Expanding Opportunities: Inclusive Hiring Practices** Organisations are not merely filling positions; they are creating futures. With a commitment to inclusive hiring, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities where job opportunities can be limited, companies are



working to ensure that more individuals, regardless of gender or background, can build stable and rewarding careers. With an increasing focus on safety and a surge in residential and commercial complexes, the private security industry has become one of the biggest generators of jobs. **Women in the Workforce: Breaking Barriers** Empowering women in the workforce is a crucial aspect of inclusive hiring. More women are stepping into roles as individual contributors, frontline managers, and even executive leadership positions, demonstrating that gender is no barrier to success. These initiatives foster a workplace culture where women can not only succeed but thrive.

The Road Ahead: Looking ahead, organisations are set to expand their upskilling programs to cater to India's growing middle class and evolving job market needs. By integrating technology-driven training and fostering a culture of continuous learning, companies aim to set new standards in workforce development. With strategic hiring approaches and robust skill enhancement initiatives, organisations are not just providing jobs; they are building careers and transforming lives. Investing in upskilling and creating employment opportunities at the grassroots level is not just a matter of social responsibility; it is also a key economic imperative. (The writer is CEO SIS Ltd; views are personal)

Punjab CM opposes US deportee flights, government defends move amid row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann taking exception to US flights carrying Indian deportees landing in Amritsar, government sources Wednesday defended the move, saying the state makes up for the biggest share of these illegal immigrants. Sharing figures of the three flights that have arrived in India since February five, they said Punjab residents total 126 of the 333 people deported in US military aircraft, followed by 110 from neighbouring Haryana and 74 from Gujarat. Eight of them were from Uttar Pradesh, five from Maharashtra, two each from Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Rajasthan and Goa, and one each from Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand. Each of the three flights on February 5, 15 and 16 carried over 100 Indians and 333 of them have been deported so far, they added. The total includes 262 men, 42 women and 29 minors, the sources added. As many as 23 flights carrying Indian deportees have arrived in the country since May 2020 and all of them landed in Amritsar, they said. Since Donald Trump's inauguration as US President, whose



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

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campaign promises included a crackdown on illegal immigrants, three military aircraft have arrived in India carrying the deportees. Opposition parties protested the treatment meted out to the deportees, including them being shackled, and asked the Indian government to take up the issue with the US. After the first flight landed on February 5, Mann accused the Centre of trying to defame Punjab and said a holy city like Amritsar should not be made a "deport centre". This flight had 30 deportees from Punjab and 33

each from Haryana and Gujarat. He kept up his attack and said on Tuesday that if another US plane carrying deportees arrives in India, it may not land in the state following strong objections raised by him. The second flight had 65 deportees from Punjab, 33 from Haryana and eight from Gujarat. The corresponding numbers for the third flight were 31, 44 and 33. Following the opposition's protest, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told Parliament on February 6 that the government was engaging with the US to ensure that deported Indians

are not mistreated. The minister, however, added that the process of deportation is not a new one, and the standard operating procedure for deportation by aircraft provides for the use of restraints. Women and children were not restrained, he added. Government sources said the rules of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency tasked with such deportations, stipulate that the "deportees transported by ICE aircraft" will be fully restrained by the use of handcuffs, waist chains and leg irons.

Kharge pulls up Congress socks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after a major organisational rejig in the party, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday stressed that the top workers will be held accountable for future election results in States under their charge and asking them to be wary of ideologically weak turncoats. Addressing general secretaries and in-charges, including those appointed last week, at a meeting held at the party's new headquarters at Indira Bhawan, Kharge emphasised the importance of promoting those people who are committed to the ideology of the Congress and stand with us like a rock even in adverse circumstances. Kharge also hinted at some more changes in the organisation, saying some changes have already taken place and some more are in the offing. "I want to talk to you about the most important thing of accountability. You all will be held accountable for revamping the organisations in states and for all future election results," he told the office-bearers. The party recently brought in new office bearers in the revamped organisation. Among those who attended the meeting



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge in the Lok Sabha arrives for a meeting of party's general secretaries and state in-charges, in New Delhi

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were former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, senior leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, KC Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh, and all general secretaries and in-charges in various states. At the meeting, Kharge also flagged the issue of alleged "voter list manipulation" and claimed that it is happening on a large scale in elections. He noted that Rahul Gandhi also raised a question about this in the Lok Sabha. "All of you will realise that these days the names of our supporters are deleted from the voters list. Or the name is removed and added to the adjacent booth. New names are added by the BJP just before the election. This rigging has to be stopped at all

costs," the Congress chief asserted. Kharge pointed out that earlier the Chief Justice was also included in the selection committee of Chief Election Commission (CEC) by the order of the Supreme Court but the CJJI was removed from the panel by the Modi government. "The government does not even trust the impartiality of the Chief Justice of the country. This matter was to be heard in the Supreme Court, but the government announced the new CEC before that. Rahul Ji also said that what is the use of such a selection committee, where you are using Leader of Opposition only for certification?" he said.

External Affairs minister to visit South Africa for G20 meeting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will be on a two-day visit to South Africa beginning February 20 to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) announced on Wednesday. The minister is expected to hold a few bilateral meetings on the margins of the meet. South Africa is currently the chair of the influential grouping. "External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar will be visiting Johannesburg, South Africa on 20 and 21 February 2025 to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) at the invitation of the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Ronald Lamola," MEA said in a statement. The minister's participation in the G20 FMM will "strengthen" India's engagement with G20 countries and "bolster the voice of the Global South" in this important forum, it said.

India raises commitment to rural transformation in Africa-Asia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India is committed to rural transformation in member nations of the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO) and will increase its technical contribution to the forum, Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said here on Wednesday. He was speaking at the inauguration of the 77th session of the executive committee of the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO). "India gives the highest yearly membership contribution to AARDO, which is around USD 1,55,300, and the Indian government has been providing organisation, technical, and financial support to AARDO from time to time," he said. "India will keep playing its role in rural transformation in



Shivraj Singh Chouhan addresses inaugural Session of 77th Session of Executive Committee of African Asian Rural Development, in New Delhi

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member nations. India will also continue its technical support through 2025-27. The technical contribution will be increased to USD 2,50,000 per year from USD 2,00,000," he said. Chouhan also said capacity building will remain a priority. "Education, technology and inclusive development are the

foundation stones on which we will build the future for the rural population of Asia and Africa," he said. While talking about the Rural Development Ministry's schemes and initiatives, he said the participating nations will share their success stories, and learn from each other's experience.

Delhi HC asks Home Ministry to explain delay in Rahul Gandhi's citizenship case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Union Home Ministry why it has not responded to the petition of BJP leader Subramanian Swamy regarding the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's British citizenship issue, where he is facing show cause notice from the Ministry. Home Ministry in April 2019, issued show cause notice to Rahul Gandhi on Subramanian Swamy's complaint based on the documents filed by Rahul in British company register, declaring himself as British citizen between 2002 to 2009. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma, who was representing the Central Government, to obtain



Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha arrives for a meeting of party's general secretaries and state in-charges, in New Delhi

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instructions regarding the matter. "The prayer is not to make decision on the substantive issues of the pending matter

in either of the matters pending here or in Allahabad. He is only seeking directions on his representations. Seek instructions then

regarding stage of the proceeding regarding the letter," the Court told ASG Sharma. This was after Swamy told the Court that the Home Ministry had issued a show cause notice to Rahul in 2019 asking him to explain his British citizenship. But there was no reply on the part of Rahul Gandhi to the same and no action was taken by the government too after that. "The Government of India, on my letter to the Home Ministry, wrote a show cause notice to Gandhi to explain the data brought on record to show that he is also a British citizen. Under Indian Law, no Indian can have citizenship of any other country. This was never replied, no reminders sent, no action taken by the Government. The Government must complete its responsibility," Swamy contended. He was assisted by Advocate Satya Sabharwal.

The High Court posted the case for further hearing on March 26 while asking the ASG to obtain instructions on the status of the proceedings with respect to Swamy's representation. "List on March 26 to enable ASG complete their instructions, specially keeping in view the document enclosed as Annexure P2 in the petition, which is a 2019 letter issued by MHA," the Court said, directing MHA to reply in three weeks. In 2015, Subramanian Swamy brought documents of British company Registry showing Rahul Gandhi's statements, declaring himself as British Citizen. The documents show that Rahul floated a company named as BackOps Ltd in London between 2002 to 2009. The documents also showed that Rahul was a resident in London during this period, though he was Member of Parliament from 2004.

Gyanesh Kumar takes over as 26th CEC, Vivek Joshi as Election Commissioner

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday took over as the 26th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) while Vivek Joshi assumed charge as an Election Commissioner. An Election Commissioner since March 2024, Kumar was elevated as the CEC on Monday. Gyanesh Kumar replaced Rajiv Kumar, who demitted office on Tuesday, as head of the poll panel. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu is the other election commissioner. Joshi, a former Haryana cadre IAS officer, was appointed as an Election Commissioner on Monday. In his message to voters after assuming charge, Kumar said,



New Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar is greeted by Election Commissioner Vivek Joshi

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"First step for nation building is voting. Therefore, every citizen of India who has completed 18 years of age should become an elector and should always vote." The CEC asserted that the "Election Commission was, is and will

always be with the voters". A mechanical engineer from IIT-Roorkee who has served as the chief secretary of Haryana, Vivek Joshi on Wednesday assumed charge as an election commissioner. At 58, Joshi is one

of the youngest members to be a part of the poll panel. According to the law governing the appointment of CEC and ECs, the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners will hold office for a term of six years from the date on which they assume office or till they attain the age of 65 years, "whichever is earlier". Born on May 21, 1966, Joshi will turn 65 in May 2031, but as per the law, his term in the poll panel will end on February 18 of that year. While CEC Gyanesh Kumar will demit office on January 26, 2029, the other election commissioner, Sukhbir Singh Sandhu will retire in July 2028. Joshi could possibly supervise the conduct of the Lok Sabha elections in 2029 as the next CEC.

Congress targets BJP in Gurugram civic polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Encouraged by the better performance in the recently held Lok Sabha and Assembly elections by the Congress party, the party has prepared many local issues to surround the ruling BJP government in the civic elections. The party leaders will uplift issues of waterlogging, dirt, the construction of the Sheela Mata temple, and road construction in Gurugram. Since the announcement of civic elections in early February, the party has been engaged in its preparations on a war footing. Following an announcement of the Municipal Elections, the congress formed various committees by holding meetings at various levels, and all the committees were given their responsibilities.

Senior leaders of the party were included in the campaign and manifesto committee. Information about the issues related to the civic elections was also taken from all the senior leaders of the district. It was decided that the party would raise the issues of waterlogging, dirt, road construction and other city issues loudly during the campaign. Party workers will go door-to-door and tell about the failures of the ruling BJP government and the schemes of the Congress. The Congress leader said that in this election, the Congress will raise the issues of waterlogging, dirt, construction of the civil hospital, construction of Sheela Mata temple, road construction, traffic jams and parking problems in Gurugram.

India, Malaysia to enhance defence cooperation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia on Wednesday reviewed the entire gamut of their bilateral defence ties and identified steps to further enhance cooperation in emerging areas such as cyber security and AI during talks between Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh Secretary General of Ministry of Defence, Malaysia Lokman Hakim Bin Ali, defence ministry said here. Giving details, officials said the 13th meeting of Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM) took place in Kuala Lumpur. Both sides expressed happiness at the growing bilateral defence cooperation with regular engagements between the two Armed Forces in recent years. The two sides held wide-ranging discussions on effective and practical initiatives to further expand bilateral defence engagements and regional and global issues. They identified ways to deepen existing collaboration, particularly in the defence industry, maritime security, and multilateral engagements. They agreed to form a joint focus group to address non-traditional maritime security threats. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the new initiatives under the defence pillar of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Malaysian counterpart Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim during the latter's visit to India in August 2024. India and Malaysia also exchanged the finalised Terms of Reference (ToR) on the establishment of Strategic

Affairs Working Group. This forum will act as a consultative mechanism intermediate between the MIDCOM and the two sub-committees to progress all aspects of bilateral defence cooperation. Both sides also exchanged the finalised ToR on the establishment of Su-30 forum as an outcome of MIDCOM. Su-30 Forum will enable closer cooperation between the two Air Forces in exchanging expertise and best practices in Su-30 maintenance. The Defence Secretary highlighted the capability of the Indian defence industry, particularly its potential to collaborate with the Malaysian companies and the Armed Forces in their capability enhancement and modernisation. He congratulated Malaysia on assuming the chairmanship of ASEAN and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus and wished MoD, Malaysia the best for conduct of ADMM Plus and ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting meetings this year. India supports ASEAN centrality and unity, which is a crucial element of India's Indo-Pacific Vision. The Defence Secretary reiterated India's support to Malaysia's endeavours as ASEAN chair in promoting a stronger, unified, and prosperous ASEAN that plays a central role in shaping the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region. India considers Malaysia as an important partner in the Indo-Pacific as Malaysia lies at the confluence of three key foreign policy visions i.e. Act East Policy, SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

CVC issues new procedure for corruption complaints

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has issued a new procedure for handling corruption complaints referred to it for conducting preliminary inquiry by the Lokpal, an official order said. The Lokpal directs the chief vigilance officers (CVOs) - who act as a distant arm of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) - to conduct preliminary inquiry and submit reports in respect of certain complaints received by it. "An instance has been noted by the Lokpal where the preliminary inquiry entrusted by it specifically to a CVO was submitted to the Lokpal under the signature of an authority other

than the CVO. "The CVOs are advised that any preliminary inquiry directed by the Lokpal should be submitted to it by the respective CVO concerned under his signature," the order issued on Tuesday by the probity watchdog said. The Lokpal has the mandate to inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries. As per the provisions contained under Section 20 (1) (b) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, complaints in respect of public servants belonging to Group A, B, C or D are referred by the Lokpal to the CVC for preliminary inquiry. The CVC forwards such references to the CVOs concerned for preliminary inquiry and report.

NHRC stresses balance between digital innovation and human rights

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) chairperson Justice (retired) V Ramasubramanian emphasised that safeguarding "privacy as a human right" in the digital world is necessary, even as he pointed out that there is a "significant decline" in value systems and one must bear its consequences. The NHRC chief's remarks came during an open house discussion on "Ensuring privacy and human rights in the digital era: A focus on corporate digital responsibility" held at its premises, with some participants joining virtually, according to an NHRC statement on Wednesday.

Some of the important suggestions that emanated from the discussion include simplifying user agreements and policy frameworks to enhance consumer understanding and control over personal data; establishing "clear accountability" structures for data breaches, especially for research institutions and third-party data processors; and strengthening user consent frameworks for greater transparency and informed decision-making. Having "explicit penal provisions for non-compliance"; need for bilateral agreements to address cross-border security and data-sharing concerns; addressing the challenges arising from strict data localisation mandates; and having clear guidelines on obtaining verifiable parental

consent for minors, were also suggested. Addressing the participants, the NHRC chairperson "emphasised that safeguarding privacy as a human right in the digital world is necessary", the statement said. The technological advancements should "align with fundamental human rights and privacy protection". The responsibility must begin with the individual user, it said. Justice Ramasubramanian highlighted that "maintaining digital hygiene is crucial". He also pointed out the "significant decline in value systems, cautioning that one must bear the consequences of this shift", it said. The NHRC chairperson reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to fostering inclusive

discussions on digital rights and corporate accountability for developing a robust regulatory framework that balances innovation, security, and individual privacy. The intensity of the problem that arises due to misuse of data and data breaches were extensively discussed during the meeting. Further, several key provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 were also discussed, it said. Many participants raised concerns over the "extensive control exerted by global technology companies on user data, which complicates regulatory enforcement". Law enforcement agencies often face challenges in accessing critical data due to data storage in offshore centres, the statement said.

PM Modi gives tributes to Indian bravehearts across the globe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A staunch proponent of giving due respect to soldiers, especially those whose sacrifices may have been forgotten over the years since they lay down their lives far away from the motherland, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it a point to visit the memorials in his foreign visits. During his recent visit to France in February 2025, the Prime Minister visited the Mazargues War Cemetery in Marseille. The Cemetery contains a memorial that honors the memory of Indian soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending foreign lands during World War. As a tribute to their valor and sacrifice, PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron laid a wreath at the

cemetery, reaffirming the deep historical ties between India and France. In August 2024, PM laid a wreath and paid tribute at the Monument to the Battle of Monte Cassino in Warsaw, Poland. This Monument commemorates the sacrifice and valor of soldiers from Poland, India and other countries who fought alongside each other in the famous Battle of Monte Cassino in Italy during the second World War. In June 2023, PM visited the Heliopolis Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery in Cairo during his State Visit to Egypt. He paid homage to over 4300 valiant Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in Egypt and Aden during the 1st World War. In October 2018, PM spoke about the contribution of Indian soldiers in the First World War. "We had no direct

connection with that war. Despite this, our soldiers fought bravely and played a very big role and made the supreme sacrifice. Our soldiers have displayed great valour in difficult areas and adverse conditions," Modi had remarked. In September 2018, during his Mann Ki Baat address, PM spoke about the centenary of the Battle of Haifa in Israel and paid tributes to our brave soldiers of Mysore, Hyderabad & Jodhpur Lancers who had freed Haifa from the clutches of oppressors during the First World War. In July 2017, PM visited the Indian War Cemetery in Haifa, Israel and paid respect to the soldiers. In November 2015, PM Modi paid homage at the INA Memorial Marker in Singapore and became the first Indian PM to do so. In

April 2015, PM Modi paid homage to Indian Soldiers at World War I Memorial in Neuve-Chapelle in France. He became the first Indian Prime Minister to do so. During his visit to Australia in November 2014, PM Modi paid homage to the martyrs at the Australian War Memorial, in Canberra. At the memorial, he presented the Man Singh Trophy, a prized possession of Sikh regiment battalions, to his Australian counterpart Tony Abbott. The trophy originally in silver was presented to the Officers' Mess 14 (King George's own) Sikhs in 1919. The officers of the battalion, who served in the unit during the First World War in Egypt, Gallipoli, Sinai and Mesopotamia from October 1914 to May 1917, had made it in commemoration of the gallant actions of their soldiers during the First World War.

PM to launch MP's industrial policies at GIS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav chaired a meeting of the top committee on Tuesday for well-organized and successful conduct of the Global Investors Summit (GIS) 2025, which will be held on February 24-25 at the Indira Gandhi National Human Museum Complex in Bhopal. Yadav said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the two-day GIS on February 24 at around 10 AM and will also launch Madhya Pradesh's latest industrial policies. He further mentioned that the Prime Minister will also inspect the MP Experience Zone, which will be established at the GIS venue. This zone will feature an immersive digital walkthrough showcasing Madhya Pradesh's heritage, its progress to date, and future aspirations in a coordinated presentation. CM Yadav directed officials to work in close coordination

with each other to make the GIS grand, well-organized, and result-driven. CM Yadav emphasized that the Global Investors Summit is being organized to strengthen Madhya Pradesh's economy and attract both domestic and foreign investors. To make the event historic, he directed comprehensive preparations. He further instructed officials to ensure that there is no mismanagement in the arrangements. The Chief Minister emphasized the importance of effectively presenting the state's investor-friendly industrial policies, the vast infrastructure available for industries in Madhya Pradesh, and the investment opportunities to attract investors. He said that the state must provide all necessary assistance and facilities to make Madhya Pradesh an "industry-friendly" state. CM Yadav instructed officials to treat all the investors attending GIS as special guests and to welcome them according to traditional

Indian hospitality. He urged that, to make these two days memorable, the culture of Madhya Pradesh, along with local arts, cuisine, and hospitality, should be specially showcased to the investors. He also directed the beautification of Bhopal's lakes and the entire city to enhance its charm. He instructed the authorities to provide boating and e-battery-operated boat rides at the large lake so that the investors and participants can enjoy Bhopal's unique natural beauty. The Chief Minister stressed that GIS would give a new direction to industrial development in the state and increase job opportunities. He also directed the Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Shri Vishwas Sarang to organize water sports at Bhopal's large and small lakes, making the experience unique for both investors and participants. He added that the involvement and cooperation of Bhopal's citizens will be essential for the success of the GIS.

Three held for leaking information to Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Three men were arrested for leaking sensitive information to Pakistan-based intelligence operatives, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said on Wednesday. In a statement, the NIA said the three men were sharing sensitive information about Indian defence establishments at Karwar Naval Base and Kochi Naval Base. While Vethan Laxman Tandel and Akshay Ravi Naik were picked up from Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka, Abhilash P A was arrested from Kochi in Kerala on Tuesday. All three persons, arrested with the assistance of local police, were allegedly found to have been in contact with Pakistan Intelligence Operatives (PIOs) through social media. As per NIA investigations, they were sharing sensitive information about Indian defence establishments at Karwar Naval Base and Kochi Naval Base and were receiving money from PIOs in exchange for the information. A total of eight people have been arrested so far in the case. The NIA has so far chargesheeted five persons, including two absconding Pakistani operatives, in the case that was originally registered by the Counter Intelligence Cell, Andhra Pradesh in January 2021. The anti-terror agency took over the case in June 2023. NIA investigations have revealed that Pakistan national Meer Balaj Khan and one Akash Solanki -- who has been arrested -- were involved in the espionage racket related to leaking of sensitive vital information about the Indian Navy as part of an "anti-India conspiracy". Another absconding PIO, Alven, and two others -- Manmohan Surendra Panda and Amaan Salim Shaikh -- have also been chargesheeted by the agency. The NIA will continue its probe in the case to unravel the espionage conspiracy by Pakistan-based operatives and other anti-national elements, the statement said.

BJP knocks Governor's door as Mamata threatens Adhikari

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Wednesday accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of trying to threaten him into silence, warning no amount of threats would cow him down. This even as his party BJP wrote a complaint to State Governor against Banerjee seeking action. Adhikari who earlier said that he was going to write a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah for trying to jeopardise his security said quoting Banerjee on how she was trying to incite members of a particular community against him. Adhikari wrote Adhikari on the social media about a "veiled threat" that the Chief Minister had issued against him during her speech inside the State Assembly on Tuesday. "The veiled threat that you made yesterday on the floor of the

Assembly, is nothing but a sinister conspiracy to threaten my safety and security," adding though Banerjee would not name anyone that butt of her rant was easily discernible. Adhikari also wrote that the Chief Minister had a wrong conception that she could silence him by holding out such threats. "If you think that you can scare me by saying that, you are wrong," he later said adding how Banerjee had desecrated the State Assembly on a number of occasions. "Everyone remembers how you vandalised and ransacked the Assembly with your party men before coming to power. This was another occasion that you desecrated the historic House by making such remarks against the Opposition Leader," he said. Adhikari's statement was coupled with a letter and an 18-minute video clipping of Banerjee's Assembly speech being sent to State Governor C.V. Ananda Bose for his action. The complaint in reference to the video clipping sent by State BJP leader and advocate Kaustav Bagchi read, "It is clearly evident that the Chief Minister is trying to intimidate the Leader of Opposition. In the light of the aforesaid you are requested to call for the records pursuant to today's speech of Mamata Banerjee, and also call for an explanation pursuant to the nature and intent of the speech delivered by her." Earlier while delivering her speech inside the Assembly on Tuesday Banerjee had, besides raising issue of stam-

pede deaths during the Maha Kumbh, roundly attacked Adhikari for using "slanderous words" against a particular religion. Referring to an alleged remark made by Adhikari that the Trinamool Congress Government was encouraging terrorist activities in Bengal and that she could be hand in gloves with the Bangladeshi fundamentalists Banerjee warned that BJP leader that he will not be able to hold on to himself if the people against whom he was using foul languages rose up in revolt. "You have been using bad and slanderous words and spreading propaganda regarding the members of a religion, will be able to withstand the impact if they hit the streets and revolt one day," Banerjee during his speech said.

The Opposition was not inside the House during her speech as the entire battery of BJP MLAs had staged a walk-out protesting the suspension of Adhikari and four other MLAs for alleged misdemeanor, even as the BJP was demanding a debate on alleged disruption of Saraswati Pujas in many places early this month. Referring to how Banerjee's Government had filed 73 FIRs against him and how he had to move the High Court to obtain immunity from arrests and how he had to move the courts 74 times seeking permission for holding events," Adhikari said, "you can't scare me into silence. I will keep on fighting democratically till your corrupt, dynastic, appeasement politics regime comes to an end."

Assam CM denies 'witch hunt'

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said he is not the "witch hunt" over the controversy surrounding Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's British wife Elizabeth Colburn's alleged links with the ISI. Reacting to a post on X by another Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi, Sarma on Tuesday said he is driven by national security, which cannot be compromised. "You will be shocked in the coming months. Let me assure you, with all the responsibility vested in me, this is not a witch hunt. I, too, have served under Sri Tarun Gogoi, and I fully understand the gravity of such actions," the CM said. Sarma and the BJP have been attacking Gaurav Gogoi, the Deputy Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha, over Colburn's alleged connection with Pakistan's spy agency.

Lokayukta police fail to prove MUDA scam

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Lokayukta police probing the MUDA site allotment case on Wednesday said that the charges against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathi could not be proved for want of evidence. The probing officers said they have submitted the final report to the High Court. "Since the above allegations against accused-1 to accused-4 in the case have not been proven due to lack of evidence, the final report is being submitted to the High Court," the Lokayukta police said in a letter to activist Snehamayi Krishna who is a complainant in the MUDA case. Besides Siddaramaiah and his wife, his brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and the land owner Devaraju are also the accused. The Lokayukta police said that further investigation will be conducted into the allegations of Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) providing



compensatory plots in the ratio of 50:50 from 2016 to 2024 and an additional final report will be submitted to the High Court under Section 173 (8) CrPC. In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50

ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout. Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. It is alleged that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres of land at survey number 464 of Kasare village, Kasaba hobli of Mysuru taluk. The Lokayukta as well as the ED are probing the matter simultaneously.

CBI arrests five rail officers in job bribery case

From page 1

They were collecting money from candidates appearing in the Railway Departmental examination by promising them selection, the agency spokesperson said in a statement. The CBI has alleged that Wasan had directed Tiwari to compile a list of at least 10 candidates willing to pay bribes for selection in the said examination. Tiwari contacted Sinha and Meena to get in touch with such candidates and collect bribes from them, it has alleged. The FIR alleged that Tiwari had contacted a jeweller in Vadodara to purchase around 400 grams of gold in lieu of cash without generating any invoice and he had gone to Anand where he met Meena and collected cash from him. "During the investigation, it is also revealed that a nursing superintendent in the Western Railway was intercepted and 650 grams of gold was found with him which had been obtained by him from the jeweller after payment of around Rs 57 lakh (approx.) and the said gold was to be delivered to accused Senior Divisional Personnel Officer (IRPS: 2018) of Western Railway, Vadodara," the statement said.

HC slams railways over ticket sales

From page 1

"His (petitioner) concern is not confined to the unfortunate incident. His concern is this situation would not have arisen if the Railways had complied with its rules. He is asking directions to Railways to implement its rules in future. I am understanding there should not be any opposition," Justice Upadhyay said. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Indian Railways, submitted that he was not taking an adversarial stand. Mehta further said Railways would go into the issues raised. The matter will be heard next on March 26.

UP cops capitalise on Delhi sleuths

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LALITPUR

In a dramatic showdown between two state police forces, a team of Delhi Police officers was detained by Uttar Pradesh Police in Lalitpur while attempting to arrest two constables in a ?1.5 crore fraud case. The incident, which unfolded on Tuesday, has raised serious questions about inter-state police coordination and protocol violations. According to officials, five Delhi Police personnel, dressed in casual attire and carrying weapons, arrived in a private vehicle to arrest three individuals, including two Lalitpur police constables-Vishwajeet and Sachin Awasthi-and a third accused, Bikki Raja. However, they did not have a written order or official permission from the UP Police. The team reportedly stormed

into the Lalitpur police station without prior notification, arrested the two constables from their government residences, and apprehended Bikki Raja from his house. As soon as Lalitpur police were informed of the arrests, they intercepted the Delhi team mid-way. A heated exchange followed, after which the UP police detained the Delhi cops, including Inspector Darshan Singh, for questioning. The Delhi team was allegedly held for an entire day before being released after tendering an apology, sources said. A senior UP Police official criticized the Delhi team for acting without jurisdictional approval. "They came to arrest our constables in a fraud case but did not follow any protocol. They did not inform us or seek proper permissions," the official said. Further complicating the case,

the UP police revealed that the tip-off to Delhi Police came from Ankit Jain, whose sister owns a company in which one of the accused's brother, Vishwajeet, is a partner. Allegations of a business dispute between the two families have now surfaced, and UP Police say they are investigating the financial angle. This rare confrontation between two law enforcement agencies has sparked concerns over inter-state policing procedures. The incident also highlights growing friction between state police forces over jurisdictional boundaries and procedural enforcement. "With both sides standing firm on their versions of events, further investigations into the fraud case, the arrests, and the circumstances leading to the standoff are expected in the coming days," a retired police officer said.

Six jump from second floor to escape fire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to escape a fire, six people jumped from the second floor of a house in Nangloi's Janata Market area, an official of the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said on Wednesday. The blaze, which broke out at 9:45 pm in domestic articles on the first and second floors, prompted a swift response from the firefighters, the DFS said in a statement. According to fire officials, the distress call was received at 9:45 pm from Y-655, Mobile Market, Janata Market, under Jwala Puri jurisdiction, it read. Three fire tenders were rushed to the scene and the fire was brought under control by 11 pm, it further stated. However, six residents trapped on the second floor had no option but to jump to save their lives before the firefighters arrived. The injured were identified as

Pranjal (19), Preeti (40), Pankaj (40), Panav (18), Vaibhav (13) and Sweta (20), it further read. All were rushed to Pushpanjali Hospital for treatment. The incident took place on the night of February 17. A video of the incident went viral on social media, showing a massive fire engulfing the first floor of the building and people jumping from the balcony to escape. An eyewitness said the fire broke out around 9:30 pm when many noticed smoke billowing from the building. The police and fire brigade were immediately informed. As the flames spread rapidly, the members of two different families were trapped on the second floor, shouting for help. "Those who were trapped shouted that they would jump from the balcony. Many people standing nearby rushed to bring bedsheets

from their homes and six people jumped," the eyewitness recounted. According to an official from the Delhi Fire Services, six people had already jumped in a desperate bid to save their lives by the time their team arrived. "Our teams rushed them to Pushpanjali Hospital for treatment. They sustained injuries due to crash landings, but their condition was stated to be stable. We have informed the police, who are now investigating the matter," the official said. A police officer said that six people had jumped from the second floor due to the massive fire. "They are currently under treatment and we have launched an investigation into the incident. We are also checking different videos of the incident to know about the sequence of the events," the officer stated.

Rekha Gupta is Delhi Chief Minister

From page 1

Former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, who had defeated AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal from New Delhi seat, is set to become the Deputy Chief Minister, and Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta was appointed as speaker of the Delhi Assembly, BJP sources said. The LG has accepted her claim and invited Gupta to form the new government. By choosing her as the Delhi CM over other prominent faces, including giant-slayer Parvesh Verma, the BJP might be trying to score on multiple

fronts. By appointing Gupta as the Delhi Chief Minister, the BJP is trying to build on the legacy of women chief ministers, and showing AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal's stint as a contrast and aberration. Choosing Rekha Gupta as the CM also conforms to the BJP's priority for women in electoral politics and policies. Women in Delhi voted more than men in the 2025 Assembly elections. Women voter turnout stood at 60.92%, while men were at 60.21%. Gupta's appointment aligns with BJP's ongoing emphasis on increasing female representation in politics. By

selecting her as Delhi Chief Minister, the BJP has opted for a non-controversial politician, a woman leader, and a fresh face. She is known for the slogan "Kaam hi Pehchaan" (my work is my identity), which she uses in her campaigns to highlight her accomplishments. The BJP ended the decade-long rule of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) by winning 48 seats in the 70-member House. The Aam Aadmi Party managed to win only 22 seats and lost key seats including Arvind Kejriwal's New Delhi constituency and Manish Sisodia's Jangpura.

As BJP convened for the legislative party meeting, senior BJP leaders including Vijendra Gupta, Satish Upadhyay and Parvesh Verma have been called for a separate meeting with incharge Alka Gurjar, sources said. Her name was proposed by senior party leaders Parvesh Verma, Vijender Gupta and Satish Upadhyay. Large crowds of BJP workers have gathered outside the party office ahead of today's legislative party meeting, where the name of the Delhi CM will be finalised. The 50-year-old leader, won from Shalimar Bagh, defeating

AAP candidate Bandna Kumari by over 29,000 votes in the February 5 Assembly polls. She enjoys close ties with the RSS and is actively engaged with women-related matters. Gupta is also the national vice president of BJP Mahila Morcha and a member of the party's national executive. Gupta, a former president and general secretary of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) has served as the general secretary of the BJP Mahila Morcha in Delhi and as a member of the party's national executive committee. She started her political journey with the Akhil

Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) at Daulat Ram College, Delhi University, in 1992. In 1996-97, she became president of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU), where she actively raised student-related issues. Elected as a councillor from North Pitampura in 2007, she worked on enhancing public amenities such as libraries, parks, and swimming pools. She was re-elected in 2012 and later served as the mayor of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), further building her administrative experience. She was re-elected in 2012 and later served as the

mayor of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), further building her administrative experience. Gupta also launched the "Sumedha Yojana" to help economically weaker female students pursue higher education. As head of the Women Welfare and Child Development Committee, she worked on initiatives for women's empowerment. The BJP's last Chief Minister in Delhi was also a woman, Sushma Swaraj, who was in the top post for 52 days in 1998. She was succeeded by the Congress's Sheila Dikshit, who headed the Congress

government in the national capital for three full terms. Meanwhile, preparations are in full swing for a grand swearing-in ceremony of the new government at Rameela Ground on Thursday afternoon. Around 50,000 people, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his cabinet colleagues and the chief minister of NDA ruled states among other guests, will attend the ceremony. The ceremony is expected to begin at 11 am. Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena will administer the oath of office to Rekha Gupta and the cabinet at 12.35 pm.

Russia, US agree to work for ending Ukraine war in major diplomatic shift

AP ■ RIYADH

Russia and the US agreed on Tuesday to start working toward ending the war in Ukraine and improving their diplomatic and economic ties, the two countries' top diplomats said after talks that reflected an extraordinary about-face in US foreign policy under President Donald Trump.

In an interview with AP after the meeting, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the two sides agreed broadly to pursue three goals — restore staffing at their respective embassies in Washington and Moscow, create a high-level team to support Ukraine peace talks and explore closer relations and economic cooperation.

He stressed, however, that the talks — attended by his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and other senior Russian and US officials — marked the beginning of a conversation, and more work needs to be done. Lavrov echoed Rubio's remarks and told reporters that "the conversation was very useful".

Trump's national security advisor Michael Waltz and special Mideast envoy Steven Witkoff joined Rubio at the table, along with Lavrov and Russian President Vladimir Putin's foreign affairs advisor Yuri

Ushakov.

No Ukrainian officials were present at the meeting, which came as the beleaguered country is slowly but steadily losing ground against more numerous Russian troops in a grinding war that began nearly three years ago.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country would not accept any outcome from the talks since Kyiv didn't take part, and postponed his own trip to the kingdom scheduled for Wednesday.

European allies have also expressed concerns that they are being sidelined. Trump showed little patience for Ukraine's objections to being excluded from the talks. "Today I heard, 'Oh, well, we weren't invited.' Well, you been there for three years. You should have ended it three years ago," Trump said during a news conference at his Florida residence. "You should have never started it. You could have made a deal."

Ties between Russia and the US have fallen to their lowest level in decades in recent years — a rift that has been widening ever since Russia illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and only worsened after Moscow's full-scale invasion.

The US, along with European nations, imposed a raft of sanctions on Russia in an effort to damage its economy. And embassies in Washington and Moscow have been hit hard by expulsions of large numbers of diplomats, as well as other restrictions.

Rubio said on Tuesday that ending the war in Ukraine could "unlock the door" for "incredible opportunities" to partner with the Russians on issues of common interest "that hopefully will be good for the world and also improve our relations in the long term".

His comments were further evidence of the remarkable US reversal on Russia after years in which Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, led international efforts to isolate Moscow.

Tuesday's meeting was meant to pave the way for a summit between Trump and Putin. After the talks, Ushakov and Waltz said no date has been set yet for that summit.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Lavrov mentioned the same three goals as Rubio and said that Washington and Moscow agreed to appoint representatives to carry out "regular consultations" on Ukraine. The meeting marked the most extensive contact between the two countries since Moscow's

February 24, 2022, invasion. The recent US diplomatic blitz on the war has sent Ukraine and key allies scrambling to ensure a seat at the table amid concerns that Washington and Moscow could press ahead with a deal that won't be favourable to them.

Kyiv's absence at Tuesday's talks rankled many Ukrainians, and France called an emergency meeting of European Union countries and the UK on Monday to discuss the war. Kyiv's participation in such talks was a bedrock of US policy under Biden.

US State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said the talks were aimed at determining how serious the Russians are about achieving peace and whether detailed negotiations can start.

Rubio said Tuesday that there would be "engagement and consultation with Ukraine, with our partners in Europe and others. But ultimately, the Russian side will be indispensable to this effort".

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said last week that NATO membership for Ukraine was unrealistic and suggested Kyiv should abandon hopes of winning all its territory back from Russia — two key items on Putin's wish list.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday said he spoke by phone to Trump and Zelenskyy following Monday's European meeting.

The meeting at the Diriyah Palace in the Saudi capital of Riyadh also highlighted de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's efforts to be a major diplomatic player.

Saudi state media described the talks as happening at the prince's direction. Like the neighbouring UAE, the prince has maintained close relations to Russia throughout its war on Ukraine, both through the OPEC+ oil cartel and diplomatically as well.

Saudi Arabia has also helped in prisoner negotiations and hosted Zelenskyy for an Arab League summit in 2023.

But Zelenskyy postponed his own trip to Saudi Arabia scheduled for this week, suggesting that he wanted to avoid his visit being linked to the talks since Ukrainian officials weren't invited.

Meanwhile, Russia continued to pummel Ukraine with drones, according to Kyiv's military. The Ukrainian air force said Russian troops launched a barrage of 176 drones at Ukraine overnight, most of which were destroyed

Zelenskyy: Trump living in Russian 'disinformation space'

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday that US President Donald Trump is living in a Russian "disinformation space" regarding his previous day's comments about the Ukrainian leader's approval rating.

Trump said at Mar-a-Lago that Zelenskyy's rating stood at 4 per cent.

Zelenskyy replied in a news conference in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv that "we have seen this disinformation. We understand that it is coming from Russia."

He said that Trump "lives in this disinformation space."

Trump also suggested Ukraine ought to hold elections, which have been postponed due to the war and the consequent imposition of martial law, in accordance with the Ukrainian Constitution.

Public opinion polls and approval ratings haven't been reliable in Ukraine because of the fighting.

Zelenskyy made the comments shortly before he was expected to meet with Keith Kellogg, the US special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, who arrived in Kyiv on Wednesday.

Kellogg will meet Zelenskyy and military commanders as



the US shifts its policy away from years of efforts to isolate Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump suggested Tuesday that Kyiv was to blame for the war, which enters its fourth year next week, as talks between top American and Russian diplomats in Saudi Arabia sidelined Ukraine and its European supporters. Trump's comments are likely to vex Ukrainian officials, who have urged the world to help them fight Russia's full-scale invasion that began February 24, 2022.

The battlefield has also brought grim news for Ukraine in recent months. A relentless onslaught in eastern areas by Russia's bigger army is grinding down Ukrainian forces, which are slowly but steadily being pushed backward at some points on the 1,000-kilometre

front line.

Trump told reporters at his Florida residence Tuesday that Ukraine "should have never started" the war and "could have made a deal" to prevent it. Kellogg said his visit was "a chance to have some good, substantial talks." Zelenskyy cancelled his planned Wednesday trip to Saudi Arabia in what some analysts saw as an attempt to deny legitimacy to the US-Russia talks about the future of his country.

American officials have signalled that Ukraine's hopes of joining NATO in order to ward off Russian aggression after reaching a possible peace agreement won't happen. Zelenskyy says any settlement will require US security commitments to keep Russia at bay. "We understand the need for security guarantees," Kellogg said in comments carried by Ukrainian public broadcaster Suspilne Novyny on his arrival at Kyiv train station.

"It's very clear to us the importance of the sovereignty of this nation and the independence of this nation as well... Part of my mission is to sit and listen," the retired three-star general said. Kellogg said he would convey what he learns on his visit to Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio to "and ensure that we get this one right."

Federal judge won't immediately block Musk or DOGE from federal data or worker layoffs

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A federal judge refused on Tuesday to immediately block billionaire Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency from accessing government data systems or participating in worker layoffs.

US District Judge Tanya Chutkan found that there are legitimate questions about Musk's authority but said there isn't evidence of the kind of grave legal harm that would justify a temporary restraining order.

The decision came in a lawsuit filed by 14 Democratic states challenging DOGE's authority to access sensitive government data. The attorneys general argued that Musk is wielding the kind of power that the Constitution says can only be held by those who are elected or confirmed by the Senate.

The Trump administration, for its part, has maintained that layoffs are coming from agency heads, and asserted that despite his public cheering of the effort Musk isn't directly running DOGE's day-to-day operations himself.

DOGE has tapped into computer systems across multiple agencies with the blessing of President Donald Trump, digging into budgets and searching for what he calls waste, fraud and abuse, even as a growing number of lawsuits allege DOGE is violating the law.

Chutkan recognised the concerns of the group of states, which include New Mexico and Arizona.

"DOGE's unpredictable actions have resulted in considerable uncertainty and confusion," she wrote. Their questions about Musk's apparent "unchecked authority" and lack of Congressional oversight for DOGE are legitimate and they may be able to successfully argue them later.

Still, at this point, it remains unclear exactly how DOGE's work will affect the states, and judges can only issue court orders to block specific, immediate harms, she found.

Chutkan, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, previously oversaw the now-dismissed criminal election interference case against Trump in Washington, DC.

Support to kids stopped

Washington (AP): The Trump administration on Tuesday stopped support for legal representation in immigration court for children who enter the US alone, a setback for those fighting deportation who can't afford a lawyer.

The Acacia Center for Justice says it serves 26,000 migrant children under its federal contract. The Interior Department gave no explanation for the stop-work order, telling the group only that it was done for "causes outside of your control" and should not be interpreted as a judgment of poor performance.

The halt remains in effect until further notice.

White House says Elon Musk not in charge at DOGE but advising president

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The White House says billionaire Elon Musk is not technically part of the Department of Government Efficiency team that is sweeping through federal agencies but is rather a senior advisor to President Donald Trump.

Musk's exact role could be key in the legal fight over DOGE's access to government data as the Trump administration moves to lay off thousands of federal workers. Defining him as an advisor rather than the administrator in charge of day-to-day operations at DOGE could help the administration as it pushes back against a lawsuit arguing Musk has too much power for someone who isn't elected or Senate-confirmed.

The declaration was filed on

Monday as the Trump administration fends off the lawsuit from several Democratic states that want to block Musk and the DOGE team from accessing government systems. The litigants say Musk is wielding "virtually unchecked power" in violation of the Constitution.

The Trump administration, on the other hand, says Musk is not a DOGE employee and has "no actual authority to make government decisions himself", Joshua Fisher, director of the White House Office of Administration, said in court papers. The documents do not name the administrator of DOGE, whose work Musk has championed in posts on his social-media platform X and in a public appearance at the White House.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt declined on



Tuesday to tell reporters at the White House who the DOGE administrator is, though minutes before she said in an interview with Fox News Channel that Musk has been tasked with overseeing the effort on behalf of the president.

Layoffs, she told reporters, are up to individual agency heads. "Elon Musk, just like everybody else across the federal

government, works at the direction of President Trump," Leavitt said.

The DOGE team has roamed from agency to agency, tapping into budgets and searching for waste, fraud and abuse, while lawsuits pile up claiming Trump and DOGE are violating the law. At least two are targeting Musk himself.

Last week, Musk called for the US to "delete entire agencies" from the federal government as part of the push to radically cut spending and restructure its priorities. US District Judge Tanya Chutkan seemed sceptical in a hearing on Monday when Justice Department lawyers asserted that Musk has no formal authority.

"I think you stretch too far. I disagree with you there," Chutkan said.

Trump administration gives schools deadline to end DEI programmes or risk losing funds

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Trump administration is giving America's schools and universities two weeks to eliminate diversity initiatives or risk losing federal money, raising the stakes in the president's fight against "wokeness".

In a memo on Friday, the Education Department gave an ultimatum to stop using "racial preferences" as a factor in admissions, financial aid, hiring or other areas. Schools are being given 14 days to end any practice that treats students or workers differently because of their race.

Educators at colleges nationwide were rushing to evaluate their risk and decide whether to stand up for practices they believe are legal. The sweeping demand threatens to upend all aspects of campus operations, from essays on college applica-

tions to classroom lessons and campus clubs. It's meant to correct what the memo described as rampant discrimination in education, often against white and Asian students.

"Schools have been operating on the pretext that selecting students for diversity or similar euphemisms is not selecting them based on race," said Craig Trainor, acting assistant secretary for civil rights. "No longer. Students should be assessed according to merit, accomplishment and character."

The guidance drew sharp backlash from civil rights groups and university groups. Some believe its vague language is meant to have a chilling effect, pressuring schools to eliminate anything touching on the topic of race even if it may be defensible in court.

"Creating a sense of risk around doing work that might promote

diverse and welcoming campuses is much more of the goal than a clear statement of existing law," said Jonathan Fansmith, senior vice-president of government relations at the American Council on Education, an association of college presidents.

The memo is an extension of President Donald Trump's executive order banning diversity, equity and inclusion programmes. As legal justification, it cites the 2023 Supreme Court decision barring race as a factor in college admissions.

"Put simply, educational institutions may neither separate or segregate students based on race, nor distribute benefits or burdens based on race," it said. On Monday, the Education Department announced it also cut USD 600 million in grants for organisations that train teachers. The programmes pro-

moted "divisive" concepts like DEI, critical race theory and social justice activism, the department said.

Confusion around the implications of Trump's anti-DEI order was apparent at last week's confirmation hearing for education secretary nominee Linda McMahon. Asked whether classes on African American history would run afoul of the president's order, McMahon said she wasn't certain.

The California School Boards Association is awaiting legal guidance so it can advise schools on the Trump administration's deadline, spokesman Troy Flint said. "At this point there is not enough information for a step-by-step playbook that tells school districts if you were doing A then now you should do B, or perhaps eliminate the whole programme entirely," he said.



A photo of Pope Francis stands in front of Priest Nicolas Angelotti as he leads a Mass to pray for the pope's health in Buenos Aires, Argentina. AP/PTI

Nearly 300 deportees from US held in Panama hotel

AP ■ PANAMA CITY (PANAMA)

Panama is detaining in a hotel nearly 300 people from various countries deported under US President Donald Trump, not allowing them to leave while waiting for international authorities to organise a return to their countries.

More than 40 per cent of the migrants, authorities say, won't voluntarily return to their homeland. Migrants in the hotel rooms held messages to the windows reading "Help" and "We are not save (sic) in our country".

The migrants hailed from 10 mostly Asian countries, including Iran, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and others. The US has

difficulty deporting directly to some of those countries so Panama is being used as a stopover. Costa Rica was expected to receive a similar flight of third-country deportees on Wednesday.

Panama's Security Minister Frank Abrego said Tuesday the migrants are receiving medical attention and food as part of a migration agreement between Panama and the US. The Panamanian government has now agreed to serve as a "bridge" or transit country for deportees, while the US bears all the costs of the operation. The agreement was announced earlier this month after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit.

Panamanian President Jose

Raul Mulino, who faces political pressure over Trump's threats of retaking control of the Panama Canal, announced the arrival of the first of the deportation flights last Thursday. The confinement and legal limbo the deportees face has raised alarm in the Central American country, especially as images spread of migrants peaking through the windows of their rooms on high floors of the hotel and displaying the notes pleading for help. Abrego denied the foreigners are being detained even though they cannot leave the rooms of their hotel, which is being guarded by police.

Abrego said that 171 of the 299 deportees have agreed to return voluntarily to their respective

countries with help from the International Organisation for Migration and the UN Refugee Agency. UN agencies are talking with the other 128 migrants in an effort to find a destination for them in third countries.

Abrego said that one deported Irish citizen has already returned to her country. Those who do not agree to return to their countries will be temporarily held in a facility in the remote Darien province through which hundreds of thousands of migrants have crossed on their journey north in recent years, Abrego said.

The Panamanian Ombudsman's Office was scheduled to provide more details on the deportees' situation later Tuesday.

Border arrests plummet

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Arrests for illegal border crossings from Mexico plummeted 39 per cent in January from a month earlier, authorities said on Tuesday, an early gauge of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. The Border Patrol made 21,593 arrests during the month, down from 47,316 in December and the lowest mark since May 2020 near the peak of the COVID-19 epidemic, according to US Customs and Border Protection. "Call it the Trump effect," the White House said in a statement. Border arrests fell sharply well before Trump took office from an all-time high of 2,500,000 in December 2023.

Mexican authorities increased enforcement within their own borders and then-president Joe Biden introduced severe asylum restrictions in June. Arrests sank even further after Trump was sworn in on January 20 and issued a slew of orders on immigration, including one to suspend asylum on grounds that the US is under "invasion" at the southern border.

Man who attacked Japan's ex-PM sentenced to 10 years

AP ■ TOKYO

A Japanese court on Wednesday convicted a man who threw a homemade pipe bomb at Japan's former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at a 2023 campaign event, sentencing him to 10 years in prison, according to local media reports.

Ryuji Kimura, 25, was charged with attempted murder for the April 15, 2023 attack on Kishida at a small fishing port in the western city of Wakayama, as well as four other charges including violations of laws on explosives and other weapons.

In the ruling, the Wakayama District Court sentenced

Kimura to 10 years in prison, according to Japan's public television and other media, without specifying which of the five charges he was found guilty of. The court did not immediately confirm the ruling by phone.

Kimura, at an opening session of the trial in early February, pleaded not guilty to attempted murder, saying he didn't intend to kill Kishida.

The then-prime minister was unhurt, but two people sustained minor injuries. Kimura was arrested on the spot.

The attack came about a year after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during a campaign speech in Nara, another city in western Japan.

Mysuru layoffs: Infosys denies force, intimidation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT services company Infosys on Wednesday said it did not use force or intimidation tactics when it laid off trainees at Mysuru campus over performance-related issues, and that it was explaining the circumstances to the labour department authorities. Shaji Mathew, Chief Human Resources Officer at Infosys, however, conceded that assessment failure percentages this time around have been "slightly higher" than in the past but dismissed charges that the tests had been designed for failure. On whether the layoffs would severely dent Infosys' brand as the company goes out to campuses for FY26 hiring, he said that plans to hire 20,000 freshers for next fiscal are on track and they should have nothing to worry about as they will get one of the best corporate training. Responding to allegations that testing parameters, assessment criteria and syllabus were altered and intimidation tactics

were resorted leading to the 300 plus terminations at Mysuru campus recently, Mathew said that given that the company invests money and effort to select and put trainees through the training program "it is in the interest of Infosys to see that all these people are successful, and that is when we are able to put them into our projects". "There is training investment that goes in and we also pay them salary during the training. It is not in the interest of the company to let any of these people go...It is a loss to them of course, it is a loss to us as well," he said adding that the particular batch of trainees had not cleared internal assessments after three attempts. On the Labour Ministry's direction to Karnataka state labour department to take action, and reports that the Labour Department officials had followed up with visits to Infosys campuses in Bengaluru and Mysuru, Mathew said the Labour Department is in touch with the company and Infosys

is cooperating with the authorities. "Yes, the Labour Department has been in touch with us, they wanted to understand our training process and the assessment etc and we have taken (them) through the entire training process, the assessment, and how this is a critical part of developing the future talent, not just for Infosys, but even for the entire IT industry. "They have been quite supportive, and I think they understand the entire process that we have been going through in terms of training and assessment, all of that. So we have cooperated with them so far. And there has been no further ask from their side," Mathew said. Asked if Infosys will consider taking the trainees back and reinstating them, he added "There has been no further ask in terms of taking them back". Earlier this month, India's second largest IT services company faced a backlash after it laid off over 300 freshers who underwent foundational

training at its Mysuru campus but could not clear internal assessments. The trainees after a two-year wait had been onboarded just a few months ago in October 2024. IT employee union NITES had sought urgent intervention of Ministry of Labour and Employment urging authorities to take strict action against the company. Nascent Information Technology Employees Senate (NITES) had, in fact, alleged that employees were summoned to meeting rooms at Infosys' Mysuru campus, and asked to sign "mutual separation" letters. Mathew countered allegations claiming that at no point were 'bouncers' brought in, nor were intimidation tactics used. This is not what Infosys stands for, he emphasised. "I can't even imagine us thinking about 'bouncers' and so on so forth. These are our trainees, and we don't need to bring in bouncers. So that is absolutely not correct. There was also concern that we did

not allow people to stay on the campus. Again, there are people who wanted to stay on the campus, and we allowed them to stay on the campus," he said. Infosys has now postponed, by a week, internal assessments scheduled for another set of trainees, reportedly 800 of them are slated to take their tests. The company has, however, asserted that the deferment is aimed at giving them additional time for preparation. "It is in our interest to see how we can help these set of trainees to get through the training program, and that they come out successful at the end of the training so we can continue with them as employees in the company. We have seen the failure rate, and therefore we wanted to give them an additional opportunity and time to prepare," he said. The additional time will help them in the doubt-clearing, and subject matter experts will be made available so they can actually work with trainees to prepare them well.

US tariffs on India to have limited impact

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be less impacted by the proposed United States (US) reciprocal tariff as the country's economy is mainly driven by domestic demand, and has substantial services exports, which is not going to be targeted by the Trump Administration, S and P Global Ratings said on Wednesday. US President Donald Trump has announced he will impose reciprocal tariffs on its trading partners, including India. S&P Global Ratings, Economist Asia-Pacific, Vishrut Rana said the reciprocal tariff will hurt countries like Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan more as they have high trade surplus with the US. The Indian economy has two mitigating factors - greater reliance on domestic economy and larger services trade with

the US, which is not likely to be tariffed. In Japan also, there are similar mitigating factors - greater reliance on services trade, and domestically-driven economy. "Which means (US) trade measures might be less impactful there (India and Japan)," Rana said at the S&P Asia-Pacific Credit Focus webinar. He also said that reciprocal tariffs may fuel inflationary expectations, thus leading to higher interest rates globally. S and P Global Ratings, Director, Sovereigns (Asia-Pacific) YeeFarn Phua also said India's economy is largely still domestic-oriented and the nature of the exports to the US is more on the services side, which is less prone to tariffs. "India's dependence on exports for growth is not that great. So, therefore, I think the impact (of US tariffs) will be more or less limited," he said, adding on the goods side the

sectors which could be exposed to higher tariffs are jewellery, pharmaceutical, textiles and chemicals. Phua said the US may not impose higher tariffs on pharmaceuticals, which are basically generic drugs, from India as it would drive up healthcare costs in its own country. However, textiles and to some extent chemicals are most at risk of higher tariffs. "If we were to reimagine that scenario for the first Trump administration to unfold again, I think overall, the impact on India should be quite minimal," Phua added. Earlier in 2018 under the Presidency of Donald Trump, Washington had imposed an additional 25 per cent import duty on steel products and 10 per cent on certain aluminium products. In retaliation, India in June 2019, imposed additional customs duties on 28 American products.

Efforts to serve complaint on Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani ongoing: SEC

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The United States (US) Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has told a federal judge here that its efforts to serve its complaint on Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani in the alleged bribery scheme are "ongoing", including through a request for assistance to the Indian authorities. The SEC submitted a status update Tuesday to Judge Nicholas Garaufis at the United States District Court, Eastern District of New York regarding its efforts to serve its complaint on Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani. The SEC said that both Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani "are located in India, and the SEC's efforts to serve them there are ongoing, including through a request for assistance to the Indian authorities to effect service under the Hague Service Convention for Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters." The SEC said that its complaint dated November 20 last year

alleges that Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani violated the antifraud provisions of the federal securities laws by "knowingly or recklessly making false and misleading representations concerning Adani Green Energy Ltd in connection with a September 2021 debt offering by Adani Green. It said that because the "defendants are located in a foreign country, Rule 4(f) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) governs service of the Summons and Complaint. FRCP 4(f) contains no set time limit for service, and the SEC may serve Defendants by any internationally agreed means of service that is reasonably calculated to give notice", such as the Hague Service Convention." The SEC update, submitted by its Counsel Christopher Colorado, cited a case which notes that service via the Hague Service Convention is one permissible means of serving defendants located in India. "Since the filing of its Complaint, SEC staff has been

working to serve Defendants in accordance with FRCP 4(f). SEC staff has contacted Defendants or their counsel (to the extent SEC staff is aware of such counsel) and has sent them Notices of Lawsuit and Requests for Waiver of Service of Summons, including copies of the Complaint. "Additionally, under Article 5(a) of the Hague Service Convention, the SEC has requested assistance from India's Ministry of Law and Justice, the Central Authority for India under the Hague Service Convention." "That process is ongoing, and the SEC will continue its efforts to serve Defendants in India by the methods prescribed by FRCP 4(f)-including under the Hague Service Convention-and will keep the Court apprised of its progress," the SEC said. In November last year, the Securities and Exchange Commission had charged Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani and Cyril Cabanes, an executive of Azure Power Global Ltd., for conduct arising out of a massive bribery scheme.

Australia's Federation University acquires Employability.life

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Federation University Australia on Wednesday announced its expansion in India with the strategic acquisition of Employability.life, reaching 10 Million students in higher education to make them work-ready. Federation University, which dates back to 1870 when the School of Mines in Ballarat was established, has evolved into Victoria's leading regional university, and established local and global partnerships, and produced over 123,000 graduates. The university is ranked number 175 in the Times Higher Education World's Young Universities. It is ranked number one in Victoria and number two in Australia for full-time postgraduate employment. New Delhi headquartered Employability.life, a workplace readiness company, has partnerships with several colleges and universities across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi,

and Punjab. Through this acquisition, Employability.life will be integrated into Federation University's ecosystem, helping to bridge the gap between academic learning and workplace readiness. Commenting on the acquisition, Professor Duncan Bentley, Vice Chancellor, Federation University Australia said, "Federation University Australia is thrilled to announce the acquisition of Employability.life as part of our mission to deliver a world-class education that combines academic excellence with practical, real-world experience. Federation University's mission is to transform lives and enhancing communities, and the acquisition of Employability.life will help us deliver on that commitment on a global scale. It will also expand our presence in India where our expertise in supporting regional communities has helped us forge many valuable partnerships in education and research."

Coal ministry plans to offer extra incentives in mine auctions

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Coal Ministry is planning additional incentives to boost underground (UG) commercial coal block auctions in India, a senior government official said on Wednesday. The push for UG mining aligns with India's drive for sustainable coal production. The proposed incentives are in an advanced stage of discussions and are expected to be announced soon, Coal Secretary Vikram Dev Dutt said at a roadshow for commercial coal mine auctions in the city. Additional Secretary and nominated authority Rupinder Brar clarified that any new incentives and policy relaxations are expected to be applicable prospectively. The coal ministry's policy evolution has involved multiple stakeholders, including industry players. "We have consistently refined the auction framework based

on industry feedback, ensuring an investor-friendly environment," Dutt said. The ministry was discussing demands for reclassification, as underground mining faces inherent challenges. Of the 113 commercial mines successfully auctioned, 37 are underground, officials said. The ministry is also working to secure environmental concessions with the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. The ministry believes the next two-three years are crucial for commercial mines to rapidly begin production. Currently, production from auctioned commercial mines is 20 million tonnes, but combined with captive production, it totals 157 Million Tonnes and is expected to reach 170 Million Tonnes by the end of the fiscal year, an official said. In 2025-26, this production is projected to rise to 210 Million Tonnes.

MREI facilitates cultural exchange for UK students

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Manav Rachna Educational Institutions (MREI) facilitated an enriching sports, cultural and academic exchange for over 50 students and faculty members from Havant and South Downs College (HSDC) and Park Community School (PCS) under the UK Government's Turing Scheme, a prestigious international mobility grants programme initiated by the UK government. The exchange featured a thoughtfully designed academic schedule incorporating interactive sessions, hands-on projects, and industry-relevant learning experiences. Participants engaged in discussions with subject matter experts, attended specialised workshops, and explored innovative solutions in these fields, ensuring a well-rounded and immersive educational experience. The program focused on providing domain-specific insights into sports, sustainability, environmental science, and culinary arts and a deeper appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives. "Such initiatives play a vital role in expanding students' academic horizons and preparing them for a globally connected world. Through this journey, we hope to broaden their perspectives, enhance their skills, and build lasting friendships," said Dr. Amit Bhalla, Vice President, MREI. "At Manav Rachna, we are committed to creating transformative learning experiences that empower students with knowledge beyond textbooks," he added. Julio Carrillo, Turing Coordinator and Team Leader, HSDC said, "I am delighted to be a part of this enriching exchange program between MREI and our institution in the UK. The opportunity for our students and faculty to engage with the vibrant academic and cultural landscape of India is truly invaluable."

India-Qatar trade agreement must be approached with caution: GTRI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India should tread cautiously on a potential free trade agreement (FTA) with Qatar, particularly in the petrochemical sector as both countries are strong in this segment, economic think tank GTRI said on Wednesday. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) added that India should ensure that tariff concessions on petrochemicals and energy-related imports do not undermine domestic industries. According to a joint statement issued after the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the two sides agreed to explore the possibility of entering into a bilateral comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) with an aim to double bilateral trade to \$28 Billion by 2030. Normally in a CEPA, a kind of free trade agreement (FTA), two trading partners either eliminate or significantly reduce customs duties on the maximum number of goods (90-95 per cent) traded between them. Besides, they ease norms to promote trade in services and boost investments. Given the trade structure between the two nations, a trade agreement "must be approached with caution," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava said. India has a well-developed domestic petrochemical industry that could face challenges if tariff reductions lead to an influx of cheaper Qatari imports, he said, adding that India already has a significant trade deficit with Qatar, which could widen further post-trade pact if market access benefits are

not balanced. "A careful evaluation of sectoral impacts, particularly in energy and manufacturing, will be essential before proceeding with such an agreement," he said. India's trade with Qatar is marked by a significant imbalance. In 2023-24, the country's imports from Qatar stood at \$12.34 Billion, while its exports were only \$1.7 Billion. A large portion (85 per cent) of India's imports from Qatar comprises LNG (\$6.3 Billion), butane, propane mostly for LPG production (\$3.1 Billion), and petroleum crude (\$1.1 Billion). Meanwhile, India's primary exports to Qatar include Basmati rice (\$124 Million), articles of iron and steel (\$200 Million), and machinery (\$106 Million). According to the GTRI, as of 2024, Qatar has a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$221.4 Billion, and a population of about 3.1 Million. India has a GDP of \$4 Trillion and a population of 1400 Million. The bilateral trade has declined to \$14 Billion in 2023-24 from \$18.77 Billion in 2022-23. India received \$1.5 Billion of foreign direct investments from that country between April 2000 and September 2024. Qatar's key exports to India include LNG, LPG, chemicals and petrochemicals, plastics, and aluminium articles, while India's key exports include cereals, copper articles, iron and steel articles, vegetables, fruits, spices, processed food products, electrical and other machinery, plastic products, construction material, textiles and garments, chemicals, precious stones and rubber.

Markets end marginally lower in volatile trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended marginally lower in a volatile trade on Wednesday dragged by blue-chip IT stocks. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex dipped 28.21 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 75,939.18. Intraday, it hit a high of 76,338.58 and a low of 75,581.38, gyrating 757.2 points. The NSE Nifty skidded 12.40 points or 0.05 per cent to 22,932.90. From the Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys fell over 2 per cent each. Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Tech, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards. Among the gainers, Zomato jumped nearly 5 per cent. Larsen & Toubro, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank

and Kotak Mahindra Bank were also among the gainers. "The national benchmarks exhibited a range-bound performance with a slight downward bias, though selective buying in the broader market was evident, driven by bargain hunting in beaten-down stocks. "A reversal in FII flows also influenced market dynamics; however, the durability of this trend remains uncertain. Despite concerns over potential US tariff impositions and delays in anticipated interest rate cuts, market sentiment remains optimistic about a rebound in India's Q3 GDP growth," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. In Asian markets, Seoul and Shanghai settled in the positive territory while Tokyo and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading mostly lower.

US markets ended in positive territory on Tuesday. "While markets ended flat with a slightly negative bias due to selling in IT stocks, broader markets witnessed a lot of optimism as mid and smallcap stocks rallied after the recent sell-off. "Despite the uncertainty over rising FII selling, falling rupee, and the ongoing tariff war, the recently beaten sectoral stocks from banking, automobile, telecom, metals attracted significant buying interest," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Tuesday after unabated selling. They bought equities worth ₹4,786.56 Crore, according to exchange data. The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 2.41 per cent and midcap index climbed 1.30 per cent.

Ola Electric renegotiates registration agency contracts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ola Electric on Wednesday said it is renegotiating contracts with its vehicle registration agencies, which will temporarily affect registrations on government's VAHAN portal but not the actual sales, while adding that consumer rights protection authority CCPA has sought additional documents related to over 10,000 consumer complaints against the company. In a stock exchange filing, Ola said it is discussing revising existing agreements with Rosmerta Digital Services Private Ltd and Shimnit India Private Ltd as part of a sales overhaul. This will "temporarily affect" registration numbers reflecting on the VAHAN portal in February. "We are renegotiating the terms of agreement with our agencies,

namely Rosmerta Digital Services Private Ltd and Shimnit India Private Ltd, to reduce cost and enhance registration process efficiencies. Due to ongoing negotiations and optimisation of the registration process, our registration numbers for the month of February 2025 (on VAHAN portal) will be temporarily impacted. Our sales continue to be strong through February 2025 and the dip in registration will be streamlined in the next few weeks," it said. According to the company's exchange filing, the negotiations aim to reduce costs and modify the registration process. Ola Electric works with the registration agencies as it does not operate through automobile dealerships but only through company-owned stores as part of a direct-to-consumer strategy.

How Tesla's investment will strengthen economy



BINOD ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

As India embraces sustainability and innovation, a cooperative economic framework becomes essential to address G-local challenges through responsible Business. This ensures shared growth by fostering collaboration between multinational corporations, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and government bodies.

Establishing a Cooperative Economic Zone (CEZ) for green manufacturing will create an ecosystem where industries like Tesla thrive while benefiting local businesses and workers in India's transition to a net-zero emissions economy. A CEZ dedicated to electric vehicles (EVs) and clean energy will integrate research, development, and production under a single umbrella, facilitating knowledge sharing and resource optimization. With streamlined policies, incentives, and sustainable infrastructure, India can accelerate its ambitions to become a global hub for EV manufacturing, battery technology, and renewable energy solutions. For years, Indian consumers have awaited a future where

advanced technology, affordability, and sustainability coexist. The dream of cleaner air, reduced fuel dependency, and premium EV accessibility seemed distant-until now. With Tesla coming to India and in future can be explored as investing in India under the 'Make in India' initiative, the nation may undergo a transformative shift. This is not merely a business expansion; it is a revolution redefining mobility, generating employment, and positioning India as a global leader in EV manufacturing. A major advantage for Indian buyers will be cost-effective Tesla vehicles. High import duties have kept EV prices elevated, making them inaccessible to many. Local manufacturing eliminates these costs, allowing Tesla to offer

premium EVs at competitive prices, promoting mass adoption. Additionally, Tesla's advancements in battery technology will reduce operational costs for consumers. The expansion of Tesla's energy storage solutions in India could also lead to more affordable home and business energy solutions, reducing reliance on conventional power sources and promoting sustainability. Eastern India presents a unique opportunity for Tesla to establish a world-class manufacturing hub like those in Germany. With Elon Musk's capability to invest through a cooperative economic framework, this region, rich in natural resources and labor availability, can provide Tesla with economies of scale.

IN BRIEF

RECPDCL HANDOVERS TWO NUMBER OF SPVS OF TRANSMISSION PROJECTS TO PGCIL

NEW DELHI: REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL) handed over two number of project specific Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV) of ISTS Transmission Projects to Power Grid Corporation of India Limited

CLW TURNED OUT 581 ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES OF THE FY 2024-25

NEW DELHI: Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) turned out the 581st Electric Locomotive for the financial year 2024-25, surpassing its highest ever production of 580 locomotives achieved in the financial year 2023-24. This is the highest ever production in any financial year.

Shubman Gill becomes No 1 ODI batsman

PTI ■ DUBAI

India vice-captain Shubman Gill on Wednesday dethroned Babar Azam of Pakistan from the Number one spot in the ICC ODI Rankings for batters on the back of his strong show against England in the recent home series. The ICC issued the latest rankings just ahead of the start of the eight-team Champions Trophy (CT) in Karachi with the match between Pakistan and New Zealand.

"India right-hander Shubman Gill overtakes former Pakistan captain Babar Azam to become the top ranked ODI batter in the world," the ICC said.

Gill, who scored two fifties and a century in the recent three-match ODI series against England at home which India won 3-0, jumped one place to the No. 1 spot. He now has 796 rating points compared to Babar's 773.

India skipper Rohit Sharma is placed at the third spot with 761 points followed by South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen and New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell at fourth and fifth respectively.

"It's a major shake-up at the top of the rankings just prior to the start of the Champions Trophy and leaves an interesting sub-plot to what will transpire over the coming



weeks during the eight-team tournament in Pakistan and Dubai," the ICC said. "This is the second time Gill has held the No.1 ranking in ODI cricket, with the India batter having also gone past Babar to claim top

spot midway through the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in 2023. "Gill has been in excellent form of late, with his century against England in Ahmedabad during the third ODI of the recently concluded series enough to

catapult the 25-year-old to the top of the rankings," the global governing body added. Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana, meanwhile, has taken the first position in the ODI rankings for bowlers as he replaced Afghanistan

captain Rashid Khan. "While Sri Lanka won't be featuring at the Champions Trophy, Theekshana earned the top spot following his exploits against the Aussies that included an excellent four-wicket haul in the opening match of that series in Colombo," the ICC said. Sri Lanka had recently handed a 2-0 whitewash to Australia with Theekshana taking four wickets. The Sri Lankan spinner has 680 rating points, followed by Rashid at second, Namibia's Bernard Scholtz at third, India's Kuldeep Yadav at fourth and Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi at fifth. "Meanwhile, Afghan spin wizard Rashid drops to second and will be keen to regain the No.1 spot as he trails his Sri Lankan counterpart by just 11 rating points," the ICC said. "While a trio of spinners in India's squad Kuldeep Yadav (up one place to fourth), South Africa's Keshav Maharaj (re-enters the rankings in sixth) and New Zealand's Mitchell Santner (up four rungs to seventh) are all inside the top 10 after making ground this week." Afghanistan veteran Mohammad Nabi remains the top ranked all-rounder in ODIs, followed by Sikandar Raza, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Rashid.

KIWIS DOMINATE PAK WITH 60-RUN WIN

PTI ■ KARACHI

Will Young and Tom Latham struck fine hundreds as New Zealand maintained their recent dominance over hosts Pakistan with an emphatic 60-run win in the Champions Trophy opener here on Wednesday. Young compiled an important innings of 107 off 113 balls, while Latham remained unbeaten on 118 off 104 balls to steer the Black Caps to 320 for five after Pakistan put them in to bat. Glenn Phillips' 39-ball 61 also went a long way in the Kiwis getting past the 300-run mark as New Zealand overcame a shaky start. The Pakistan top-order comprising Babar Azam (64 off 90), Mohammed Rizwan (3 off 14) and Saud Shakeel (6 off 19) were a tad too conservative in their approach. That ultimately cost the home team as it ended with 260 all out in 47.2 overs. Fakhar Zaman (24 off 41) batted at number four after being off the field for a major part of the New Zealand innings due to an injury scare. It was New Zealand's third win over Pakistan in less than two weeks, the Kiwis having beaten the Rizwan-led side twice in the preceding tri-series. The sole positive for defending champions Pakistan ahead of their clash against India was the performance of the lower-order with Khushdil Shah smashing 69 off 49 balls. Salman Agha also showed plenty of intent in his 42 off 28 balls but that urgency was missing in the approach of the top-order. New Zealand pacers as well as spinners bowled with accuracy, not allowing the opposition batters to get away. The efforts of pacer William O'Rourke (3/47) and Mitchell Santner (3/66) stood out with the ball. Earlier, Young struck 12 fours and a six, while Latham batted through the innings to strike 10 boundaries and three maximums as New Zealand posted a challenging total. Young played anchor after Pakistan elected to field first and had New Zealand reeling at 40 for two and then 73 for three in the 17th over.

Young fast bowler Naseem Shah got the prized wicket of Kane Williamson who was caught behind for a single digit score for the first time in his last 35 ODI outings. Making a comeback to the team after an injury that had kept him out of the recently-held tri-series, Haris Rauf had Daryl Mitchell mistiming a pull shot to leave the visitors in trouble. Opener Devon Conway was the first wicket to fall on a pitch which clearly had some grip in it for the spinners, as Abrar Ahmed, brought in the eighth over, used a carom ball to beat the southpaw.



CHAMPIONS TROPHY

With three wickets gone with not many runs on the board, Young, who was playing only because of an injury to Rachin Ravindra, steadied the ship in partnership with Latham as they put on 118 runs for the fourth wicket.

Pakistan, depending on one specialist spinner, three pace bowlers, and two part-time spinners in Khushdil and Agha, just didn't have the penetration to break the partnership. After Young fell while looking to open up after sweeping his way to his fourth one-day hundred, Latham and Phillips went after the Pakistan bowling in the final 10 overs.

Latham, who scored his eighth ODI hundred, and Phillips walloped Abrar and Haris for 32 runs in the 44th and 45th overs. In the 47th over, Shaheen Shah Afridi was smashed for 18 runs.

Phillips, who fell in the final over to Haris while trying a reverse scoop shot, did the maximum damage with four sixes and three fours.

Rauf was the most expensive bowler, conceding 83 runs in his 10 overs for two wickets. Before start of play, President Asif Zardari opened the tournament and was introduced to both teams by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi and ICC officials.

The crowd turnout at the start of the match was not as high as anticipated but as the weather improved, the stadium was getting packed with spectators eager to watch a major ICC event in the country for the first time since 1996.



Raducanu loses to Muchova in Dubai Championships

PTI ■ DUBAI

Emma Raducanu lost to Karolina Muchova after an emotional first set in which a spectator was ejected at the Dubai Championships. The 2021 US Open champion appeared to be in tears as she went to the umpire's chair after the second game Tuesday and her second-round match was briefly paused on Court 2.

After speaking to the umpire, who immediately called tournament organizers, Raducanu stood in a small space between the official's chair and court-side screening before Muchova moved over to console her.

Raducanu then picked up a towel, wiped her face, nodded and continued the match. The British player rallied from 4-0 down to force a tiebreaker but eventually lost 7-6 (6), 6-4 to Muchova.

Organizers of the women's tour issued a statement later saying Raducanu was approached in a public space Monday "by a man who exhibited fixated behavior" and "this same individual was identified in the first few rows during Emma's match on Tuesday... And subsequently ejected." "He will be banned from all WTA events pending a threat assessment.

The WTA said it was working with Raducanu and her team "to ensure her well-being and provide any necessary

support." A man who stalked Raducanu while she was still a teenager was sentenced to an 18-month community service order and given a five-year restraining order after appearing in a British court in 2022.

Amrit Magar, a former delivery driver from London, went to Raducanu's home on three separate dates, loitered outside, left unwanted gifts and cards, and stole property. Raducanu rose to fame in 2021 by winning the US Open as a qualifier, one of the most unlikely achievements in tennis. She hasn't been past the third round at a major since then and has spent long stints recovering from injuries.

The 14th-seeded Muchova advanced to a meeting against No. 53-ranked McCartney Kessler, who upset 2023 U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff 6-4, 7-5.

Third-ranked Gauff hadn't fallen to an opponent ranked outside the top 50 since a loss to Sofia Kenin (128th) at Wimbledon in 2023. Earlier, second-seeded Iga Swiatek beat Victoria Azarenka 6-0, 6-2 and will next face Dayana Yastremska for a spot into the quarterfinals. Top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka eliminated Veronika Kudermetova 6-3, 6-4, and defending champion Jasmine Paolini defeated Eva Lys 6-2, 7-5.

Ranji Trophy semifinal: Vidarbha lead by 260 runs against Mumbai

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Yash Rathod and Akshay Wadkar shared an unbroken 91-run partnership as Vidarbha recovered from a mini collapse to lead by 260 runs against Mumbai at stumps on day three of their Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Wednesday.

After Vidarbha dismissed Mumbai for 270 to take a first-innings lead of 113 runs, the hosts found themselves in trouble after being reduced to 56 for four, thanks to Shams Mulani's (2/50) two-wicket burst. However, Rathod (59) and Wadkar (31) steadied the ship, guiding Vidarbha to 147 for four in 53 overs.

At stumps, the duo, who train at the same academy in Nagpur, remained at the crease, but with Mulani and the spinners making the ball talk, Vidarbha are aware that the job is far from over, with



two full days of play remaining. With a 113-run first innings lead in hand, the hosts had a solid foundation, but Mumbai all-rounder Shardul Thakur (1/14) gave them a glimmer of hope with an early breakthrough in the second over. Thakur, who is set to join Essex for the County Championship, removed Atharva Taide for a duck, trapping him in front with an inswinger. Danish Malewar (29), who

scored a vital 79 in the first innings, looked in good touch, hitting five boundaries before Mulani dismissed him off his own bowling with a sharp caught-and-bowl effort, leaving Vidarbha at 40 for two. Karun Nair (6), in scintillating form, joined opener Dhruv Shorey (13) at the crease, but Tanush Kotian (1/33) made an impact, dismissing Shorey LBW after he missed a classic off-break delivery. Much was expected of Nair,

Djokovic loses to Berrettini in Doha

PTI ■ DOHA

Novak Djokovic was upset by Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (4), 6-2 on Tuesday at the Qatar Open in the Serb's first match since exiting the Australian Open with a hamstring injury. The 37-year-old Djokovic, ranked No. 7, lost to the Italian for the first time in five career matches and will have to wait to join Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103) as the only players in the ATP Tour's 100-win club. The 24-time Grand Slam champion reached the

Australian Open semifinals but retired from the last-four match against Alexander Zverev because of a hamstring injury. Djokovic said he didn't have "any pain or discomfort." "I was outplayed by just a better player today," he said. "I wasn't at my desired level, and it could be that I'm still not moving the way I want to move, but... I played without pain, so there is no excuse in that." Berrettini won for the 10th time in his career against a top-10 player and will face Tallon Griekspoor in the second round.

Always liked Champions Trophy as tournament: Virat

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian superstar Virat Kohli has always liked the format of Champions Trophy (CT) as it demands the eight participating teams to be at their best from the get go. The Champions Trophy is taking place for the first time since 2017 when India lost the final to Pakistan. India open their campaign against Bangladesh here on Thursday. "The tournament is happening after a long time. I have always liked this tournament. It represents consistency as you have to be in the top 8 of the rankings (to qualify). The level of competition is



always good," Kohli told Star Sports. Kohli, who has played three editions of the 50-over event in 2009, 2013 (when India won) and 2017, likened the tournament to the fast-

paced T20 World Cup. "In ODI format, it creates the pressure of a T20 World Cup. There also you have three or four games in the league stage. If you don't start well, you are under pressure. The pressure is from the first game itself and that is why I like it, you have to be at your best from game one," said the former India captain. India will play their remaining league games against Pakistan on February 23 and New Zealand on March 2. While the tournament host is Pakistan, India will be playing all the games in Dubai as part of the event's hybrid model.

Kohli will be aiming for a bagful of runs in the tournament after a tough Test tour of Australia. He was back amongst the runs in the preceding ODI series against England, scoring a half-century in the final game in Ahmedabad.

Bangladesh can beat any team in Champions Trophy: Shanto

PTI ■ DUBAI

Heading into their Champions Trophy (CT) opener against formidable neighbours India, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto was filled with optimism. He was particularly emboldened by the rise of pace sensation Nahid Rana, who has added a new dimension to their bowling attack.

The 22-year-old Rana holds the record for the fastest ball (152kph) bowled by a Bangladesh cricketer, hits 150kph on occasion, and averages 145kph for most of his spells.

Besides the presence of Rana and experienced pace colleague like Taskin Ahmed, the team also has few useful all-rounders and spinners, and some good

batters. "Obviously, all-rounders always balance the team and we have got some good all-rounders. I hope they will perform tomorrow," Shanto said in the pre-match press conference here on Wednesday. "If you look in this format, our team is quite balanced and we believe we can beat any team in this tournament. All teams are capable of winning this trophy but I am someone who is not thinking about the opponents much. If we execute our plan properly we can beat any team in any day," Shanto said.

After years of struggle, Bangladesh are now in a position to boast a good pace-bowling attack, feels Shanto. "Yes, obviously, I think we always struggle with our seam attack, but last couple of years and we have got some quality fast

bowlers. Now we have got Nahid Rana, Taskin the way they are bowling. I think it helps a lot.

"As a captain, we love to see them bowling fast. So, I'm really happy that we have got a good fast bowling unit and under lights the ball might swing. So, if they bowl in the good areas, it will help our team."

Rana has done well in his nascent career, having taken 20 wickets in six Tests and 20 wickets in three ODIs.

Bangladesh are in a group in which the spotlight is on traditional rivals India and Pakistan, and Shanto was asked if this is a favourable position to be in before a big tournament.

"Yeah, obviously, I think if you look at all eight teams - they are quality teams. And against India, Pakistan, New Zealand,



we have good memories. We won a couple of matches in recent times.

"Last year, when we played India in Bangladesh, we have some good memories from then. But that is past, I think if we play well tomorrow and

execute our plan, we will have a good match tomorrow," he said. Shanto refused to read much into the absence of India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and Bangladesh's star all-rounder Shakib al Hasan.

The conditions in the UAE are

familiar to both the teams but for Bangladesh to have any chance against India, Shanto knows that they will have to have one of the best days in all departments.

"We have to play well in all departments - batting, bowling, fielding - because I think the way we played the last few years in this format, I think we have a good side and as you mentioned the conditions are quite similar. I'm really confident that we will prepare ourselves well."

When asked about Rana, Shanto said he was looking to leading the pace attack on Thursday and that his emergence has motivated the whole bowling unit.

"I think last few matches he bowled really well and bowled fast. And when we see in the ground bowling like this, it

helps our whole bowling unit. And it's motivated us. "He needs to be fit and he can continue his bowling form. We have got another two-three fast bowlers as well," he said.

After their opener in Dubai, Bangladesh will be playing their last two group games in Pakistan, and the conditions there are going to be different.

"Yes, here I think we need to adjust, because if you look at this wicket, probably it's not that high scoring if you compare to Pakistan. So, we have to adjust."

"Recently we played against Pakistan in a Test match in Rawalpindi. We have that experience how the wicket will behave. But as a cricketer, I think we all understand when we need to adjust and how to play the game. I don't think it will be difficult."

Talks around fast-bowling unit With Rana linking up with the likes of Taskin, a lot of people have started talking about Bangladesh's fast bowling department, and Shanto said factors such as switching to Duke balls and arrival of experts from overseas have contributed to the improvement in the country's pace attack.

"I think the important thing is the wicket and the ball has been changed in first class cricket. We play with the Duke ball, so the fast bowlers wanted to bowl a lot of overs and we get a little bit charged."

"And obviously there is a lot of local coaches and obviously overseas coaches there, so they helped and they motivated the fast bowlers, how they can compete in the international arena."