### Established 1865

WORLD 10
HAMAS RETURNS BODIES OF
4 ISBAFI I HOSTAGES

www.dailypioneer.com

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



Adani Foundation pledges integrated

'Healthcare Temples' at Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

In our temples of health, seva will always come first.

At Adani, we believe that healthcare is a promise and not a privilege. Because everyone deserves access to world-class medical care, regardless of their background or financial situation. We also believe in creating a culture of continuous learning and innovation to advance medical science and improve patient outcomes.

That's why we are proud to announce the development of integrated Healthcare Temples in Mumbai and Ahmedabad, with many more to follow across India. These state-of-the-art facilities will encompass world class super-specialty hospitals, teaching hospitals, medical colleges, nursing colleges and cutting-edge research and incubation centers, with advisory support from Mayo Clinic.

Our commitment to seva drives our vision of a comprehensive healthcare ecosystem that integrates treatment, education and research, all designed to meet the unique healthcare demands of a healthier India.



Spread across 50 lac sq. ft.



2,000 medical students



2,000 beds



Will positively impact over 20 lac lives





## **Khanna presents ₹8.08 lakh-cr UP Budget**

PNS LUCKNOW

 $T^{he\ Yogi\ Adityanath\ government,\ on\ Thursday,\ presented\ a\ Rs\ 8.08\ lakh-crore}$ Budget for the financial year 2025-26, the largest in the history of Uttar Pradesh.

Finance Minister Suresh Khanna who tabled the Budget, described it as a significant step toward the state's economic growth and social welfare.

Highlighting its importance, the finance minister said, "This Budget is 9.8 per cent higher than the 2024-25 Budget, and it will accelerate Uttar Pradesh's economic growth. The Budget has been designed with a focus on strengthening the state's economy, boosting industrial development, and creating

employment opportunities."
He said the government was committed to propelling Uttar Pradesh towards becoming a \$1-trillion-economy, aligning with its vision of rapid economic progress.

The government has allocated 22 per cent of the Budget for infrastructure development, 13 per cent for education, 11 per cent for agriculture and allied services, 6 per cent for health-care and 4 per cent for social security programmes. The capital outlay is about 20.5 per cent of the total Budget. To strengthen basic infrastruc-

ture, 22 per cent of the Budget will be used for road construction, industrial expansion, transport improvements and attracting investments. For education, 13 per cent of the Budget is proposed to be allocated for enhancing learning facilities. It proposes to set up ICT labs and smart classes in primary and higher secondary schools, along with digital libraries and smart classrooms in government polytechnics/colleges. Special schemes have also been proposed to promote research and development in the state. The government has also pro-



CM Youi Adityanath with Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna before the presentation of the UP Budget in the assembly, in Lucknow on Thursday

posed several new initiatives in the Budget to transform UP into a technology hub. A key highlight is the establishment of an 'Artificial Intelligence City', which aims to position

the state as a centre for technological innovation.

Additionally, a Technology Research Translation Park focused on cyber security will be set up to enhance digital advancements in artificial intelligence (AI).

To boost science and research, the government has outlined plans for the establishment of Science City, Science Parks and planetariums, along with the renovation of old institutions. Special emphasis will be placed on providing modern scientific facilities for students, and fostering innovation and research in the state.

During the session, the finance minister mentioned that 58 urban bodies in Uttar Pradesh will be developed as 'Model Smart Urban Bodies', with each receiving Rs 2.50 crore, totalling Rs 145 crore. These cities will be equipped with modern facilities, technological innovations and improved sanitation management.

To support workers, labour camps will be set up in district headquarters, providing can-

security. The Budget also includes a proposal for a Centre of Excellence to promote to promote dims to improve the living and working conditions of labour-

> "The government has also started the 'Zero Poverty Campaign' from October 2, 2024. Under this campaign, the poorest families will be identified from every gram pan-chayat of the state. The goal is to increase their annual income to Rs 1,25,000 and ensure they receive basic necessities," he added.

The finance minister further stated that this Budget is designed to drive Uttar Pradesh's development, technological advancement, education reforms, poverty alleviation and infrastructure expansion. "Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, the state is moving towards modernisation, innovation and selfreliance, making it a national and global investment hub," he

### 'Government initiatives advancing interests, welfare of farmers' Lucknow (PNS): Finance hectare, farmers' income

Minister Suresh Khanna highlighted the government's dedicated efforts towards uplifting farmers, who are the backbone of the nation's food security. He also informed the Uttar Pradesh assembly about the government's continuous initiatives to advance the interests and welfare of farmers. Additionally, he outlined the proposed schemes and the allocated budget for farmers, reinforcing the administration's commitment to their

prosperity.
He pointed out that under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, about Rs 79,500 crore was transferred to about three crore farmers through DBT. Besides, under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, about Rs 496 crore was paid to about 10 lakh insured farmers in the financial year 2024-2025 and under the PM Kusum Yojana, 22,089 solar pumps of various capacities were installed on farmers' fields in the year 2024. He pointed out that the Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana, implemented on September 14, 2019, provides aid for farmers in cases of accidental death or disability while the escrow account mechanism, introduced in 2017, ensures timely sugarcane payments to farmers by preventing fund diversion in sugar mills.

The present government has made a record sugarcane price payment of about Rs 2.73,000 crore to about 46 lakh sugarcane farmers since 2017, he said, adding that this sugarcane price payment is Rs 59,143 crore, more than the combined sugarcane price of the previous 22 years.

With the average sugarcane productivity increasing from 72 tons per hectare to 85 tons per increased by Rs 43,364 per hectare at an average rate of Rs 370 per quintal and for this, the scientists, students of research institutes, and the hardworking farmers deserve congratulations, he assed.

A free minikit distribution programme is being conducted to increase the area coverage, production and productivity of pulses and oilseed crops in the state.

A provision of Rs 50 crore is proposed for both schemes. Under the UP Seed Self-Reliance Policy 2024, the Rs 251 core Seed Park Development Project aims to boost certified seed production. Besides, Rs 124 crore is proposed for statewide natural farming under National Mission on Natural Farming Scheme, while Rs 509 crore has been allocated for solar pumps under PM Kusum Yojana to support farmers; Rs 200 crore has been allocated for agricultural skill and production boost, plus Rs 200 crore for WB-assisted UP AGREES Project. Five agricultural and technology universities have been established in the state to maintain dynamism in agricultural education, research and extension work and provide effective results to the farmers. Twenty new agricultural science centres have been established in the state. A total of 89 agricultural science centres are operating in the state.

Besides, Rs 100 crore is proposed to establish Mahatma Buddha Agricultural and Technology University in Kushinagar district and Rs 25 crore is proposed for research programmes in agricultural and technology universities while Rs 86 crore is proposed for various works in agricultural universities/colleges estab-lished in the state.

#### **NOTICE**

I, Karuna Pandey Dixit (K.P. Dixit) R/o H.No. 761, A-20, Plot No. 3/2 Shiv Puri Harjender Nagar, Kanpur 208007 have changed my name to Karuna Dixit for all future purposes.

#### **NOTICE**

Due to an error in my son's Aadhaar card, his name is recorded as Nitesh Patel and his date of birth as 12.10.2010, whereas the correct name is Ritesh Patel and the correct date of birth is 22.09.2010.Anil Patel S/o Ramnaresh Patel R/o 12/176, Mishra Colony, Shuklaganj Netua, Unnao.

#### **NOTICE**

It is informed to the general public that the possession letter of my plot number 3/216 Vibhav Khand Gomti Nagar Scheme which was issued by Lucknow Development Authority has actually been lost, whose use will be considered Madhulika seth Vibhav Khand Gomti Nagar Lucknow- 226010

#### **NOTICE**

I have changed my son's name Md.Samad. In future he will be known by his new name MD. SAMAD only. Tanveer Alam S/o Liyakat Ali R/o-446/89/1 Musahubganj, Thakurganj,

#### **NOTICE**

My name has been registered as Anoop Kr Rai in CDC which is wrong. My correct name is registered as Anoop Kumar Rai in Aadhar card, passport and other certificates. Anoop Kumar Rai is the son of Shri Radhey Shyam Rai vill/post- Bairan district-Ghazipur, pin code- 2332 27.

#### **NOTICE**

My sons MOHAMMAD OMAR KHAN's and MOHAMMAD JIBRIL KHAN's school documents have wrongly recorded his father's name MOHAMMAD SHORAB KHAN and mother's name SHABILA KHAN. It should be modified and the correct name should be written and read as SHORAB KHAN and SHABILA SHORAB KHAN respectively. SHABILA SHORAB KHAN 529k/368, Khurram Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226022

#### आवश्यकता है

#### आवश्यकता है इरम कालेज,

कुर्सी 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। इच्छ्क अभ्यर्थी विज्ञापन के प्रथम प्रकाशान के 21 दिन के अन्दर दो रंगीन पासपोर्ट साइज फोटो एवं समस्त शैक्षिक अभिलेखों की प्रमाणित छायाप्रति सहित प्रबंधक, इरम एजुकेशनल सोसाइटी सी–ब्लाक, इन्दिरानगर, लखनऊ-226016 के

पते पर प्रेषित करें। 0522-2310712 Email:info@eramedu.org +eramedu@gmail.com प्रबंधक

## Budget embodies spirit of priority to deprived: CM

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, said that the state Budget embodies the spirit of "priority to the deprived", and was dedicated to uplift the poor, farmers, youth and women in line with the vision of 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah'. Chief Minister Yogi made this remark while addressing a press conference following the presentation of the 2025-26 Budget in the UP assembly by Finance Minister Suresh Khanna.

Detailing key features of the Budget, the chief minister highlighted that by adopting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 5 Ts Trade, Tourism, Technology, Tradition and Talent - as a guiding mantra, UP has transformed from a labour-driven

Presenting the 2025-26 Budget, Uttar Pradesh

Finance Minister Suresh

Khanna highlighted the state's

progress, stating that UP has moved beyond its 'BIMARU'

tag to set new benchmarks in

medical services, ensuring bet-

ter healthcare access for all.

The finance minister men-

tioned that eight years ago,

many people in different parts

of UP used to die every year

due to infectious diseases as at

that time, there were no prop-er facilities for disease detec-

tion, prevention and treatment

"However, under the Yogi

Adityanath government, the

state efficiently handled the COVID-19 pandemic, earning

global appreciation. Today,

healthcare facilities in UP have

expanded significantly and

He informed the House that

continue to grow," he added.

for the general public.

PNS LUCKNOW

ic powerhouse. He said, "Once considered a BIMARU state, UP has emerged as a revenuesurplus state, setting new benchmarks in governance and development.

"As Uttar Pradesh celebrates Amrit Mahotsav of the Constitution's implementation and the state's foundation anniversary – both milestones achieved in January 1950 - this budget not only honours the past 75 years of development but also lays the foundation for the next 25 years, shaping UP's trajectory toward unprecedented growth," he said.

The chief minister said, "The state government is establishing Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Memorial and Cultural Centre in Lucknow, which will serve as a hub for

the state now has 80 medical

colleges – 44 run by the govern-

ment and 36 by private institu-tions. UP also has two AIIMS,

along with IMS-BHU in

Varanasi and Jawaharlal Nehru

Medical College in Aligarh. In

2024-25, 13 autonomous med-

ical colleges were established, in

addition to three new medical

colleges in Maharajganj, Sambhal and Shamli under

11,800 MBBS seats and 3,971

PG seats in government and

private medical colleges, insti-

tutes and universities," he

added. The finance minister

mentioned that the Central

government has planned to

add 10,000 UG and PG med-

ical seats across the country in

2025-26, out of which UP will

receive 1,500 seats. For this, a

budget of approximately Rs

2,066 crore has been pro-

In 2017, the total number of

the PPP model.

"At present, the

propagating his philosophy and advancing the constitutional principle of prioritising the deprived. A Sardar Patel District Economic Zone will be set up in every district over 100 acres under the PPP model to boost economic growth. The state will also establish 10 Sant Kabir Textile Parks and two Sant Ravidas Leather Parks on a PPP basis, further promoting employment and industrial

Honouring former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth centenary, libraries will be built in urban areas in his memory. The 150th anniversary of the UP-Agriculture Department will be observed as 'Seed Year', with the establishment of a Seed Park at Attari Agricultural Field, Lucknow, in a tribute to Bharat Ratna

super-specialty seats in gov-

ernment medical colleges was

120, which has been increased

to 250 in the academic session

2024-25. Additionally, Rs 27

crore has been allocated for

establishing an autonomous state medical college in Ballia

and Rs 25 crore for a similar

"Under the Ayushman Bharat

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya

Yojana, 5.13 crore Ayushman

making it the leading state in the country for card distribu-

tion. Primary health units are

being upgraded into

'Ayushman Arogya Mandirs', with a total of 22,681 such cen-

tres currently established," he

The finance minister men-

tioned that in order to improve

rural healthcare, teleconsulta-

tion services have been provid-

ed through sub-centres since

July 2020. The state govern-

ment, under the National

added.

cards have been issued in UP.

college in Balrampur.

expansion."

**New benchmarks set in med services** 

Chaudhary Charan Singh, the champion of farmers, at a cost of Rs 251 crore.

Chief Minister Yogi said, "For the welfare of farmers, Mata Shabri canteens and rest houses will be set up in every agricultural market, providing meals at subsidised rates. Moreover, Rs 400 crore has been allocated for the Rani Laxmibai Scooty Yojana, ensuring merit-based scooty distribution to outstanding female students pursuing higher education.

In support of working women, hostels named after Mata Ahilyabai Holkar will be built in Varanasi, Meerut, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur, Kanpur Nagar, Jhansi and Agra, creating safe and affordable accommodation. Highlighting the economic growth, the chief minister

Health Mission (NHM), is

also offering free dialysis services through the PPP model. Additionally, free CT scan facilities are being made avail-

able in district hospitals under

The finance minister stated

that UP currently has 2,110

Ayurvedic hospitals, 254 Unani hospitals, and 1,585

Homeopathic hospitals across

various districts. In addition,

the state has eight Avurvedic

colleges, two Unani colleges

and nine Homeopathic colleges, each with their own

He also mentioned that for the

2025-26 financial year, the

government aims to complete

the construction of Mahavogi

Guru Gorakhnath Ayush

University in Gorakhpur, fin-

ish building the Government Ayurvedic College in Ayodhya,

and establish a Government

Homeopathic Medical College

affiliated hospitals.

in Varanasi.

the NHM's PPP initiative.

pointed out that the state's gross domestic product (GDP) has surged from Rs 12,89,000 crore in 2017-18 to an estimated Rs 27,51,000 crore in 2024-25. This progress was achieved despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted economies worldwide for three years, he

In 2016-17, UP ranked sixth in economic strength among Indian states; today, it stands at the second position. This achievement has been made possible by eliminating revenue leakages, leveraging tech-nology and implementing innovative revenue collection methods. The government's efforts in revenue mobilisation have been recognised nationwide, with financial experts also praising these initiatives, the CM added.

### Youth, farmers, women disappointed: Cong

PNS I LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Mishra Mona, on

made the Budget an event when no expenditure is being made on the ground. Increasing the Budget figures is just a show and drama, she added, accusing the government of making false claims on riots. Congress also reacted sharply to the Budget presented on Thursday by the Yogi Adityanath government, calling it disappointing for the common man, including youth, farmers and women, and described the increase in the Budget figures a mere event and misleading the people of

"Only 52 to 54 percent of the

Thursday, claimed that the youth, farmers, women and common man are disappointed with the Budget presented by the Bharativa Ianata Party government. She claimed that the BJP has

the state.

Reacting to the budget, Mona said that the Yogi government had made the budget an event, claiming that when the last Budget was not being spent then why they claimed to increase it?

previous Budget was spent so what is the benefit of increasing the numbers?" she asked. Mona said that the collective responsibility of the Budget lay with the entire cabinet, but on Thursday, when the Budget was being presented, both Deputy

Chief Ministers Brajesh Pathak and Keshav Maurya were absent in the House. This shows how indifferent

the government is collectively towards the Budget presented on Thursday," she

#### **NOT IN INTEREST OF** COMMON MAN: MAYA

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati criticised the Budget presented by the Uttar Pradesh government, claiming that it lacks adequate government intention and policy to remove inflation, poverty, unemployment, backwardness and to meet the basic needs of the common man.

Taking to social media platform X, Mayawati said, "If the Budget of 2025-26 presented by the UP government in the assembly today (Thursday) was more of a broad public interest and public welfare, it would have been better, whereas there is a lack of adequate government intention-policy to remove inflation, poverty, unemployment, backwardness and to meet the basic needs of the common man. How is true development possible?"" Overall, the UP BJP govern-

ment's Budget is also aimed at appeasing the well-fed middle class, while the real concern and constitutional responsibility of the governments should be to fulfill the objective of 'sarvajana hitaya' and 'sarvajana sukhaya', which should bring peace and happiness to millions of families by removing their poverty. It is a matter of concern that this is not happening," she assed.

#### SAYS CPI (ML) The Communist Party of India

(Marxist-Leninist) described the Yogi government's Budge for 2025-26, as corporatefriendly and jobless. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said: "The Budget will benefit capitalists, not the common man. Displacement will be promoted. Farmers will be looted due to land acquisition. There is nothing in the Budget for ad hoc and contractual workers who have been struggling for a long time to be declared government employees with a hike in their honorarium. The Budget is als silent on waiver of micro finance loans. Allocations for education and health are inadequate," he

#### **ANIL DUBEY ALL PRAISE** Rashtriva Lok Dal senior leader

Anil Dubey has termed the Budget presented by the Uttar Pradesh government as development-oriented and said that this Budget would provide relief to all sections of society. He said that the Budget was dedicated to the uplift of farmers, youth and women of the state. He said that with efficient and effective policies, about six crore people in UP had been lifted out of multidimensional poverty.

#### Provisions made to empower women, uplift labourers

Lucknow (PNS): The 2025-26 UP Budget includes several key provisions aimed at empowering women and improving labour welfare across the state. It lays significant emphasis on women's welfare through various schemes. Notably, under the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission, over 96 lakh rural families have benefited. The BC Sakhi Scheme has facilitated financial transactions worth Rs 31,103 crore at the village level through 39,556 BC Sakhi, enabling them to earn dividends of Rs 84.38 crore. Similarly, the Lakhpati Mahila Yojana has identified over 31 lakh women, of whom more than two lakhs have become 'Lakhpati Didis'.

To encourage higher education among girls, the government has introduced a Scooty Distribution Scheme for meritorious students based on eligibility criteria. Special budgetary provisions have also been made for women and child development, with Rs 2,980 crore designated for the Nirashrit Mahila Pension Yojana to support destitute women and Rs 700 crore for the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana.

The budget also proposes Rs 252 crore for the UP Chief Minister Bal Seva Yojana, aimed at supporting children who lost their parents during the COVID-19

## Industry assns welcome Budget

posed.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has given a thumbs up to the UP Budget presented on Thursday. Chairperson, CII Uttar

Pradesh, Smita Aggarwal, said, "The Uttar Pradesh Budget 2025-26 underscores the state's commitment to technological advancement, industrial growth, and healthcare infrastructure. The substantial investments under the electronics manufacturing and IT policies demonstrate the state's growing prominence as a hub for digital transformation. The expansion of data centres and the launch of the Semiconductor Policy, 2024 will position UP as a key player in the global semiconductor landscape."

Vice-Chairperson, CII Uttar Pradesh, Dr Upasana Arora, said, "This budget reflects a strong push for innovation, infrastructure, and inclusive growth. The increase in data centre investments and the introduction of new expressways will significantly enhance the ease of doing business in the state. The emphasis on AYUSH education and healthcare expansion, including the development of AYUSH University and new medical colleges, highlights the government's dedication to holistic healthcare," she said.

Meanwhile, IIA President Neeraj Singhal said that allo-

cating 22% of the total Rs 8 lakh crore of the state for infrastructure development is a welcome step.
"This will benefit the industries

of the state. The development of infrastructure facilities in the state in the last few years and the improvement in law and order have indirectly benefited the industries, especially micro, small, and medium industries. In this budget, as per the expectations of IIA, the announcement of the location of AI City and Technology Research Translation Park in Cyber Security is a welcome step," he said.

However, Singhal said that the government needs to bring PNG and CNG under the purview of GST and work more on easing manufacturing. The state government also needs to purchase as much as possible from micro and small industries in government departments and undertakings so that their development is possible, Singhal added.

#### ADEQUATE CARE OF TRADERS NOT TAKEN'

A discussion on budget was organised at the state office of Uttar Pradesh Adarsh Vyapar Mandal on Thursday. The traders discussed the budget presented by the finance minister while watching the live telecast.

State president of the organisation, Sanjay Gupta, said that the traders fill the treasury of both the state and Central governments by collecting taxes from the public, but adequate care was not clearly taken of the traders in this budget.

"The traders expected health insurance, CCTV camera schemes in markets, e-commerce policy, and a retail trade policy, which has been long demanded by the organisation. But there is no mention of this in the budget," he pointed

#### **BASIC EDUCATION** IGNORED'

Meanwhile, national president of the Sarvajan Hitay Sanrakshana Samiti Women's Cell, Reena Tripathi, said that while the budget has acknowledged infrastructure development and allocated more funds for it, basic education, which is the foundation of education, has been ignored.

Emphasising that infrastructure in the budget, the discussion of development-oriented policies, and investment in them is welcome, she pointed out that the allocation of funds for infrastructure construction, basic facilities, and computer education is extremely low. She added that there are about 4.59 lakh teachers in the primary schools in UP, and there are approximately 1,11,614 primary schools, while 45,651 are upper primary

### बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda

Regional Office, Kanpur Metro Region: 118/330 1st Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpuri, Kanpur - 12 Possession Notice Branch : Fazalganj, Kanpur

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property & O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date

Borrower: Mohd. Asif S/o Shri Faroog Khan, R/o: House No. L-1/255-LIG, Yojna Sanigwan, Kanpur Nagar. Demand Notice Date: 04-12-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 17-02-2025 Property: Residential Property Situated at House No. L-1/255-LIG, Yojna Sanigwan, Kanpur Nagai in the name of Mohd. Asif S/o Shri Farooq Khan, Area: 48 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North: House No L-1/254. South: House No. L-1/256., East: House No. L-1/250. West: 6 Mtr. Wide Road O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 28,34,148.77 + Intt. w.e.f. 01-12-2024 + Others Charges

Total Dues Amount as on Dated 15-02-2025: Rs. 28,86,143.18 + Intt. + Others Charges Date: 17-02-2025 Place : Kanpur

**Authorised Officer** 

## **Established 1865** LUCKNOW, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3

www.dailypioneer.com

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

## A FRESH BHAGYA REKHA FOR DELHI, ITS CHIEF MINISTER TAKES OATH



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minsters Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah and Lt Governor VK Saxena with newly sworn-in Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and other ministers after the oath ceremony, in New Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

¬irst time MLA Rekha Gupta on Thursday was sworn in as Chief Minister of Delhi at Ramlila Maidan in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Cabinet colleagues and chief ministers of National Democratic Alliance-governed states, among others.

Along with Gupta, leaders including Parvesh Verma, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Ravinder Indraj Singh, Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Kumar Singh also took oath as ministers. Verma was the first MLA to take oath as the minister, followed by Sood, Sirsa, Mishra, Indraj and Śingh. Mishra, the newly-elected legislator from Karawal Nagar, was a minister in the first Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government.

All the ministers took oath in Hindi, except for Sirsa who did so in Punjabi.



Gupta has been marshalled out of the Assembly by the Speaker on multiple occasions in the past 10 years

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

The seasoned, affable, BJP leader holding the fort T successfully for the party in Delhi Assembly, municipal corporation, as head of the State unit free from any controversies, Vijender Gupta, was named as Speaker of the new Vidhan Sabha on Thursday. Vijender will preside from the same chair which on several occasions had got him marshalled out of the proceedings of the Assembly under the chief ministership of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal.

Vijender won in 2015 and 2020 from Rohini constituency even as Kejriwal's wave swept Delhi assembly polls. Incidentally, Kejriwal and erstwhile speaker Ram Niwas Goel are no longer members of the new assembly.
As soon as Vijender was named as Speaker dramatic

visuals of him being marshalled or dragged out of the Delhi Assembly went viral. He was previously also the leader of Opposition. Ten years ago, he was marshalled out of the Delhi Assembly amid was marshalled out of the Delhi Assembly amid much fury over allegedly derogatory remarks by a party colleague, OP Sharma, against then-AAP MLA Alka Lamba.Visuals from within the Assembly showed Vijender Gupta, dressed in a pristine white kurta-pyjama set - being lifted, shouting and twisting, by half-a-dozen marshals. The BJP leader even held tightly onto the furniture, fighting and resisting all the way out the exit

Vijender return is likely spell more trouble for a battered AAP. After his election win last week, he promised that 14 pending reports on the Delhi government by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India would be tabled in the House.

Continued on page 9

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Imphal after meeting top officials following

**Manipur Governor seeks** 

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena administered the oath of office to Rekha Gupta elected from Shalimar Bagh in noethr Delhi area and her council of ministers.

Her appointment makes her the fourth woman to hold the position in Delhi, following BJP's Sushma Swaraj, Congress' Sheila Dikshit, and AAP's Atishi and also the fourth BJP chief minister of Delhi after Madan Lal Khurana, Sahib Singh Verma and Sushma Swarai. The 50-year-old MLA, who took charge of her office at the Delhi Secretariat in the afternoon, is also the only woman in the NDA team of chief ministers and the second in the country after TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal.

Congratulating the new chief minister, Modi expressed confidence that she will work for the city's development with full

Continued on page 9

### **AYUSHMAN FOR DELHI, CAG FOR AAP**

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A mid expectations of major announcements, the newly formed Delhi Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta in her first cabinet meeting on Thursday approved a proposal reinstating the implementation of Ayushman Bharat Yojna (ABY) with Rs 5 Lakhs top-up and tabling of 14 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports in the first siting of the Assembly.

The cabinet also discussed the financial assistance scheme, which provides Rs 2,500 to women, aiming to support their welfare and empowerment.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gupta said in Hindi, "During the Cabinet meeting, we During the Cabinet meeting, we have taken two big decisions. The ABY, whose implementation had been held back by the previous government, will be implemented in Delhi with a top-up of Rs 5 Lakh from the state government. PM Narendra Modi had announced the scheme for the whole nation, but Delhi could not get its benefits because of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). This will be done at the

first session of the Assembly. These decisions were taken today. We will take up our other commitments, give shape to each one of them and present them

before you soon," she added. Performance Audit Regulation and Supply of Liquor in Delhi for 2017-18 to 2021-22, Public Health Infrastructure and Management of Health Services for 2023 and Performance Audit Report on Children in Need of Care and Protection for 2018-19 to 2020-21 are among 14 pending CAG reports.

The implementation of the ABY for medical insurance had become a major flashpoint between the AAP and the BJP. MPs from the BJP had also filed a petition in the Delhi High Court, seeking that the scheme be made available to people in the national capital.

Notably, the previous AAP government, led by former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, had opposed the implementation of the Centre's Avushman Bharat scheme in Delhi, saying that it would "amount to downgrading the healthcare initiatives already in place." The AAP government in Delhi had several run-ins with lieutenant governors over various issues in the past decade. However, with the BJP coming to power in the city after more than 26 years, many expect the earliest after the formalities are completed."

"There are 14 CAG reports pending, which were not tabled relationship to improve, paving the way for smooth governance.

After chairing the first Cabinet meeting on Thursday, Gupta by the previous government. announced the distribution of They will be tabled during the portfolios among her ministers, portfolios among her ministers, keeping with her finance, vigilance, revenue, services. women and child development among other departments.

Continued on page 9

### Rahul Gandhi propelled by foreign hand: BJP



at Shankarpur in Rae Bareli

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he BJP}}_{\text{ sparred over alleged funding by USAID}}_{\text{for raising voter turnout in India with the}}$ former saying it was "reaffirmation" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion that foreign powers were trying to stop him from coming to power. Congress, meanwhile, demanded a white paper on the issue.

The ruling party said US President Donald Trump's latest remarks on the USAID funding to India was a "reaffirmation" of Prime Minister Modi's assertion during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls campaign that foreign powers were trying to stop him from coming

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has aligned himself with global networks seeking to undermine India's strategic and geopolitical interests while "acting as a tool for foreign agencies", alleged BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya, targeting the grand old party following the US president's remarks.

On Thursday, Trump once again questioned the USAID funding of USD 21 million for "voter turnout" in India and said "I guess they were trying to get somebody else elected". In a series of posts on social media, Malviya said PM Modi had warned of foreign influence on multiple occasions during the 2024 election campaign.

He also posted a video in which Trump was heard making such remarks.

"Now, former (sic) US President Donald Trump has confirmed that there was indeed an attempt to influence the Indian election and install someone other than Prime Minister Modi," he said.

US President Trump's claim that money was being pumped into India to influence election results in the country is a "reaffirmation" of Prime Minister Modi's assertion during the 2024 campaign that foreign powers were trying to stop him from coming to power, the BJP leader added.

Targeting the Congress, Malviya alleged that ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Rahul Gandhi was in London in March 2023, "urging foreign powers", from the US to Europe, to intervene in India's internal affairs. "He has aligned himself with global networks seeking to undermine India's strategic and geopolitical interests acting as a tool for foreign agencies," the BJP leader charged. Continued on page 9

surrender of illegal arms

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has urged the people of the strife-torn state to surrender looted and illegally held weapons within seven days, assuring no punitive action would be initiated against those giving up arms during this period. However, Bhalla asserted that "strict action" would be taken after seven days.

the implementation of President's rule in the state

"People of Manipur, both in the valley and hills, have suffered immense hardship for the last over 20 months due to a series of unfortunate incidents affecting peace and communal harmony," he said

in an appeal issued on Thursday. He said all communities in the state must come forward to ensure cessation of hostilities and maintenance of peace and order in the society so that people can return to their normal day-to-day activities. "It is in this regard that I sincerely request the people of all communities, particularly the youths, to come forward and surrender looted and illegally held weapons and ammunition to the nearest police station, outpost, security forces camp within next seven days, effective from today," he said.

Continued on page 9

### Centre cracks whip on OTT platforms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A mid a row over vulgar jokes on social media, the Centre has cracked the whip and warned OTT platforms against transmitting content that is prohibited by the mid a row over vulgar jokes on social law. In an advisory to over-the-top (OTT) platforms and self-regulatory bodies, the linistry of Information and Broadcasting also asked them to strictly adhere to the Code of Ethics prescribed under the IT Rules-2021 while publishing content, including stricter adherence to the age-based classification of

I&B Ministry's advisory also asked self-regulatory bodies of OTT platforms to take appropriate proactive action for violation of the Code of Ethics by the platforms. The Ministry said it has received complaints from Ministry said it has received complaints from Members of Parliament, statutory organisations and public grievances regarding the alleged spread of obscene, pornographic and vulgar content published by certain publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) and social media. "In view of the above it is advised that the OTT platforms adhere to the various provisions of applicable laws, and the Code of Ethics prescribed under IT Rules, 2021 while publishing content on their platforms, including stricter adherence to the age-based classification of content prescribed under the Code of Ethics," the advisory said.

It said the Code of Ethics, inter-alia, require OTT platforms not to transmit any content that is prohibited by law, undertake age-based classification of content, based on general guidelines provided in the Schedule to the Rules, implement access control mechanism



for 'A' rated content to restrict access to such content by a child, and also exercise due caution and discretion.

The advisory also comes in the wake of the Supreme Court suggesting regulation on content on social media platforms.

The apex court had flagged the "vacuum" in law when it comes to sharing content on platforms such as YouTube and said "all kinds of things were going on". The court's suggestion came following a row involving YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia on the show India's Got Latent. The court was hearing a plea filed by him, where he sought clubbing multiple FIRs against him in the matter. The

plea also sought protection from arrest.
The court issued notices to the states of Assam and Maharashtra over Allahbadia's remarks and staved his arrest in the Guwahati and Thane FIR. Additionally, the court ruled that no further FIRs should be filed against him in the same matter.

Continued on page 9

### Tradition, legacy and ancestry will meet Digital India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Adding another feather to the digital India movement, the Government has envisioned a unique way to digitise the century old multi-generation ancestry records commonly know as 'pothee' in custody of genealogy priests at various pilgrimage centres in India.

For instance next time a pilgrim visit Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, they may track the record of past visit to the temple by their ancestors or family members at the flip of their finger or click of a mouse.

For this, National Archives of India has envisioned a project to digitise multi-generation ancestry records seeking to harvest traditional knowledge and community repositories and preserve them as a cultural heritage.

"NIA has approached these priests

Singhal in his address at opening session of the meeting of the South and West Asian Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (SWARBICA) here. India is hosting a meeting of

SWARBICA after a long time, currently in the position of the treasurer of this regional body of the Paris-based International Council on Archives (ICA). In his address, Singhal also shared

some details and figures related to the NAI's "ambitious programme" of digitising 300 million pages in a period of two years, as part of its project that began last year.
"Before we started the project, our

portal, Abhilekh Patal, was displaying about 10 million pages. In the past 7-8 months, the number has grown from 10 million to 84 million pages.. Every day, we are scanning about 400,000 pages. It is a process going well," said the National Archives of India (NAI) DG. "Shortly, we are hoping, we will complete 100 and the project will begin with Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain," said NAI Director General (DG) Arun hoping, we will complete 100 million pages, perhaps by end of April," he added.



Singhal said it was found during the course of this project that many documents had been left "untouched" in last 50-60 years and nobody had looked at them. "And, we realised these are in urgent need of repair, and conservation was required. So, we had to spruce up our conservation

efforts simultaneously," he added. Another project taken up by the NAI is "harvesting of traditional knowledge and community archives". "In India, if you go to Gaya, Kashi, Allahabad (now Prayagraj), Badrinath, Kedarnath, Jagannath Puri, Dwarka, there are priests there who document every

visit by every pilgrim. These documents are available with them. So, if you go there and tell them about your father's name, your grandfather's name, the place you belong to, they are able to come out with some documents, some 'pothis' (registers), which will contain genealogical records of such families," Singhal said. He underlined that these ancestry

records may even have archival information related to ten generations of many families.

This is traditional knowledge which has been put together in some 'pothis'. And, these 'pothis' can get destroyed. In a major flood in Kedarnath, some of these 'pothis' were wiped out," the NAI chief rued. Singhal emphasised that children

of many of these priests have taken up other career streams and even moved out of these old cities and, therefore, are "not interested in continuing this family tradition". These 'pothis' in all probability could end up getting locked up in some boxes and perhaps could go

waste, he cautioned. "So, we said, we will try to digitise all these information. And, we approached these priests. And, I am happy to inform, the priests in Ujjain have agreed. So, we will start with Ujjain, we will digitise their records," Singhal said.

There are "more than 25 places" in India where such records exist, he underlined. "If we can digitise all of them, collate and compare the information contained in these records, it can become a very valuable database," the NAI DG said.

Many people from India and broad travel to religious sites like Gaya in Bihar or Haridwar in Uttarakhand to perform rituals for attaintment of salvation for souls of their deceased ancestors.

In Gaya, the 'Pitra Paksha Mela' is held annually on the bank of the Saryu River and 'Gayawal Pandas' (genealogy priests) maintain records of multiple generations of people about their ancestors such as year of birth, pilgrimage, caste, and year of death and perhaps be used "to learn from each other and share best practices", he said.

even cause of death. Similarly, in Ujjain and Haridwar, two of the four sites of Kumbh Mela in India, the other being Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh and Nasik in Maharashtra, such priests diligently maintain ancestry records in 'pothis', stacks of which are stored physically in rooms and cupboards.

"Harnessing traditional knowledge and such community archives is another thing, we have discussed with SWARBICA. Perhaps, a blueprint for future collaboration could be discussed," Singhal said.

Union Culture and Tourism Gajendra Minister Shekhawat in his address said the venue of the event — India International Centre (IIC) was also significant that allows space to voice different strands of opinions, as he welcomed participants from different counties who are attending the meeting of SWARBICA. This occasion should

### Rahul Gandhi accuses Union govt of diverting attention from real issues

PTI RAE BARELI

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday accused the BJP-led Union government of diverting attention from real issues and promoting capitalists while asserting that a country steeped in hatred can never progress.
Urging people not to accept hate, the Congress leader stressed that India "was and shall always remain" a country of love.

Kickstarting a two-day visit to his parliamentary constituen-cy Rae Bareli, Gandhi interacted with party workers and youths in Bachhrawan and then went to Jagatpur in Unchahar where he unveiled a statue of Rana Beni Madhav Singh, a hero of the 1857 Indian Mutiny.

Speaking at a public event, he took a jibe at the news media. "I have to say they (media) are our friends, but in reality, they are friends of Modi, Adani and Ambani."

"This is because they don't talk about the public, have you seen any news about farmers, labourers or inflation on TV? They will show you weddings of the Ambanis and Adanis, dance shows and watches worth Rs 15 crore," Gandhi

"Their work is to put pressure on the government. If the government does anything wrong, they hold it accountable. But they are not doing their work properly now," he added.

Recalling the contributions of Rana Beni Madhav Singh and Beera Paasi in the 1857 mutiny, the former Congress chief said all great men who fought for India's Independence, "fought for the Constitution and if the poor, labourers and farmers in the country have a voice today it

"This Constitution is the voice of India. Gandhi, Ambedkar and Nehru gave this Constitution. They fought the British and went to jail. Before

is because of the Constitution."



LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi meets students at Mool

### **Mayawati accuses Cong of 'dual** character & casteist mindset

accused the Congress of 'dual character and casteist mindset' after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi questioned her party's present political approach. "Wherever the Congress is strong or in power, it harbours hostility and casteist attitudes towards BSP and its followers. But in states like UP, where it is weak, it tries to mislead people by talking about an alliance with BSP. If this is not hypocrisy, then what is?" Mayawati said in a post on X. Mayawati's post came soon after Gandhi, on the first day of his visit to his Raebareli Lok Sabha constituency on Thursday, virtually accused her of staying away from anti-BJP front or the INDIA bloc

them, Rana Beni Madhav They all fought for the

Lucknow (PTI): Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Thursday during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "I wanted Behenji to fight alongside us against the BJP, but for some reason, she did not. That was deeply disappointing. If all three parties had united, the BJP would never have won," Gandhi said while interacting with Dalit students in Raebareli.

Congress and Samajwadi Party had contested the 2024 polls together in Uttar Pradesh and succeeded in limiting the BJP's advance in the most populous state winning 43 seats including Faizabad Lok Sabha seat. Hitting back at Gandhi, Mayawati accused the Congress of having a "dual character" and a "casteist mindset" towards BSP supporters. She further argued that past alliances with Congress had always been

"Political parties have a duty Singh and Beera Paasi fought. towards saving the They all fought for the Constitution and so does the media. But these days they

(media) are not working to protect the constitution and that's why I talked about them," Gandhi said. He alleged that the country was being

"sold".
"Airports, ports, infrastructure, coal, railways, everything is being sold. The Congress is fighting, I am fighting on the streets. But the media is not helping us. But we will fight and show you we can win "

"Inflation has risen significantly and the BJP government is only promoting capitalists," he alleged.

Mentioning his Bharat Jodo Yatra, Gandhi said, "A country that is divided and steeped in hatred can never progress."
"That is why we had the Bharat Iodo Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. From the sea to the mountains, 4000 kms, we

gave this message that this is a country of harmony and love, not hatred," he said. He urged people to stop forces trying to divide India, pitting one religion, language and caste against another. "This has been a country of love and so shall it remain," Gandhi told

the gathering. Earlier in the day, the former Congress president visited the Hanuman temple at the Churuva border and then went to Bachhrawan where he addressed a party workers' conference and urged them to maintain a stronghold at the booth level.

Meanwhile, some BJP workers claimed they were placed under house arrest during Gandhi's visit.

BJP mandal president Pravesh Verma alleged, "Along with 25 workers, we have been confined to the nagar panchayat office. It is the MP's responsibility to stay here, listen to the problems of the people and resolve them because the people of Rae Bareli elected him as their representative." However, there was no confirmation from the police about

### Akhilesh to present book by Harvard Varsity on Kumbh mgmt to Yogi

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Thursday, said that he would present a book on the Kumbh Mela study by Harvard University, conducted during his tenure, to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath so "they can learn some lessons from it". The SP chief claimed he had earlier sent an English version of the book for "decoration purposes" but would now send a Hindi version so that "he can actually read it".

"The study on Kumbh by Harvard University was sent to the CM (chief minister) through the Speaker... it was in English," Yadav said, and addes, "I am sending one in Hindi for him (chief minister) to read." Earlier this week, in a post on X, the SP stated that Harvard University and global organisations had praised the SP gov-ernment's management of Kumbh Mela 2013. The chief minister should

read this book for lessons on how successful events are organised," the post read. Yadav also shared a photograph of the book, stating, "Reading a good book is a good habit. One can read this book for expertise in managing such

Akhilesh Yadav dismissed the Uttar Pradesh Budget presented by the Yogi Adityanath-led government, calling it the BJP's "second last Budget" in the

events.

"Today is a special day as this is the second last Budget of this government. After this, there will be the final Budget, and then we will get a new government," he said. He also criticised the BJP's repeated claims of presenting the "biggest bud-



get", pointing out that every new budget is naturally larger than the previous one.

"Every time they present a Budget, they say it is the biggest one. This statement can be made by any government because every budget is bound to be bigger than the last," he remarked.

Yadav also took a dig at the UP government over reports of faecal contamination in the waters of Triveni Sangam, where thousands of devotees are taking a dip during the ongoing Maha Kumbh.
Citing the Central Pollution

Control Board's (CPCB) report to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) about water quality, he stated that pollution data from the Central government agency contradicted that of Uttar Pradesh authorities.

"There is a confrontation it seems," Yadav said. "Will the UP government say that the Delhi government is not Sanatani? Should we believe what Delhi is saying? Be it data from the UP Pollution Board or Delhi Pollution Board... BJP leaders should be given water from Kumbh to use for making food, drinking, and bathing,

#### CM Adityanath congratulates Rekha Gupta

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended congratulations to Rekha Gupta on her appointment as the Chief Minister of Delhi. Adityanath, in a post on X, said the "double engine BJP government" would bring forward public welfare policies, ensure improved security, order and governance for the national capital. "Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Mrs. Rekha Gupta ji on taking oath as Chief Minister of Delhi!" he wrote. Adityanath said he was confident that under Gupta's leadership Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance, Delhi would reach new heights of development.

He said he could not attend Gupta's swearing-in ceremony as the state budget was presented in the assembly on Thursday.

#### **Irate kin protest against police** after property dealer shot dead rushed to KGMU Trauma youths from the other group

PNS LUCKNOW

I rate family members of a slain young property dealer, who was shot dead in the Behta village of Kakori on Wednesday night, staged a protest by placing his body on the road while criticising police "inefficacy" and demanding the immediate arrest of the perpetrators. The deceased was identified as

43-year-old Ankit Lodhi. Preliminary investigations revealed that there was a dispute between two groups at a wedding in the village. After some time, property dealer Ankit's brother-in-law (sister's husband) called him to come to a paan shop regarding the mat-ter. When he reached there, some accused from the other group abused Ankit and opened fire. The attackers consisted of four youths, all travelling in a car. Seriously injured, Ankit was

Centre by police. However, he was declared dead.

Angry family members and villagers blocked Narayanpur Road on Thursday afternoon, accusing the police of negligence. They demanded the immediate arrest of the accused. The police tried to convince the protesters, and the blockade was lifted after the authorities assured them of proper action. The police said that a wedding procession had arrived in Behta village on Wednesday night. Some youths, who were part of the procession, had gone to Abrar's shop located outside the village to buy paan. They got into a heated argument with Ramu, who was already there, over a cigarette. Ramu then called his brother-in-law, Ankit, to the spot. As soon as Ankit reached there, the dispute escalated further. Meanwhile, one of the four fired at Ankit. Before anyone could react, the accused fled the scene, brandishing pistols. Ramu immediately informed

the police about the incident. Ankit was taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead. The police took the body into custody and kept it in the mortuary for a post-mortem. Ankit was the only son of his parents.

The police are currently investigating even as panic has gripped the village. As soon as the news of the murder spread, a huge crowd gathered at the spot. Family members rushed to the scene, and people blocked the road. Senior police officers reached

the spot, and the traffic jam was cleared after convincing the crowd. Ramu registered a murder case against Sumit Kanaujia, Golu Yadav, Tauwa Yadav, and Akhilesh Yadav.

### 103,778 students set to take UP Board exams

workshop on the 'UP Board at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on Thursday. It was chaired by District Magistrate Visakh G. During the meeting, the district magistrate said that the Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education's High School and Intermediate examinations are scheduled to commence on February 24 and conclude on

March 12.
The DM said that 103,778 students would sit for the exams at 127 centres across the Lucknow district, including 126 regular centres and one in Adarsh Jail. Of these, 53,931 students are enrolled for the High School exams (27,048 boys and 26,883 girls), while 49,847 students are registered for the Intermediate exams,

(24,524 boys and 25,323 girls). of the exams. On exam days, He emphasised that all person- they will also carry out surnel involved in the examina- prise inspections. tion process are expected to carry out their duties with the utmost seriousness, ensuring that the exams are conducted smoothly, without malpractice, and with full transparen-

The DM urged all officials to familiarise themselves with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued for the exams and ensure strict adherence. He further instructed officials to report to their designated duty points on time. In the workshop, details of responsibilities were provided to sector, zonal, and static magistrates. The DM stressed that sector magistrates should conduct advance visits to their designated centres to gather necessary information ahead

Additionally, he that all examination centres be equipped with clean toilets, drinking water, and proper lighting.
The DM confirmed that ques-

tion papers and answer sheets are securely stored at all centres, with separate strong rooms for their safekeeping. To ensure thorough monitoring, a control room has been set up at Government Jubilee Inter College in Lucknow, overseeing CCTV footage from all centres 24/7.

Furthermore, the necessary arrangements for armed police, reliable electricity supply, cleanliness, and first-aid facilities have been made at all centres to support the smooth running of the exams.

## Chain-snatcher arrested after police encounter

PNS LUCKNOW

chain-snatcher was arrest-Achain-snaturer was acreed ed following an encounter in the PGI police station area of Lucknow late on Wednesday night, authorities said. He was injured by a police bullet and was hospitalised, they said.

The accused has been identified as Lukman, a resident of Sitapur.

As per reports, the police were conducting checks near Vrindavan Chowki Sector-14 railway bridge on Wednesday night when two suspiciouslooking youths were seen riding a bike. When the police signalled for them to stop, the accused started firing and attempted to flee. Lukman was shot in the leg in the return fire and he fell along with the bike. He was apprehended and the police team recovered a pistol from the spot. DCP (East) Shashank Singh

Lukman and his partner Shani committed two chainsnatching incidents within one hour.

Colony, causing her to suffer private an injury to her neck. After this, they also targeted another woman in Sector-7, but she woman did not file a complaint," Singh said.

Police recovered the looted chain, a pistol, cartridges, and the bike used in the incident from Lukman. His accomplice, Shani, has also been arrested by the police. The police are investigating the criminal records of both. Singh said that the accused is a habitual offender. He explained that the accused were attempting to flee after firing on the police, and Lukman was injured in the retaliatory action.

"He has been involved in robbery incidents previously as

well. The investigation into the case is ongoing," he added. said that on February 13,

"They first snatched Richa A Class V student was found Shukla's chain in Vrindavan hanging in the bathroom of a school hostel in Malihabad on Thursday. The deceased was identified as Khan Altamas (15), a resident of Pakulia village in Basti. The incident came to light when fellow students discovered the body and alerted the

school management.
According to Malihabad
Inspector Baijnath, preliminary inquiries suggest that Altamas had been upset after a recent incident involving smoking. Three days earlier, he and a few friends had jumped from the hostel roof to smoke a cigarette. Upon learning about this, the school management reprimanded him and informed his family. Since then, he had appeared withPolice suspect this may have led to his suicide.

During questioning, Altamas's friends told police that he was distressed after learning that his family, particularly his elder brother, had been informed about his smoking. "The principal had called his brother, who threatened to

take him home and beat him. Since then, he had not spoken to anyone for two days," they Police have informed the fam-

ily, and further action will be taken based on their complaint and the post-mortem report. Investigations are ongoing.

**MAN SUFFERS BURNS** 

A man suffered burns after a fire broke out in his flat on the fourth floor of a 15-storey apartment in Sarojininagar on Thursday. The fire erupted in a room and gradually spread. The man sleeping in the room sustained burns. ADCP (South) Amit Kumar

stated in a video that Om Tiwari, sustained burns in the incident.

"As soon as we received information about the incident. the fire brigade team rushed to the spot. Those trapped in the fire were rescued flames," he said.

According to residents, a fireman also sustained burns while attempting the rescue. At the time of the incident, four members of the family, including two children, were on the balcony of the flat and they were also evacuated safely. The incident occurred in Parth Republic Society Apartment on Lucknow-Kanpur Road. As soon as the fire alarm rang, chaos ensued in the building.
People rushed downstairs in

panic, with some running towards the lift and others towards the stairs. After nearly an hour and a half, three fire tenders managed to control

#### **Govt to enhance** tourism potential of Budheshwar temple

**Lucknow (PNS):** The Tourism department has approved a development and beautificadevelopment and beautifica-tion plan for the Budheshwar Mahadev Temple and Sitakund in Alamnagar, Lucknow, with a budget of Rs 2.32 crore, of which Rs 1 crore has already been disbursed. Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh shared the details, noting that the Budheshwar Mahadev Temple, one of the oldest in Lucknow, was established by Raja Bakshi. The temple draws a steady number of devotees throughout the year, with larger gatherings during Mahashivaratri.

The temple is linked to a legend, where it is believed that Lord Rama, Sita, and Lakshman worshipped Lord Shiva here during their exile. The site remains a peaceful destination, particularly visited on Mondays, Wednesdays, Ekadashi, and throughout the month of Shravan.

Singh further explained that the state government aims to enhance the temple's tourism

### Wish to take classical flute music to rural India: Ronu Mazumdar

SHARMILA KRISHNA

Plautist Ronu Mazumdar, known as the 'Bansuri Samrat', performed at the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) here on Thursday.

Mazumdar, who has made significant contributions to classical music, and awarded the Padma Shri this year, expressed his desire to take classical flute music to rural India. Mazumdar, hailing from

Varanasi, shared his gratitude for receiving the prestigious Padma Shri, although he believed the recognition came later than expected.
"Although I feel it should have

come sooner, I respect the government and am grateful for finally receiving it. I dedicate this honour to my gurus," he said.

Reflecting on his recent achievement of entering the Guinness Book of World Records for organising a per-formance with over 546 musicians playing Tansen ragas in Gwalior, Mazumdar spoke

about the extensive preparation required for the event.

The Madhya Pradesh government invited me to organise the programme. It required intense work, including sleepless nights composing the music. The result was a completely Indian orchestra, and I was proud to receive the Guinness World Record certificate," he explained.

Mazumdar expressed ambitious future plans, aiming for the Padma Bhushan, stating, "An artist is not truly an artist if they are ever satisfied."

Mazumdar also discussed his long-standing connection with Lucknow, a city renowned for its rich tradition of shayari and music. "I've played for 'Ghazal Samrat' Jagjit Singh and many poets from Lucknow. The city's audience is unparalleled in their understanding of music and appreciation," he said. He noted the growing interest in the flute among young people. "There is a surge in young flautists, even surpassing the

number of sarod and sitar

players. Many of my students are driven by commercial



prospects, with a deep enthusiasm for the instrument," he

Mazumdar believes the appeal of the flute will endure, comparing it to salt in food: "Flute music is integral to both folk and classical music, and is even used by katha vachaks (storytellers)."

Having worked extensively in Bollywood and fusion music,

Mazumdar highlighted his collaborations with music director RD Burman, particularly on timeless songs from 'Love Story' and '1942: A Love Story'. "I was close to Kishore Kumar and later worked with Himesh Reshammiya. Gulzar brought me back after Pancham Da, and I played for Macchis," he recalled.

Mazumdar, who has been nominated for a Grammy, reit-erated his primary goal of bringing classical flute music to villages, where it is often overshadowed by folk music.

"While flute music is popular in folk genres, classical flute has vet to reach rural areas. I aim to perform in small towns and villages through my association with SPICMACAY," he said. He also called on the state government to establish schools in cities and villages dedicated to teaching performing arts. Looking ahead, Mazumdar revealed plans for an album with three-time Grammy winner Ricky Kej, dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, and

starting March 13 this year.

#### **Foresters devise** new strategy to trap tiger

**Lucknow (PNS):** After 70 days of efforts to trap the stray tiger in Rehmankhera, the Forest department has devised a new

been moving between Zone 1 and Zone 3 of the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture, and efforts are now focused on capturing it in these areas.

"We have observed its pug marks in these zones, and camera traps have been placed accordingly," he said. Pandey explained that, consid-

ering the tiger's shy nature, a new approach has been developed. "We have been stationed at the machans for several days, but the tiger avoids these areas due to its reluctance to come near human presence. We have now altered the baiting method. The bait is tied to nets attached to ropes, so that when the tiger strikes, the net will fall and trap the animal. This method ensures minimal human intervention," he

explained. Pandey acknowledged the announced a tour to Canada challenges faced in tracking

### Woman suffers injuries during scuffle, dies Lucknow (PNS): A woman allegedly sustained knife

injuries during a fight with her sister-in-law in Mahanagar on Thursday evening. The family rushed her to the Civil hospital, where she succumbed to injuries. The deceased woman hás been identified as Deepa. Initial investigations revealed that disputes were a frequent occurrence in the household. According to the police, Deepa, a safai worker residing in the Mahanagar GIC compound, had an argument with her sis-

Thursday. Neighbours gathered at the scene and rushed the injured woman to the hospital, where

ter-in-law, Vandana (35), on

she died later. Mahanagar Inspector Akhilesh Mishra stated that Vandana had been married to Rakesh, a resident of Naka in Ganeshganj. Due to ongoing marital issues, she had been living with her brother, Manish, at her maternal home for the past 15 years. Vandana's mental health had also been deteriorating, which led to frequent arguments with her sister-in-law, he added. Deepa, the deceased woman's

sister-in-law, has been taken into custody for questioning. Further action will be taken based on the outcome of the investigation, Mishra said.

#### EIGHT KILLED IN 2 ROAD ACCIDENTS

Eight devotees on their way to Ayodhya were killed and several others injured in two separate road accidents here early Thursday, police said.
The incidents occurred on the

Sarokhanpur underpass of the Varanasi-Lucknow National Highway. The first accident took place around 2 am when an unidentified vehicle collided with an SUV carrying a group of devotees. Five people were killed in the

accident while six others sustained serious injuries. The victims were residents of

Jharkhand and were en route to

Avodhva from Varanasi. After an hour, another accident occurred on the same stretch when a double-decker bus collided with a trailer parked on the roadside. The crash resulted in the death of the bus driver, a woman, and a child while 27 other passengers were

Varanasi (PNS): Under Kashi amidst drum beats and show-Tamil Sangamam (KTS) 3.0, self-help groups (SHGs), Mudra loan beneficiaries and pracharaks (propagators) from Tamil Nadu were welcomed at comed the Tamil guests.

ering of petals. Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurva, District Magistrate Rajalingam and others wel-Banaras railway station with Earlier, at the book exhibitions tilak and flower garlands organised by various institu-



verka <sup>®</sup> Har Din Da, Har Dil Da					
THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD. SCO 153-155. SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66					
Notice Inviting Tender	www.verka.c				
e tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of					
Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative				
For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh	Qty				
1. Dry Fruits	Half Yearly/				
i. Badam	2275 kg				
ii. kaju 4 Pc	4725 kg				
iii. Kishmish	950 kg				
iv. Pista	950 kg				
v. Elaichi	2365 kg				
2. Free flow grinded salt	Annual/ 1550 MT				
3. 10 kg WMP Tins	Annual/ 65 K				
Amyl Alcohal Grade 1	Annual/ 4000 Ltr				
5. Calcium Carbonate	Annual/ 2100 MT				
6. Paneer Bags 200 gm	Annual/ 38 Lac				
7. Vitamin AD2 Premix	Annual/ 5 MT				
8. Sulphuric Acid	Annual/ 112 MT				
9. HDPE Paper Re-inforced Bags	Annual/				
i. 39"x 22" ii. 40"x 22"	2.20 Lac 45 K				
ii. 45°x 22°	7 K				
iv. 43"x 22"	3.10 Lac				
10. IML Container	Annual/				
i. 1 kg (For Kheer)	4.50 Lac				
ii. 5 Ltr (Ghee)	1.30 Lac				
iii. 15 Ltr (Ghee)	10 K				
iv. 17 Ltr for high fat Dairy	25 K				
v. 5 Ltr (Cow Ghee)	20 K				
vi. 15 Ltr (Cow Ghee)	5 K				
11. Common Salt	Annual/ 700 MT				
12. Curd and Kheer Cup	Annual/ 15 Crore				
13. Aluminum Lids for Curd & Kheer Cups	Annual/				
i. 95 mm	13 Crore				
ii. 80 mm	2 Crore				
14. Crown Corks	Annual/ 91 Lac				
15. Malai Kulfi Pack	Annual/ 15 Lac				
16. Parchment Paper	Annual/ 2.5 MT				
17. Wooden Spoons for :-	Annual/				
i. Kheer	1.01 Crore				
ii. Ice Cream iii. Sticks	27 Lac 1.5 Lac				
III. Sticks  18. Ice Cream Brick Carton	1.5 Lac Annual/ 5 Lac				
i. 700 ml	Allilual 5 Lac				
ii. 1250 ml					
19. Milk Testing Equipment	Annual/				
i. Lactometer	25 K				
ii. Butyrometer	21 K				

tions in the KTS, people are looking for books teaching Tamil language, turning the pages of the available books. T Mathanrai said more than 200 books teaching Tamil from Hindi and English have been sold by National Book Trust

(NBT) so far. Various stalls have been set up in this event. All the books and literature related to Tamil language are displayed in these stalls in which students of north India are liking the books of the language of South India apart from great poets and litterateurs of that place. Through these books, the students here are being taught culture, art and literature apart from stories of that place. Information is also being given about the religious bond of Kashi with Tamil Nadu as well as the trade bond of both the states.

Suman, a student of Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, who visited Namo Ghat, said she is also getting very rare information from this unique stall which is very useful.

Meanwhile, the students of Central University, which came to Kashi from South India, took a holy bath in Sangam during Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. The third team that came to KTS was welcomed by the Mela and district administration. They were welcomed in the tent city located in Sector 22. After taking bath in Sangam, the delegates left for Ayodhya Dham.

Vaishnavi, a student, expressed happiness after taking bath in Sangam. She thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said the dream of PM of one India, great India is now coming true. Vaishnavi also expressed gratitude to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for

Varanasi (PNS): The Kashi

Tamil Sangamam (KTS) 3.0,

being held from February 15 to

24 has become an important

initiative as a confluence of the

combined cultures of North

and South India, symbolising

the 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha

Bharat' vision of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi.

Under the aegis of the Union

Ministry of Education, a series

of cultural programmes are

being presented every day on

the open air stage at Namo

Ghat under this grand event.

The fifth day's programme

started with a grand dance

performance Banna Re Baag

Mein Jhula Jhule', followed by

an attractive dance drama on

the song 'Runjhun Baje

Ghughra' by the students of the

Faculty of Music and Stage

Arts, Banaras Hindu University

(BHU). Through this cultural gathering, the characteristics,

philosophy, ideologies and mythological heritage of Kashi and Tamil Nadu are being pre-

sented, which are strengthen-

ing the cultural unity of North

and South India. UÉ Sindhuja

from Tamil Nadu gave a soul-

organising the programme. She said we had never thought that we would be able to visit three religious places together. "We are very happy, it was very good to visit the Sangam area", she added. Jai said the arrangements in Maha Kumbh are very good, despite so much crowd, such a grand programme is being organised, it felt very good. Besides, a delegation of farmers and artisans participating in KTS 3.0 arrived at the Ram Mandir in Avodhya to seek blessings of Lord Ram. On their arrival in Ayodhya, SDM Sandeep Srivastava warmly welcomed the delegates with flower garlands. Following this, the delegates were briefed about the grandeur and divinity of Ayodhya. As the delegates arrived in Ayodhya and made their way to see Bhagwan Ram, the chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' echoed along the route. The Tamil delegates were deeply moved on seeing the magnificent Ram Mandir, which was built after 500 years. They expressed immense joy at seeing Bhagwan Ram and appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the government. Delegate V Raman praised the initiative, calling it a wonderful experience. "Our journey was truly beautiful. We visited Baba Vishwanath in Varanasi and learned about the rich history of temples there. After that, we went to the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh, where the arrangements were excellent. We took a holy dip and then visited the temple of Bhagwan Ram. Our entire journey has been a pleasant one, thanks to govern-

ment's initiative. This will also

contribute to strengthening

the cultural ties between both

ful recitation of Harikatha -V

Kambaramayan, which made

the audience experience the

devotion and divinity of

Ramayana. Through the

drama, the artistes from Tamil

Nadu presented the Leelas of

Lord Ram in a live form, which

After this, various presentations

of famous folk arts of Tamil

Nadu were done, including a

captivating presentation of

Naini Mellam, Kargam dance

which is a style of dancing by

balancing a kind of pitcher on

the head and Kaavadiyattam

which is a dance inspired by the

religious Kaavadi Yatra,

Sillukuchi Attam which is a tra-

ditional Tamil folk dance per-

which was presente

and Rameshwaram.

artiste

formed with help of sticks,

Govindaraj and his team. These

folk art presentations intro-

duced the north Indian audi-

ence to the rich cultural heritage

of Tamil Nadu. The chief guest

Badri Sheshadri was welcomed

by Shripati and Ramnaresh. Badri highlighted the pilgrimage relationship between Kashi

Kalaimamani

enthralled the audience.

states," he said.

Heritage of Kashi, TN showcased

### Tamil language-related literature displayed TN's thriving food industry, its impact on economic development discussed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

ashi Tamil Sangamam Kasni ranni Gangani (KTS) 3.0 is facilitating an all-round interaction between two ancient cultures of India, Kashi and Tamil Nadu, be it art, culture, education, agriculture, or industry. The initiative, on Wednesday, brought together business professionals and small entrepreneurs to pave the way for collaborations and benefit from each other's strengths, expertise and expe-

riences. The Tamil delegation was given a warm welcome upon its arrival to Pt Omkar Nath Thakur Auditorium at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), the venue of the academic session on professionals and entrepreneurs. The session focused on exchanging ideas and exploring business opportunities between the two states, fostering deeper economic collaboration. Varanasi ADM Ravi Shankar felicitated the speakers of the event, Dr Deepika Kaur, Dr Subhash Pratap Singh, and Dr Ramanathan.

Ramanathan delivered the formal welcome address. The session began with a kevnote lecture by Dr Deepika Kaur from the Institute of Management Studies (IM-BHU), who provided a comprehensive overview of government schemes and business opportunities, particularly in the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. She highlighted that MSMEs in India have seen 5.93 crore registrations, contributing to over 25 crore jobs and accounting for 45 per cent of nation's total



Tamil delegate at an academic session at BHU in Varanasi

exports. Dr Kaur also presented highlights of the Union Budget 2025-26 with regard to entrepreneurs and MSME sector. She informed about several efforts by the government aimed at strengthening the sector, including enhanced credit availability, credit cards for micro- enterprises, and a focus on labour-intensive industries. Prof Subhash Pratap Singh from the IM-BHU delivered a compelling address emphasising the significance of research contributions, advancements in manufacturing, marketing innovations and strategies to meet customer expectations. He shed light on 'Help Us Green', a startup dedicated to transforming temple waste into eco-friendly products. He also discussed the role of the IT sector in enhancing business opportunities and highlighted the Atal Incubation Centre at BHU, where startups like Cobra Online Pvt Ltd are fostering innovation. Additionally, he discussed Tamil Nadu's thriving food industry and its impact on economic growth. Prof V Ramanathan of IIT-

launched 41 startups. Additionally, he introduced the Chanakya Fellowship, an initiative aimed at fostering startup innovation at IIT-BHU. Anoop Shukla emphasised the pivotal role of startup initiatives in driving innovation and economic growth. He highlighted the importance of cultivating a culture that fosters idea generation, experimentation and entrepreneurship. He also discussed nine innovative startup ideas, including coaching and event planning, while also shedding light on government subsidies and mentorship programs available for entrepreneurs. Balram, a representative from the District Industries Centre (DIC), Varanasi, elaborated on government financial assistance, infrastructure support, and capacity building for startups. He highlighted the Government of India's efforts to encourage innovative startups and emphasised on collaboration between Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Representing the Indian Industry Association and the Small Scale Industries Association Rajesh Bhatia focused on the MSME initiatives introduced by the UP government. His address also covered social, religious, and economic relations between Tamil Nadu and UP with a special mention of wooden textile development

as a shared industry. Raghvendra

Singh provided insights on

BHU emphasised key topics

such as human resources and

skill development, startup

investments and entrepreneur-

ship. He highlighted the I-DAPT Hub Foundation at IIT-

BHU, which has successfully

and centrally sponsored schemes. The academic session included an interactive session where delegates shared their queries and experiences. Ranganathan from Salem con-

veved his heartfelt thanks to PM Modi and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for providing an opportunity to visit the sacred land of Ganges. He also appreciated the collaborative efforts of individuals involved in the organisation of the event. Rayarathnam from Chennai expressed that the enriching lectures during the session will greatly help aspiring entrepreneurs. He added that he was mesmerised by the beauty of BHU's kulgeet. Kutty from Tirunelveli mentioned about the ancient sage Agastya Muni, emphasising shared cultural roots of both states. Kanchana Devi from Kanchipuram thanked PM Modi for revitalising the cultural ethos of Kashi. She expressed her emotions after visiting the KTS 3.0 and emphasised the oneness of India and inclusivity of its tradition. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof Shunmuga Sundaram. This academic session comprehensively discussed the initiatives and schemes offered by the GOI. mentioned the ecosystem that can help in proliferation of innovative ideas and highlighted how it can also strengthen ties between north and south India. Professionals, entrepreneurs and industrialists expressed their gratitude towards KTS 3.0 emphasising it as a commendable effort to empower small entrepreneurs.

### **Emphasis on telemedicine, affordable testing**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS) and ICPC (SHUATS) and ICPC (International Cancer Patient Coalition) organised a twodays high-level political summit and conference on 'Equity in Action Driving Process in Cancer Care' from Thursday. Rajya Sabha MP, Dr Sasmit Patra from Odisha, ICPC Secretary General Prof Dennis Horgan, SHUATS V-C Prof Rajendra B Lal, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Jonathan A Lal, Pro-V-C (Administration) Prof. Bishwarup Mehra and Registrar Prof Ranu Prasad inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp. Dr Dennis Horgan advocated building strong healthcare systems, advancing and equitable cancer care and empowering patients and communities. He said that through this conference a framework will be developed with the objective to develop a system for early detection of all types of cancer at the global level, to emphasise on digital screening in public places and

in mishap

borne youths were killed after

colliding with a harvester on

Kanpur-Etawah highway near

Sardarpur village under Sikandra police station area of

Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday

night. They were seriously

injured after being hit by the

harvester. Police sent them to

Sikandra community health

hospitals, to increase rate of early detection of cancer by 15 per cent by 2030, to raise 5 million dollars fund to promote cancer prevention initiative, to train 500 cancer scientists for artificial intelligence (AI)-driven diagnosis and telemedicine by 2027 and to increase investment in research and development etc. He also said that it i the need of the hour for the public and private sectors to work together for the diagnosis of cancer and to formulate

policies that support the cancer health care system. MP Dr Sasmit Patra talked about increasing the annual cap of ₹5 lakh in Ayushman Bharat scheme for cancer treatment, establishing a global protocol for cancer diagnosis and prevention, manufacturing of expensive imported medicines

in India and also suggested changes in lifestyle and food habits. During the political round table session, the MP answered the questions raised by the scholars. MP Dr Fauzia Khan, who joined the conference online, talked about emphasising on telemedicine, affordable testing, high-level training and declaring cancer as a notified disease. She suggested to increase cancer awareness in rural areas.

In the presidential address, V-C Prof Rajendra B Lal, while sharing his experience as an agricultural scientist, said during his work in America, he examined chemicals found in water from soil surface. He said use of organic food definitely keeps away from diseases but one should not live in the fear of chemicals as well. Prof Jonathan A Lal, ICPC Board Member and Pro-V-C (Academic) said Maha Kumbh Mela in which more than 50 crores people participated teaches us that collective work can bring big changes and taking inspiration from which this international conference has been organised. He said inputs from policy makers, healthcare experts, patient advocates, industry representatives, researchers, who are attending the conference will lead to actionable frameworks and formal commitments for equitable care through the Asia-Pacific Declaration on Cancer Care. SESSION: The IIIT Allahabad organised a brainstorming session on Quantum Information and Technologies in admin auditorium in connection with Quantum Mission of India. In it Prof PC Deshmukh, former professor at IIT Madras and currently associated with IIT Tirupati and IISER Tirupati, Dr Shashank Gupta from Industry Q-Nu Labs, Prof Shekhar Verma, Dr Pramod Kumar, Dr Akhilesh Tiwari, Dr KP Singh, and Dr Upendra Kumar from IIIT Allahabad participated in the discussion.



e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.

NA/12/28228/2023/41882

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

Regional Office, Kanpur Dehat Region: 118/330, 2nd Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpuri, Kanpur-208 012 • Ph.: 8317087726 e-mail: recovery.kanpurdehat@bankofbaroda.co.in



Sale Notice For Immovable Properties "APPENDIX-IV-A [ See Proviso to rule 6(2) & 8 (6) ] 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 6(2) & Rule 8 (6) of the Security

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

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, possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Bank of Baroda as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Secured assets/dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date and time EMD and Bid increase are mentioned below

Date of e-Auction : 25-0	03-2025 Last Da	ate of EMD S	Submission	n : 24-03-2	025 upto 4	4.00 PM
Name & Address of the Borrower / Guarantor	Description of Immovable Property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of e-Auction	Reserve Price/EMD/ Bid increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive/ Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
Kumar Shukla S/o Shri Dinesh	Gangaganj S/S, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. Owner of Property: Shri Satyendra Kumar Shukla S/o Shri Dinesh Kumar Shukla and Smt. Puja Shukla W/o Shri Satyendra Kumar Shukla, Area: 33.45 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North: Plot No. 431, South: Plot No. 429, East: 5 Mtr.	15,97,263.86 as on Dated 12-03-2024 +Intt. and other	25-03-2025 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm	₹19,44,600/- (RP) ₹1,94,460/- (EMD) ₹10,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Symbolic	20-03-2025 to 24-03-2025 between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
	of the sale, please refer / visit to the web com Also, prospective bidders may cont					and Online
Date: 18-02-2025	Place : Kanpur De	hat	Authoris	ed Officer	, Bank of	Baroda
	Property : Premises on Arazi No. 517	Rs.	05 00 0005	≠23 27 300/ <sub>-</sub>	Symbolic	20.02.2025

Date: 18-02-2025	Place : Kanpur De	hat	Authoris	ed Officer,	Bank of	Baroda
Communication, Proprietor: Shri Gaurav Dixit S/o Shri Munnu Lal	Property: Premises on Arazi No. 517 (Min), Situated at Gram Bani, Pargana Sikanderpur Sarosi on Bani Bhawani Khera Link Road, Tehsil and Distt. Unnao. Owner of Property: Shri Gaurav Dixit S/o Shri Munnu Lal Dixit, Area: 640 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North: Agri land of Ganga Ram, South: Agri land of Dhaniram, East: Agri land of Shiv Kumar Singh, West: Bhawani Khera Link Road.	15,64,023.00 as on Dated 30-06-2017 +Intt. and other charges	between	₹23,27,300/- (RP) ₹2,32,730/- (EMD) ₹10,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Symbolic	20-03-2025 to 24-03-2025 between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Address: 128/329, Y-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur, Partner: Shri Keshav Sharma S/o Shri Shiv Kishor Sharma and Shri Shiv Kishor Sharma S/o Shri Devideen	Property: Bhumi No. 517 at Mohalla Shekhpur, Andar Palika City & Distt. Unnao in the name of Shri Shiv Kishor Sharma S/o Shri Devideen Sharma, Area: 139.40 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North: Plot of Prem Deep, South: Arazi Mukir, East: Road 20 Ft. Wide, West: Arazi Mukir. Branch: Adarsh Nagar, Unnao	Rs. 42,00,481.39 as on Dated 31-01-2022 +Intt. and other charges	25-03-2025 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm	₹18,19,170/- (RP) ₹1,81,917/- (EMD) ₹10,000/- (Bid increase Amount)	Symbolic	20-03-2025 to 24-03-2025 between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer / visit to the website link https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm and Online Auction Portal https://baanknet.com Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 8601804071 Date: 14-02-2025

Place : Unnao Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

#### Subhashish Guha takes charge as Two killed project head at NTPC Auraiya



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

centre (CHC) where both were declared dead by the doctors. Truck driver Amit Pal (30) of Shashtri Nagar, Sikandra, was living in Orai. On Wednesday Manager ₹eneral Subhashish Guha has offihe had come to meet his mothcially taken charge as the Head of Project at NTPC Auraiya on er Soneshree. At night he had gone to have dinner at a dhaba with his truck driver friend Wednesday. With an extensive career spanning several Iqbal (30) of Gandhi Nagar, Sikandra. While returning from there, their bike collided decades, he brings a wealth of technical expertise and leaderwith a harvester and they were ship experience to his new seriously injured. After informrole. Subhashish Guha coming their kin, police sent both pleted his BTech in Electrical Engineering from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in 1989 the youths to Sikandra CHC where doctors declared them dead. On hearing about the incident, their mothers and commenced his journey with NTPC Limited on Mehrun and Soneshree fell September 6, 1989, in the unconscious. Sikandra inspec-Electrical department. Over the years, he has played a key role in several critical NTPC projects, tor Mahesh Kumar said a searh was on in search of the absconding harvester driver. including those at Farakka, After autopsy and on receipt of Bongaigaon and Mouda. His complaint from the kin of the diverse experience spans multiple departments, such as deceased, further action will be Electrical Erection, Operations, initiated, he said. Meanwhile a constable was killed when his Fuel Handling, Commissioning and Testing, and O&M. Through motorcycle collided head on these roles, he has demonstratwith another bike under Bara Sagwar police station area of Unnao district. ed his ability to drive efficiency, optimise processes and handle

complex challenges in the power sector. With a strong commitment to innovation and operational excellence, Guha has been instrumental in strengthening NTPC's vision of delivering reliable and sustainable energy. His leadership is expected to further enhance NTPC Auraiya's performance and contribute to the organisation's ongoing efforts in advancing India's energy sector. NTPC Auraiya welcomes Subhashish Guha and looks forward to his guidance in achieving new milestones in power generation and operational excel-

lence. FOUND HANGING: A lovesick couple, missing for past three days, was found hanging from a tree in Bangermau Kotwali police area of Unnao on Thursday morning. On the information of passers-by, Circle Officer (CO) Arvind Chaurasia, Kotwali in charge and forensic team rushed to the spot and carried out a probe.

Meanwhile another couple allegedly committed suicide in Sajeti police area. They were found hanging in a dilapidated structure in Dohru village on Wednesday evening. They were found hanging from a hook. The girl wore a yellow salwar suit and black sweater while the youth, a black T-shirt and a dark green lower. It is suspected that they hanged themselves many days ago. On getting information ACP rushed to the spot and tried to ascertain the identity of the deceased.

### GI expert honoured



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

 $E_{\text{Identifications (GI) expert}}^{\text{minent Geographical}}$ and social worker Padam Shri Dr Rajani Kant from this holy city was given the highest honour of Arunachal Pradesh by Governor Lt Gen Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik during a grand ceremony held on the occasion of its 39th Statehood Day on Thursday. The function was also attended by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein and Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju. Dr Rajani Kant was honoured for getting GI tag for 18 products, including traditional clothing, handicrafts, agriculture, food etc of the tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh and starting the GI registration process of 22 new products.
This is the second honour to Dr

Rajani Kant in Arunachal this month as recently he was conferred on Doctor of Literature (DLitt) honoris causa by Arunachal University of Studies.

www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

-PAPER WITH PASSION-

### Delhi gets a woman CM

Rekha Gupta's appointment as Delhi's CM marks a historic milestone, making her the first woman to lead a BJP-ruled state

ekha Gupta has been sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Delhi, marking a significant milestone as she becomes the fourth woman to hold this esteemed position in the national capital. Her ascension not only signifies the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) return to power in Delhi after 27 years but also highlights a transformative shift in the city's political landscape. Gupta's appointment is historic, as she is the first woman to lead a BJP-ruled state. Her leadership is expected to bring a fresh perspective to Delhi's governance, focusing on inclusivity and development. Born on July 19, 1974, in Julana, Haryana, Rekha Gupta pursued her education in Delhi. She graduated from Daulat Ram College under Delhi University and later earned an LLB in 2022. Her legal background has equipped her with a strong foundation to navigate the complexities of political and administrative responsibilities. Gupta's political career commenced in 1992 with her involvement in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) at Delhi



University. Her leadership qualities were soon recognised, leading to her election as the President of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) for the 1996-97 term. She further expanded her political footprint by serving as a councillor from North Pitampura in 2007 and 2012, where she initiated various community devel-

Her dedication to public service and effective governance paved the way for her election as the MLA from Shalimar Bagh in 2025, defeating AAP's Bandana Kumari by a significant margin. Rekha Gupta hails from a respected family that values community service and education. Her father was an officer at the State Bank

of India and her family relocated to Delhi when she was two years old. As the new Chief Minister, Gupta faces several pressing challenges. Delhi's persistent air and river pollution require immediate and sustained interventions to safeguard public health. Besides, addressing the city's infrastructure deficits, including transportation and public amenities, is crucial for enhancing the quality of life for residents. Building upon her campaign promises, Gupta aims to revamp government schools, ensuring quality education for all. Expanding access to free and efficient healthcare services remains a priority to meet the needs of Delhi's diverse population. Implementing programs such as monthly stipends for economically disadvantaged women reflects her commitment to social equity. Rekha Gupta's rise to the Chief Minister's office embodies a blend of experience, dedication, and a vision for Delhi's progressive future. Her leadership is poised to navigate the complexities of the capital's governance, striving for sustainable development and inclusive growth. Now that there would be a double engine government in Delhi, Delhiites can expect some radical changes in the city. The earlier dispensation was at loggerheads with the central government and so many of the policies and programs could not be implemented due to the tussle between the Centre and the State Government.





Tourists ride a hot air balloon in Kullu

## A perilous challenge for India's soft diplomacy



The fate of Nimisha Priya, accused of murder in Yemen, hangs in balance. Her case tests India's diplomatic resolve to protect its citizens abroad

Priya, faces dire circumstances, accused of killing a Yemeni citizen. The charges are serious, but the true gravity of the situation lies in the potential consequences. Nimisha's case is not just about the allegation; it is a call for India to step forward decisively to protect one of its own. The environment in Houthi-

controlled Sanaa is precarious, with little hope of a fair trial or a peaceful resolution. This situation, which has escalated into an international diplomatic challenge, demands India's immediate intervention. Yemen has been mired in conflict for years, with the Houthi rebels now in control of the capital. With power dynamics in constant flux and the justice system fractured, foreign nationals, especially from countries like India, are particularly vulnera-

It is feared that Nimisha Priya, if left without diplomatic intervention, could face the harshest of outcomes, including arbitrary punishment or worse, in an environment where blood money—a custom rooted in Yemeni culture—may become a mode of resolution. This practice, deeply embedded in parts of the country, contradicts the ideals of modern justice and the humanitarian values upheld by The Indian government has

already taken significant steps to address the crisis. India's diplomatic response to this case has been commendable, with swift actions to ensure that the matter does not escalate further. Notably, Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, raised the issue with the Houthi envoy, showing a growing recognition of the The Houthi-controlled juscase's importance on the tice system may not provide a unique advantage in resolvregional diplomatic stage. This cooperation reflects the one would expect in a modurgency of India's intervention and highlights the potential for multilateral diplomacy to resolve the issue without resorting to traditional tribal customs like blood money.

n the volatile heart of India's foreign policy has Yemen's capital, Sanaa, an long been defined by its Indian national, Nimisha commitment to human rights and justice. In this case, the Indian government must continue to stand firm on these principles, ensuring that Nimisha's life is not negotiated for a price. Blood money, in particular, must not be allowed to govern the fate of an innocent individual. India's insistence on this point will not only safeguard her but also reaffirm India's role as a leading advocate for justice and human dignity in the glob-



DYNAMICS IN CONSTANT FLUX AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM FRACTURED, FOREIGN NATIONALS, **ESPECIALLY FROM COUNTRIES LIKE** INDIA, ARE **PARTICULARLY** VULNERABLE

al arena. More crucially, Nimisha Priya's situation places her life at risk due to the volatile political and security environment.

the due process or fairness ern, civilized society.

Foreign nationals are often treated with disdain, and Nimisha could fall victim to tament to its commitment to a miscarriage of justice. To prevent this, India must

leverage all diplomatic channels, including informal backdoor negotiations and Track Two diplomacy, which have proven effective in navigating complex international conflicts.

India has a long history of maintaining close ties with the Middle East, and it is through these alliances that India can garner support for its position. Countries like Iran, which shares strong historical ties with India, have shown willingness to mediate in this case, as evidenced by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's interven-

Track Two diplomacy is a critical tool in this regard. Informal dialogue through trusted intermediaries can often achieve results when official channels are bogged down by bureaucracy and political sensitivities. Índia's ability to operate through both formal and informal diplomatic avenues offers it ing this crisis and ensuring that Nimisha receives a fair and just resolution. The Indian government's actions to address this case are a tesprotecting its citizens abroad. This case also highlights the

importance of India's soft power diplomacy. Indian nurses, who play a vital role in providing healthcare across the Middle East, are viewed not only as healthcare providers but also as cultural ambassadors of India.

The protection of Nimisha Priya, a nurse working abroad, is thus more than just a personal concern. It reflects India's broader commitment to safeguarding its citizens and maintaining their trust in the government's ability to protect them.

The Indian government's proactive measures, including diplomatic outreach and coordination with international partners, underscore the country's growing stature

as a global player. As India's diplomatic outreach continues to develop, the importance of soft power—exemplified by its citizens abroad—becomes Nimisha's case is not merely an isolated incident: it represents an opportunity for India to assert its influence and diplomatic capability on the global stage. The government's efforts to safeguard Nimisha Priya should be lauded.

By engaging with regional powers, leveraging backchannel diplomacy, and ensuring that international standards of justice are upheld, India demonstrates its growing leadership in global affairs. Through such strategic actions, India can also affirm its position as a nation that champions human rights and justice for all its citizens, regardless of where they are in the world. In conclusion, Nimisha Priya's situation presents a serious challenge, but it is also an opportunity for India to reaffirm its values and demonstrate its diplomatic

By taking swift and comprehensive action, India will not only save her life but also reinforce its reputation as a responsible global leader, protecting its citizens and upholding the ideals of peace, justice, and human dignity. leader in human increasingly evident. rights and justice. India must continue to press forward, ensuring that Nimisha Priva's case is resolved with the fairness and respect she deserves, signalling a victory for Indian diplomacy on the world stage.

(The writer is an associate

professor; views are personal)

### Budget powers India's green transition with clean tech push



By balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility, the budget boosts India's long-term energy transition and reinforce its commitment to a greener future

Sitharaman's bud-get is tailored to drive consumption, propel long-term growth, and reinforce India's commitment to a greener world, proposals to power India's journey towards sustainability and net zero through various energy sector reforms, policies, and incentives stand out as they provide for a transformative shift in India's energy landscape. India's demand for power will continue to increase

The country has set an ambitious target of achieving net zero by 2070, a tall order. The power sector accounts for nearly one-third of India's total greenhouse gas emissions. While a country like India can't eliminate its reliance on coal-fired power with one stroke, transformative reforms in the power sector couldn't and must not

The path to carbon neutrality has to be paved with renewables. The Budget has provided the much-needed push to nuclear energy with the target of achieving 100 GW capacity by 2047 as part of India's long-term energy

transition strategy and achieving long-term economic and environmental goals. The government wants to

position nuclear energy as a significant pillar of the enermix. This aligns with India's broader objectives of a Viksit Bharat that will be less reliant on fossil fuels. The proposal to launch a Nuclear Energy Mission will promote domestic capabilities, private sector participation, and enhanced deployment of advanced nuclear technologies such as small modular

With an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore for promoting research and development of SMRs, the government targets developing at least five indigenously designed and operational SMRs by 2033. The government will also bring in necessary amendments to the

Atomic Energy Act and Civil able energy sector. The gov-Liability for Nuclear Damage Act to facilitate the Mission and encourage private sector participation in nuclear power projects. This is a great ment the development of nitiative! The Budget proposal to incentivise electricity reforms and augmentation of inter-state transmission capacity by states will advance power distribution companies' financial health and capacity. Upon meeting the reforms initiated under the revamped distribution system scheme, states can borrow an additional 0.5 per cent of their gross domestic product over and above what they get under the FRBM Act.

This will significantly improve the efficiency of the power sector. These reform measures are part of the government's plans to support clean technology. The government also intends to promote clean tech manufacturing to improve domestic value addition and build a local ecosystem for solar cells, electrolysers, wind turbines, highvoltage transmission equipment, and grid-scale batteries, among other technologies.

The Budget marks a transfor-

mative step for India's renew-

ernment's commitment to the 'Make in India' initiative and the new clean tech manufacturing policy will augsolar PV cells, batteries, and other sustainable technologies locally in India.

These moves will contribute to the nation's clean energy iourney while fostering sustainable economic growth. The full BCD exemption of the scrap of lithium-ion batteries, Lead, Zinc, and 12 more critical minerals will help boost battery manufacturing in India and promote more jobs for our youth.

By reducing the BCD on solar panels by half to 20 per cent, the FM has provided animal spirits to the wind energy sector, which would further reduce the price of the panels and reduce India's imports by facilitating domestic production

The increased allocation for solar power to promote rooftop solar projects is positive for solar module manufacturers and will boost RE

(The writer is Director, Shirdi Sai Electricals Ltd; views are personal)

#### SINS CONNOT BE WASHED

Madam — The article, 'Faith's double edged...' (February 20) presents valid points worth pondering over by one and all. Irrespective of the positive effects any religious faith is able to emit the rulers have, since centuries, found the best use of faiths to sentimentally tame the people to cover up their mistakes and misdeeds. Plunging the people in superstition continues to be a strategic ammunition in the hands of the rulers. Every rational argument and scientific inventions had to meet with a rigress and many a times fatal reaction from the rulers. Religious faith is an innate affair and the rulers should have no role to influence or denounce it. The rational behind the belief that a simple dip redeems all the accumulated sins in an instant is a matter to be pondered over. The same religion says no one can escape from paying for sins. It is also said that even death cannot redeem one of sins, and the sinner takes birth again to pay them off. The practice of committing sins and wiping them off with a holy dip promotes sinners to feel at ease or prevents them from committing sins.

The quest continues. It is strange indeed that a party questions the scheme of government funding pilgrimage by believers of a faith on one hand and spends thousands of crores to promote holy dip on the other. The simple visible fact is that for rulers it is a tool to tame the people and also to reap a good harvest of income. Our constitution is very clear with its secular character and directs the state to promote scientific temper. It is time the secular character of the ruling dispensation is analysed to set it on the right track. People resting their belief is not an issue, but the government using it or misusing it is definitely an issue. The course needs to be set on the right path before it takes ugly turns.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

**SC CRITICISES OFFENSIVE SPEECH** Madam— Recently, the Supreme Court took a firm stand on the controversial statements made by YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadi, making it clear that "freedom

#### **Protest over Nepalese student suicide**

■ epalese student Prakriti Lamsal's death by suicide at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology in Bhubaneswar is tragic and a wake-up call for the central government. KIIT seemingly disregarded Prakriti's complaints of harassment against an Indian student. Later, without investigation, it labelled her suicide a result of heartbreak. When hun-

of speech does not mean a license to say anything." This remark is not limited to a single individual but serves as a warning for the entire society. Ranveer's comments contained indecency, offensive language, and words that hurt social dignity. The Supreme Court stated that the choice of words is not merely a matter of personal thought but has an impact on the entire society. Any statement that harms the dignity of women, sisters, mothers, fathers, and families is condemnable and unaccept-

oday, social media has given every individual a platform, but that does not mean it should become a battlefield of obscenity. The power of words is greater than that of a sword-they can either unite society or divide it. In a democracy, freedom does not mean absolute liberty but responsibility. The Supreme Court's decision serves as a lesson for everyone who forgets the dignity of language and, in the name of freedom, disrespects others. True freedom lies in discipline and decorum. The restraint of words is the true hallmark of civilisation.

R K Jain | Barwani

dreds of other Nepalese students protested they were bundled out to Cuttack railway station and told to stav away.

In one viral video, two KIIT staff are reportedly heard shouting at them that the institute's expenditure on tuition and board exceeds Nepal's budget. Such arrogance! By this logic, Indians in the US should shop at Walmart with a sense of gratitude because the retail giant's revenue exceeds the central government's budget. Many had scoffed when a global survey claimed India was among the most racist countries. Our record on people from our own Northeast isn't great either. Surveys showed how they were stigmatised as 'Chinese' during the pandemic. India wants 500,000 foreign students a year by 2047 but is stuck at the 50,000 mark. Accepting what's wrong might be a good place to start.

R K Jain | Barwani

**REKHA GUPTA BECOMES DELHI CM** Madam — Rekha Gupta officially took charge as Delhi's Chief Minister in a grand oath-taking ceremony at Ramlila Maidan, symbolising the BJP's political comeback after 27 years. The event saw the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and other prominent dignitaries. A seasoned political figure with a strong grassroots background, Gupta-formerly a student leader and three-time councillor-reaffirmed her dedication to tackling Delhi's pressing challenges, including curbing pollution, upgrading infrastructure, and improving public amenities. The BJP's sweeping victory, securing 48 out of 70 seats, reflects a decisive shift in voter sentiment. As the fourth woman to hold this office in Delhi, Gupta's leadership is expected to bring strategic governance reforms, with a sharp focus on environmental sustainability and administrative efficiency.

Neha Tomar | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

### **FIRST COLUMN**

#### **OVERCOMING GRIEF**

A fragile mind, burdened by irrational fears and unresolved emotions, struggles to find clarity



RAVI VALLURI

ill Maher writes, "Suicide is man's way of telling God: you can't Bfire me, I quit." But do brave men commit suicide? Fear, anxiety, emotional upheavals, unpleasant feelings, panic attacks and phobias are all symptomatic of a fragile and delicate mind. It is an expression of an unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger

A fragmented mind is invariably a victim of irrational fear. Such an individual is unable to distinguish between what is logical and what is not. People suffer from extreme or irrational fear or aversion. This is nothing but what is called phobia (the Greek word for fear). A contributor to the magnification of fear is our pent-up emotions. These emotions are not based on a rational or scientific thinking pattern. We end up reacting violently or irrationally rather than responding in a coherent and clear-sighted manner. Humans should be prudent to ponder that if left untreated this situation can become mourning regalia.

A person can suffer from psychosomatic illnesses, loss of appetite, self-deprecatory behaviour or even schizophrenia. This has a multiplier effect in the form of morbid thoughts, persecution complexes and even hallucinations. An element of fear is perhaps required, because then we can patrol our fences. However, this needs to be distinguished from false bravado. Such an attitude will only be tantamount to mere filibustering or posturing. The brain is an organ and the mind is our intellect. The power of the mind needs to be magnified and enhanced to conquer fear. The mind is a movie theatre where the soap opera



of our life is enacted. We play, rewind and rerun an enormous number of movies. These are based on our idiosyncrasies and quality of thoughts. Thoughts are impacted by the kind of food we partake in (Tamasik, Rajasik, Sattvik), the company we keep and the amount of rest we take. The quality (guna) of food has a bearing on our disposition and approach to life. Tamasik food makes us sluggish, Rajasik food makes us feverish or anxious in disposition and Sattvik food makes

The first two lead us to fearful situations. If we are closeted to individuals who have a negative thought process, we imbibe such attributes and evince such a behavioural pattern. "Man is known by the company he keeps" is a very old adage and so is "man is born free but always is in chains". Suppose we have inspirational friends and achievers in our orbit, we will tread such a path. It is cardinal to have adequate physical and mental rest. If we are rested, then we are at peace and do not complain or quibble. Then we are physically and mentally alert and high-yielding. In our minds, we need to keep space to just dump the garbage that disappears into the recycle bin, never to appear again.

We need to pursue passions, hobbies, indulge in sports, participate in extracurricular activities, avoid negative company, take up initiatives, practice meditation, keep the mind occupied, footslog on the treadmill, go for long walks, go for treks, and read autobiographies of entrepreneurs and achievers. Others adopt the spiritual path by practising pranayama, learning yoga, undertaking the Art of Living course or observing the breath through the Vipassana technique.

These holistic techniques metamorphose the mind to be in the present moment and overcome fear. To conquer fear, we need to log out of our comfort zone so that the virus of fear does not enter our operating system. And if nothing works out, one should surrender to the Divine and feel grateful.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

## A year of cinematic innovation, AI controversies and global synergy



The global film festival circuit in 2025 is set to redefine storytelling, balancing tradition with cutting-edge innovation

very year, the international film festival circuit brings forth a renewed sense of energy, enthusiasm, innovation and cinematic craftsmanship to audiences across the globe. Each festival curates a unique paradigm shift in content, programming, outreach and presenter. tation, making every year distinct yet interconnected through the shared language of cinema.

The year 2025 is no exception. With the Berlinale 2025 already setting the tone, the world is getting a glimpse into the new formats, styles, and narratives that will dominate global screens this year. The Berlinale 2025 has kicked off the festival season, giving cinephiles a head start in understanding the emerging trends in storytelling. This year, the jury is presided over by acclaimed American filmmaker Todd Haynes, known for his originality, thematic focus, and innovative cinematic techniques that have spanned four

The jury comprises a diverse matrix of global filmmakers, costume designers, film critics, and actors, ensuring that a wide spectrum of perspectives will shape the awards decisions. The challenge for the Berlinale jury, like many others in 2025, is whether to adhere to traditional cinematic standards or to adapt to new advancements, particularly the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in

As storytelling tools evolve, the jury must decide how to balance imagination, tradition, and technological innovation while maintaining the core of cinematic expression. The Cannes Film Festival 2025, scheduled from May 13 to May 25, 2025, promises a blend of legacy and forward this line in position. Even the core ward-thinking innovation. French actor Juliette Binoche has been named the President of the Jury, a role she describes with both humility and nostalgia. In her acceptance, Binoche said, "In 1985, I walked up the steps for the first time with the enthusiasm and uncertainty of a young actress.

I never imagined that, 40 years later, I would return as the President of the Jury." Binoche holds the rare distinction of winning the Best Actress Award at Cannes in 2010, Venice in 1994, and Berlin in 1995, along with a BAFTA and an Oscar. which she shared with Julianne Moore. Cannes 2025 is expected to continue its tradition of blending mainstream and experimental films, with AI-driven narratives anticipated to make a significant impact. The 82nd Venice International Film Festival, set to run from August 27 to September 6, 2025, will feature a dedicated section on the restoration of cinematic classics.

This addition acknowledges the importance of preserving the past while exploring the future of cinema. Venice remains a unique experience where audiences do not merely watch films but immerse themselves in living art and culture against the backdrop of one of the world's most extraordinary cities.

As with Berlinale and Cannes, the Venice iury will face the challenge of evaluating films that push traditional boundaries. Will they reward those that adhere to classic storytelling structures, or will films leveraging AI tools for scriptwriting, editing, and visual effects find greater recog-

The challenge will be to balance the classical, contemporary and tech-driven



HUMAN IS BECOMING A CRITICAL ASPECT OF JURY DELIBERATIONS, PUSHING THE DEFINES

tools of storytelling on the celluloid screen. AI's increasing role in filmmaking has sparked a debate across festival juries. Should AIgenerated content be evaluated on par with traditionally crafted films? Festivals in 2025 are contemplating introducing new categories to accommodate AIassisted storytelling.

THE INTERPLAY The interplay between human creativity and technological advancement is becoming a critical aspect of jury deliberations, CREATIVITY pushing the boundaries of what defines authentic storytelling.

AND India is set to initiate a new platform within the global cinemat-TECHNOLOGICAL ic landscape with the inaugural edition of the World Audio Visual ADVANCEMENT & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) scheduled to be held in Mumbai from May 1 to 5, 2025. WAVES 2025 aims to bring together the global media and entertainment (M&E) industry with global talent, fostering collaborations, business opportunities, and cross-cultural dialogue. It is an initiative of the BOUNDARIES Government to highlight and OF WHAT present India as a juggernaut of creative excellence, encourage co-productions, and promote film tourism and management AUTHENTIC holistically.

This summit is expected to catal-STORYTELLING This summin is expected to community yee growth by attracting international investments, sharing global best practices, and enabling policy discussions.

The four-day event curated along the four broad pillars of Broadcasting and Entertainment, AVGC-XR, Digital Media and Films is expected to create an unprecedented buzz and collaborative partnership amongst key stakeholders leading to a muchneeded global media dialogue, fied by organising networking involving key stakeholders from sessions with international deleinvolving key stakeholders from B2B, B2C and B2G verticals. WAVES 2025 also aims to encourage the sharing of ideas and resources, positioning India as an attractive destination for media investments, partnerships, and collaborations and establishing India as a global content hub. Beyond the celebration of cinema, international film festivals have increasingly become instruments of soft power diplo-

These festivals act as avenues for cross-cultural dialogue, collaborations, and international partnerships. For countries like India, participating in such festivals lies in balancing tradition with goes beyond screenings and accolades; it is about leveraging the medium of cinema to strengthen diplomatic ties and cultural exchange. The insights gained from WAVES 2025 will be crucial for the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) later in the year. IFFI must focus on curating an international jury that mirrors the diversity seen in Berlinale and Venice.

The festival can also benefit from introducing categories that acknowledge AI-generated content, thus staying in step with global trends. Moreover, IFFI 2025 has the potential to strengthen India's position as a hub for filming destinations, partnerships and collaboration. By promoting India's e-visa facility for filmmakers and highlighting scenic and culturally rich locations across the country, the festival can attract global filmmakers and producers.

The festival's role in soft power diplomacy can be further ampli-

gates and facilitating collaborations that go beyond cinema into the realms of cultural exchange and education.

In the current scenario where geostrategic communication is critical, soft power diplomacy through film festivals will play a critical role in integrating cinema, people and excellence. The film festival circuit in 2025 is not merely about showcasing films; it is about witnessing a transformation in storytelling techniques, jury deliberations, and international collaborations.

The challenge for juries this year innovation, human creativity with technological advancements, and local narratives with global per-

For India, 2025 stands as a pivotal year to strengthen its cinematic presence globally. WAVES 2025 and IFFI 2025 together offer an opportunity to not only showcase India's prowess in storytelling, weaving it with contemporary styles, but also to position the country as a forward-thinking, globally connected cinema

powerhouse. As the year unfolds, the world will watch closely to see how these festivals respond to the evolving dynamics of cinema, ensuring that the magic of storytelling continues to resonate across borders and generations alike. 2025 will surely be a game-changer for cinephiles and creative geniuses.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; Inputs by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan. Views are personal)

### Beyond academics: How study abroad shapes personal growth and leadership skills

In an increasingly interconnected world, the decision to study abroad is no longer just about acquiring a degree. It is a transformative journey, one that shapes individuals

students to see the world through a different lens. By engaging with global issues firsthand, be it climate change, social justice, or economic policies, they gain a deeper understanding of how interconnected and interdependent our world truly is. This global perspective is invaluable in shaping informed leaders. It instils a sense of responsibility and encourages students to think beyond their immediate surroundings.

Leaders who understand global challenges and can approach them with a holistic mindset are better equipped to create meaningful change.

Collaboration and Networks

tudying abroad allows unique opportunities to build a global network of peers, professors, and professionals. These connections often serve as invaluable resources, providing insights, guidance, and opportunities long after graduation. Collaborating with people from different parts of the world teaches students how to harness diverse strengths and ideas to achieve common goals. They become adept at creating inclusive environments where everyone feels valued—a critical skill for leaders in today's

multicultural workplaces. Growth in Emotional Intelligence

Living away from home in an unfamiliar setting often stirs a range of emotions. These emotional highs and lows Studying abroad offers contribute significantly to the



DALJEET **SANDHU** 

development of emotional intelligence. Students learn to manage their emotions, empathise with others, and build meaningful relationships despite cultural differences. Emotional intelligence, often considered more critical than IQ in leadership roles, is cultivated naturally during the study-abroad experience. Moreover, going through relationships in a

foreign setting teaches students how to build trust and rapport, even in challenging circumstances. Communication

**Interpersonal Skills** Effective communication is a

cornerstone of leadership, and studying abroad is an excellent training ground for

Navigating a foreign environment requires students to communicate with clarity and intent, often across language barriers. They become adept at listening, interpreting non-verbal cues, and tailoring their messages to suit audiences. Furthermore, participating in group projects, extracurricular activities, or even casu-

al social interactions with

peers from different cultural



sonal skills. Students learn to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and inspire those around them, qualities that define great leaders.

Building Resilience and Independence

Moving to a new country requires immense courage. From finding accommodation to dealing with administrative paperwork, students often have to manage tasks

that they may have never encountered before. The absence of a familiar support system forces them to rely on their abilities, building resilience and self-reliance. Moreover, students gain confidence as they navigate and overcome these hurdles. This newfound sense of independence not only shapes their identity but also prepares them for leadership roles where decisiveness and selfassurance are paramount.

Embracing Diversity

One of the most profound aspects of studying abroad is exposure to cultural diversity. Students find themselves immersed in a society that often operates on different values, customs, and traditions than their own. This immersion fosters adaptability and open-mindedness, as they learn to respect and appreciate perspectives vastly different from their own. Éngaging with peers from diverse backgrounds teaches valuable lessons in empathy and cross-cultural communi-

Whether it's understanding the nuances of a local festival, navigating a new language, or simply sharing a meal with someone from another culture, these experiences challenge preconceived notions and build cultural intelligence. In short, studying abroad is much more than an academic pursuit; it is a journey of self-discovery and

transformation. By embracing cultural diver-

developing critical leader-ship skills, students emerge as well-rounded individuals ready to tackle the challenges of a globalised world. The lessons learned during this time extend far beyond the classroom.

They shape character, nurture empathy, and inspire visionqualities that define true leaders. For those who take the plunge, studying abroad is not just an investment in their education but also a stepping stone toward becoming agents of change in an everevolving world. For students who choose to study abroad, the richness comes not just in knowledge but in the experiences that mould them into future leaders.

(The writer is CEO of Daltin sity, building resilience, and AI Portal; views are personal)

## Delhi cabinet young with caste, gender and religion

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

→he Cabinet of the new government-led by Rekha Gupta balances representation of all major communities that propelled the BJP to power in Delhi with a massive majority after 27 years.

In the February five Delhi Assembly polls, the BJP won 48 seats, with nine of its MLAs belonging to the Bania community. Chief Minister Gupta, a first-time legislator,

Sahib Singh, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra, Ravinder Indraj Singh, Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Singh — were administered the oath of office by Lieutenant Governor VK

from the Rajouri Garden Nagar MLA Arvinder Singh frontrunner for the chief the party. Moreover, the BJP, Assembly constituency who has been selected for the new Tarvinder Singh Marwah are the into the new Cabinet and is reserved assembly constituencies Cabinet, is the Sikh face of the has also won Hari Nagar and Jangpura which have a sizeable

other Sikh MLAs of the BJP in Delhi. The party also inducted two Purvanchalis — Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Singh — into the Cabinet. The BJP's Jat face Parvesh Verma, who was a

2021.

banner.

ones launched after the natural disasters

in Nepal, Chennai, Uttarakhand, and

Jammu and Kashmir. Sirsa has served as

the president of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara

As the DSGMC president in 2019, he played a key role in Covid relief efforts,

organising langar sewa, providing assistance to doctors and nurses,

arranging home delivery of food, and

facilitating oxygen cylinder distribution.

Management Committee (DSGMC).

relief efforts like the

than 31,000 votes.

Singh has been

associated with

the party's SC

Morcha and has

played a key role

support for the

party in North

His political journey is deeply

rooted in Bawana,

a constituency he

now represents in

Indraj Singh, had

also served as an

Delhi

father,

Delhi.

the

Assembly.

Singh's

mobilising

expected to get major portfolios. winning four of 12 such seats, Senior leader and first-time MLA appointed Ravindra Indraj as from Janakpuri seat Ashish Sood, who has been appointed a He defeated sitting AAP MLA Jai minister in the new government, is a well-known Punjabi leader of seat by over 31,000 votes.

#### **PRAVESH SAHIB SINGH**

[Minister of PWD, Legislative Affairs, Irrigation, Flood Control, Water, Gurudwara Elections]

BJP's Pravesh Sahib Singh first rose in national politics in 2014 when he won the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat but his profile took a leap when he emerged as the giant killer in the Delhi Assembly polls after defeating AAP supremo and three-time chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. The 47-year-old Singh was a prominent Jat face of the party in the

February 5 polls winning with and was considered the frontrunner for record margins in the West Delhi Lok

the post of chief minister which Sabha seat in 2014 and 2019. Singh holds eventually went to first-time MLA an MBA degree from the Fore School of Rekha Gupta. Singh was inducted as a minister in the Delhi cabinet.

Pravesh Sahib Singh, a son of former chief minister Sahib Singh Verma, has the reputation of a firebrand leader who publicly declared himself as Kejriwal's rival in the New Delhi seat held by the former Delhi CM for three terms.

belongs to the community.

Along with CM Gupta (50), six newly elected MLAs — Pravesh

Saxena at the Ramlila Maidan here on Thursday. Manjinder Singh Sirsa, a third-time MLA

polls,

mirrored

By setting himself

up for possibly the

biggest challenge

Kejriwal had done

in 2013 when the

AAP chief pitched

himself against

another three-time

Sheila Dikshit from

the New Delhi

While he defeated

Kejriwal by a

margin of around

4,000 votes, he has

the distinction of

constituency.

Management and has also been involved

in social work through Rashtriya

Swabhiman, a non-profit organisation

Born on November 7, 1977, in Delhi, he

founded by his father.

the assembly

Singh

what

Minister

A prominent Sikh leader in Delhi's

political landscape, Manjinder Singh

Sirsa is an active

social worker who

was involved in

organising 'oxygen

langars' during the

Covid pandemic.

The leader, who turns (53) on

February 28, was on

Thursday sworn in

as a minister in the

new Delhi govern-

ment led by Chief Minister Rekha

He took the oath in

his mother tongue

repealed farm laws.

His induction into the Delhi cabinet is

seen as the BJP's effort to strengthen its

support among the Sikh community,

which has been critical of the party over

its handling of the farmers' agitation, most

of whom were Punjab, over the now-

Gupta.

Puniabi.

showed interest in politics since childhood and joined the RSS as a Bal Dhanwati Chandela by a margin of 18,190 votes in the Delhi Assembly polls. A

Bharatiya Janata Party in Delhi. Besides Rajouri Garden, the BJP number of Sikh voters. Gandhi

**MANJINDER SINGH SIRSA** 

[Minister of Food and Civil Supplies, Forest and Environment Planning]

**ASHISH SOOD** [Minister of Home, Power, Urban Development, Education/Higher and Technical Education, Training]



of Delhi government.
The first time MLA from Janakpuri Kashmir unit. included his parents' names, first his father's and then his mother's, while taking the oath as a Delhi government Cabinet Minister at Ramlila Maidan on Thursday. "Main (I) Ashish Shriram Madan Gopal Sood...," the newly sworn minister began his oath. Notably, Shriram Madangopal Sood is his father's name. Similarly, later in his speech, the minister mentioned his mother's name, saying, "Main (I) Ashish Sushila Madan

Debutant MLA Pankaj Kumar

Purvanchali face

in the newly

formed Rekha

Gupta government, is a

dental surgeon-

turned-politician.

Singh (48), sworn

in as a minister on

Thursday, has won

from the Vikaspuri

seat, defeating his

nearest rival by

over 12,000 votes.

He is the general

secretary of the

Poorvanchal

BIP's

The Delhi residents coming from

eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are referred to as

Poorvanchalis and they are dominant in

Delhi

Morcha.

Singh,

continued his oath. Senior present at the iconic Ramlila Maidan, who heard Sood's words, appreciated him for including his parents' names

while taking the of oath Minister's office. The first-time MLA from Janakpuri is known for his organisational skills and is currently in charge of the Goa BJP and the coincharge of the party's Jammu and

Gopal Sood..." and

citizens

Like the new chief minister, Sood too is a

former Delhi University Students' Union president - winning the election in 1989 and served in various capacities in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) including national secretary. He became the general secretary of the BJP Yuva Morcha in 2003 and within two years

went on to become its national vice

**KAPIL MISHRA** 

[Minister of Law and Justice, Labour and employment, Development, Art and Culture, Language and Tourism]

Activist and now a Delhi minister, Kapil Mishra has undergone a complete transition from being an avowed AAP member and a bitter critic of the BJP, RSS and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a controversial politician often regarded as the "posterboy of Hindutva". Thursday,

Mishra took oath as a minister in the formed Delhi government

at a grand ceremony at the historic Ramlila Ground. His induction in the Rekha Gupta-led Delhi Cabinet is seen as a strategic move by the BIP as it consolidates its governance approach in the national

Mishra (44), was an activist before he resources minister in 2015. started his political journey. He was actively involved in anti- against Modi, BJP and RSS inside and corruption movements during the 2010 outside the Delhi Assembly.

Commonwealth Games held in the national capital. began his political the with Aadmi (AAP) and was ernment in Delhi elected as a Member of the been an active Legislative Assembly (MLA) BJP's Scheduled representing Caste (SC)

Karawal Nagar in Legislative Assembly of Delhi in 2015. He defeated BJP candidate and four-

time MLA Mohan Singh Bisht by a margin of 44,431 votes. Considered close to poet Kumar Vishwas, who was one of the founders of AAP, Mishra was inducted by AAP convener and the then chief minister Arvind Keiriwal in his cabinet as the water

Mishra would level serious

**RAVINDER INDRAJ SINGH** 

 $F_{\text{Ravinder Indraj}}^{\text{irst-time }MLA}$ Singh, who took oath as Cabinet career minister in the Aam newly formed Party Rekha Gupta govon Thursday, has member of the Morcha.

Singh is the Dalit face in the Rekha Gupta-led Delhi Cabinet. He is a member of the BJP's SC Morcha and has been working for the Dalit community for a

long time. A prominent Dalit leader in the Delhi

BJP, Singh (50) has completed his higher education, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Delhi University's School of Open Learning (SOL). He defeated Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP's) Jai Bhagwan Upkar from the Singh — were inducted into the Bawana (SC reserved) seat by more Cabinet on Thursday.



MLA from the Narela constituency.

According to his election affidavit, he has assets worth over ₹7 Crore, with no criminal cases registered against him. Besides Ravinder Indraj Singh, five other leaders — Parvesh Sahib Singh, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Kumar

#### PANKAJ KUMAR SINGH



Yamuna river. which facilities should provided to the people of Delhi ĥave not been given to them. Our efforts will be provide facilities to the

cleaning of the

people of the national capital and to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed Delhi,"

Singh has done his Bachelor's degree

in dental surgery from Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, in Bihar in 1998. His inclusion in the Delhi Cabinet hints towards the party's political choices in Bihar which goes to polls later this year. several constituencies of the national He also served as a municipal capital. Singh said that the priorities corporation leader in the Municipal before the new government are many Corporation of Delhi (MCD) before being fielded by the party from the

### CM Rekha Gupta performs Yamuna aarti after taking oath

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after taking oath, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta along with her Cabinet colleagues reached Vasudev Ghat to perform "Yamuna *aarti*"-inspired by the daily evening ceremony at the ghats of Ganga at Haridwar and Varanasi. The gesture — apart from

being a political message of the party's comeback after 26 years — was also a reaffirmation of the BJP's promise to clean up the river that was once the lifeblood of the centuries-old city but is now little more than a drain. The party leaders then headed to the Delhi secretariat for the first Cabinet meeting.
The pollution in the Yamuna

river and cleaning it had become a major issue between the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on the one side and



Sachdeva, Minister Parvesh Verma and others during Yamuna Aarti at Vasudev Ghat in New Delhi

opposition parties BJP and and Congress on the other during treats the run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections.

AAP convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was attacked by both the BJP and the Congress over the highly polluted Yamuna.

In its election manifesto, the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Patra", the BJP had said it would set up a "Yamuna Kosh" for the revitalisation and the riverfront development

project. For now, the four-fold plan for the clear-up announced by the Lieutenant Governor's office involves the removal of trash and silt from the river and the drains — including the Najafgarh drain that contributes the most to the pollution - expanding the sewage treatment capacity to 1,000 million gallons per day

Ramlila Maidan turns saffron

common effluent treatment plant capacity to 220 MLD.

Gupta, along with Delhi BJP state president Virendra Sachdeva and her cabinet colleagues — Parvesh Sahib Singh, Asish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Ravinder Indraj Singh, Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Kumar Singh — performed 'Maa Yamuna puja' before conducting aarti ahead of the first cabinet meeting. Ram bhajans were played at the ghat, and slogans of "Jai Shree Ram" and "Yamuna Maiya Ki Jai" were raised. Earlier in the day, Gupta, the first-time MLA from Shalimar Bagh, was administered oath as the chief minister by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena in a grand ceremony at the Ramlila Maidan. Her council of ministers was also

STAFF REPORTER

The AAP government in Delhi had several run-ins with lieutenant governors over various issues in the past decade. However, with the BJP coming to power in the city after more than 27 years, many expect the relationship to improve, paving the way for smooth governance.

A senior BJP leader said the A senior BJP leader said the LG being the head of the Delhi government holds a position of authority. "It means the elected dispensation in Delhi must work not only in cooperation with him but also attach requisite disprise to the requisite dignity to the constitutional office, a fact sorely neglected by the AAP," he said.

The leader asserted that with the BJP in power both at the Centre and in Delhi, the fine balancing act with the LG office will no longer be an issue.

The LG is appointed by the President on the advice of the Union government.

According to BJP leaders, governance and public service delivery are likely to see major improvements

now.
Solving persistent issues like
Yamuna pollution, and
deteriorating civil
infrastructure like roads,
water supply, drainage and
public transport are likely to
receive a boost, besides a
general unswing in overall general upswing in overall governance and public

governance and public service delivery, they said.

The leader also asserted that the recurring issue of jurisdictional authority between the LG and an wonthe February 5 assembly assembly assembly and the service delivery, they said the new bjr government would fulfil all the promises made to Delhites.

The BJP, which has been out of power in Delhi since 1998, won the February 5 assembly elected government, which remained a major bone of contention when AAP was in

power, is also likely to take a back seat now. VK Saxena, after taking over

as Delhi LG in May 2022, had frequent confrontations with the AAP government on sanitation issues, Yamuna pollution infrastructure and other matters related to policy and

governance.
The strained relations between the two sides had a major impact on governance. The LG, through his control over the services department and bureaucracy, kept the previous AAP dispensation on a tight leash.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP had hit back defiantly, accusing the LG of jeopardising governance and smooth delivery of services. Another BJP leader said the party respects constitutional authorities and always aims to serve the people by ensuring coordination and

cooperation with them. Taking everyone together, the BJP will now work to make Delhi a "developed capital", the leader said.

First-time BJP MLA from Shalimar Bagh Rekha Gupta was administered oath as the chief minister by Lieutenant Governor VK Śaxena. Her Council of Ministers were also sworn in.

Soon after taking charge of her office at the Delhi Secretariat, Gupta asserted that not a single day would be wasted in realising the "Viksit Delhi" mission and said the new BJP government

polls, dismantling the political

### Delhi gets its ninth Chief Minister

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $F^{
m irst ext{-}time}$  MLA Rekha Gupta sworn as Delhi's ninth Chief Minister on Thursday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president JP Nadda, and Chief Ministers and Deputy CMs of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)-ruled States.

Choudhary Braham Prakash from the Congress was the first chief minister of Delhi. He was the Chief Minister from March 17, 1952 to February 12, 1955. He was the Chief Minister for two years and 332 days. He had represented Nangloi Jat constituency.

represented from Darya Ganj constituency, was the second chief minister between February 12, 1955 and November 1, 1956. He had served as CM for one year and 263 days. The Legislative Assembly of

Delhi was first constituted on 17 March 1952 under the Government of Part C States Act, 1951, but it was abolished on 1 October 1956. The legislative assembly of Delhi was re-established on January 2, 1992, following the enforcement of the (Sixty-ninth Constitution Amendment) Act, 1991, and the subsequent Government of National Capital Territory

of Delhi Act, 1991. In 1993, Madan Lal Khurana, Gurmukh Nihal Singh who known as "Delhi ka Sher"

(Lion of Delhi), became the first Chief Minister after the state Legislative Assembly was reinstated through the 69th Constitution Amendment Act, 1991. BJP had won 49 of the 70 seats, while Congress secured 14. Khurana's tenure was short lived.

However, in 1995, his name was linked to the infamous Hawala scandal, and he stepped down after 27 months due to corruption allegations. After his resignation in 1996, Sahib Singh Verma replaced as the new Chief Minister. He remained 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

#### **STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

sea of saffron engulfed the A sea of sattron engulted the sprawling Ramlila Maidan on Thursday as thousands of BJP supporters gathered here to witness the oath-taking ceremony of Delhi CM Rekha Gupta.

The venue was adorned with marigold flowers and betel leaves, while enthusiastic supporters chanted "Jai Siya Ram", waving party flags and raising slogans in jubilation.

Around 50,000 people from different

different states and backgrounds gathered to witness the grand ceremony, which marked the BJP's return to power in the city after more than 26 years. Among them was an elderly woman in her 70s who had travelled all the way from Uttar Pradesh just to



BJP supporters during oath-taking ceremony at Ramlila Maidan witness the event. "I have come here to see Narendra Modi. I am so happy today that I got

this chance, even if it's from afar," she said with a smile. energy of the event. Amid the festive atmosphere, musicians played the shehnai and dhol, filling the air with patriotic melodies like "Teri Mitti Mein Mil Jawa" and "Maa Tujhe Salaam". The crowd

hummed along, their voices blending with the music, adding to the electrifying

Sunita Gupta, a Janakpuri resident dressed in an orange saree, expressed her joy at seeing a woman take a significant leadership role. "I feel so proud that a woman is becoming our chief minister.

### BJP's return to power may end LG tussle

**NEW DELHI** 

### Uddhav appeals unity for local polls In Delhi CM's village, youth

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

ikening himself to Japan where earthquakes are residence "Matoshri" in common, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said here that given the "shocks" he was receiving in the form of desertions by leaders and workers, he had become "Dhakka Purush" (shock resilient), as he fervently appealed to his party workers to remain "united" ahead of

the local body polls.
In his desperate bid to hold his flock together in the face of continuous poaching by the rival Shiv Sena faction-led by the deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde, Uddhav held

a meeting with party leaders, office bearers and elected representatives at his Bandra north-west Mumbai and pepped up the sagged morale of the party workers.

Known for his sense of

humour, Uddhav poked fun at himself over the recent desertions from his party when he said: "My situation has become like that of Japan where people do not realise the earthquakes and tremors they experience in a day. Even I have experienced so many political earthquakes that quakes no longer surprise me. In a way I have become a 'Dhakka Purush' (quake resilient). I am

just watching which deserter gives me how many blows. When I strike back, it will be such a big earthquake that no one will forget it".

Uddhav said that in the face of ongoing desertions, he was in the process of rebuilding the party. "We are expecting the Supreme Court verdict in the party MLAs disqualification case soon. We expect the municipal corporation elections to be held in April-May this year. That being the case, I expect all of you to begin working for the party. We should not repeat the mistakes we made after the recent State Assembly polls," the Sena (UBT) president said.

It may be recalled that the Shiv Sena — which contested the recent State Assembly polls in alliance with the Congress and NCP (Sharad Pawar — won 20 seats out of the total 92 seats it had contested, while the Congress and NCP (SP) bagged 16 seats and 10 seats out of the total 102 seats and 85 seats that

they contested respectively.
Together, the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and NCP won 46 seats, as against the 230 seats out of the total 288 seats collectively bagged by the ruling MahaYuti partners — comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde) and NCP (Ajit Pawar).

## prays standing for 22 days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/JIND(HARYANA)

 $F_{\text{year-old from a Haryana}}^{\text{or the past 22 days, a 24-}}$  village has been in a standing position round-the-clock, in what villagers claimed began with praying for the victory of BJP candidate Rekha Gupta in Delhi polls and later that she should become the chief minister.

minister.

Now, the villagers of Nandgarh say the god has answered Praveen's prayers, though the youth on Thursday said he will continue with his "taph" for the next 19 days after which a "iagran" (religious "jagran" (religious programme) will be held in

the village.
Debutant legislator Rekha
Gupta was sworn in as Delhi
chief minister on Thursday in a grand show of strength that marks the BJP's return to power in Delhi after more than 26 years.

The 50-year-old has her roots in Nandgarh village in Jind's Julana, though her family had moved to the national capital a long time back.

Gupta will be the second woman chief minister of Delhi from the BJP camp with a Haryana connection after the late Sushma Swaraj, who spent her childhood days in

It was a festive atmosphere in Rekha Gupta's village as

residents gathered and offered sweets to each other. In the village, Praveen has standing position till he completes 41 days. Former sarpanch Sharma said In the village, Praveen has been praying in a temple room and meditating for the last 22 days in a standing position, though he has a swing placed in his front to lean on. Hari Om Sharma, former

sarpanch of Nandgarh, Thursday said, "Praveen neither sits nor lies down. He barely has some food and takes toilet breaks in between. Round-the-clock he is standing and his legs and feet have also got swollen." Sharma said when Rekha

Gupta's ticket from Shalimar Bagh was announced by the BJP, Praveen took a vow that he will continuously pray and meditate so that she wins the elections.

Later, after the poll results were declared, when Gupta's name started doing the round among the chief ministerial probables, Praveen continued to pray that she should chief minister, become Sharma said.

"Now, he says he will continue like this for 19 more days to thank the Almighty as his prayers have been answered," the former sarpanch said. Praveen said he had been

meditating in a standing position and praying for the last 22 days. "My prayers have been answered."

He said he will continue in

Gupta's family shifted to Delhi in 1976. She was just two years old then, he said. "Her father Jai Bhagwan was a manager in a bank in Julana. Jind and later he shifted to Delhi. Rekha Gupta's grandfather Mani Ram had a shop in village," he said, adding that her family constructed a Shiv temple in

the village.
"Rekha Gupta used to visit village on occasions. Her uncle Sushil Kumar used to mostly stay in the village," said Sharma.

"No one from our village even became an MLA. We also thank the BJP who reposed faith in her and made her chief minister," he said.

Village Sarpanch Rohtash said entire village is very happy and in celebration mode since Wednesday. Several villagers of Nandgarh had already reached the national capital to

congratulate Gupta.
Hoshiar Singh, another villager, said, "Rekha Gupta's family commanded great respect in the village." On her taking oath as Delhi CM, he said, "When a daughter of Haryana becomes chief minister of Delhi, what can be bigger happiness than this. We will invite her to her native village and accord a

JAC cancels class 10 Hindi, Science examinations

**PTI** ■ RANCHI

 $T^{\text{he Jharkhand Academic}}_{\text{Council}} \quad \text{(JAC)} \quad \text{on} \\ \text{Thursday cancelled the class}$ 10 board examinations for Hindi and Science subjects after the papers allegedly got leaked and went viral on social media, a JAC official

said. The Hindi examination took place on February 18 and the Science paper was scheduled

on Thursday.
"All students, their parents, principals concerned, centre superintendents and officials concerned are informed that in the light of information received through social media and newspapers, the examinations of Hindi (Course A & Course B) subject held in the first sitting on February 18 and Science subject in the first sitting on February 20 are cancelled," JAC, a government body, said in a notice.

It stated that the reexaminations in these subjects would be held later. The class 10 (matriculation) and class 12 (Intermediate) board examinations began amid tight security across Jharkhand on February 11. Over 7.84 lakh students are enrolled to take both the board examinations, which are being conducted in two

sittings.
The class 10 examinations are scheduled in the first sitting (9.45 am to 1 pm), while the class 12 examinations are being held in the second sitting (2 pm to 5.15 pm).

More than 4.33 lakh students are expected to appear for the class 10 examinations across 1,297 examination centres, while over 3.50 lakh students are likely to write intermediate examinations

### Delhi's new cabinet represents diverse communities from the city



Newly sworn-in Delhi ministers during the oath ceremony at Ramlila Maidan

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $T_{\text{government led by Rekha}}^{\text{he Cabinet of the new}}$ Gupta balances representation of all major communities that propelled the BJP to power in Delhi with a massive majority after over 26 years.

In the February five Delhi Assembly polls, the BJP won 48 seats, with nine of its MLAs belonging to the Bania community. Chief Minister Gupta, a first-time legislator, belongs to the community.
Along with CM Gupta (50),
six newly elected MLAs --

Parvesh Verma, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra, Ravinder Indraj Singh, Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Singh -- were administered the oath of office by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena at the Ramlila Maidan here on Thursday.

Manjinder Singh Sirsa, a third-time MLA from the Rajouri Garden Assembly constituency who has been selected for the new Cabinet, is the Sikh face of the BJP in

Besides Rajouri Garden, the

BIP has also won Hari Nagar and Jangpura which have a sizeable number of Sikh voters. Gandhi Nagar MLA

Arvinder Singh Lovely and Jangpura legislator Tarvinder Singh Marwah are the other Sikh MLAs of the BJP in Delhi. The party also inducted two Purvanchalis -- Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Singh --

into the Cabinet. The BJP's Jat face Parvesh Verma, who was a frontrunner for the chief minister's post, was also inducted into the new Cabinet and is expected to get major portfolios.

Senior leader and first-time MLA from Janakpuri seat Ashish Sood, who has been appointed a minister in the new government, is a wellknown Punjabi leader of the

Moreover, the BJP, which tasted partial success in assembly reserved constituencies winning four of 12 such seats, appointed Ravindra Indraj as minister. He defeated sitting AAP MLA Jai Bhagwan Upkar in the Bawana seat by over 31,000

### TN CM asks Centre to help release fishermen

**PTI** ■ CHENNAI

fishermen issue.

 $T^{amil\ Nadu\ Chief\ Minister}_{\ MK\ Stalin\ on\ Thursday}$  requested the Centre to take diplomatic effective measures to secure the immediate release of the state fishermen apprehended by the Sri Lankan authorities. Also, he sought the central government to convene the Joint Working Group meeting to find a permanent diplomatic solution to the

In a letter addressed to Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, the CM drew the Centre's attention to yet another incident of apprehension of 10 fishermen along with their fishing vessels by the Lankan Navy on February 19.

"The number of

apprehensions of fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan navy has rapidly risen in the past few months and immediate and continued diplomatic action

apprehensions as the livelihood of the fishermen and their families are affected for long period," the Chief Minister said in the letter. "I therefore request you to kindly take effective diplomatic measures to prevent the arrests of the fishermen and to secure the release of all the apprehended fishermen and their fishing boats from the Sri Lankan authorities," he

has to be taken to stop these

### Rahul Gandhi propelled by foreign hand: BJP

From page 3

the demanded that the Indian government should bring out a white paper on the US agency's support to both governmental and non-governmental institutions in India over the decades. The "Even so, the Government of Congress also dubbed US President Donald Trump's claims related to USAID as "nonsensical".

The opposition party's assertion comes after President Donald Trump questioned the purpose of providing USD 21 million to India for "voter turnout". "Why do we need to spend billionaire SpaceX CEO USD 21 million for voter Musk, listed items on which turnout in India? I guess they were trying to get somebody

said.

these days. It was set up on November 3, 1961. Claims India should bring out a White Paper at the earliest detailing USAID's support to both governmental and nongovernmental institutions in India over the decades," the Congress leader said.

Efficiency (DOGE), led by the "US taxpayer dollars were going to be spent" and the list

else elected...," Trump has included "USD 21M for voter turnout in India". Amid the row over alleged In a social media post, DOGE noted that all of the funding by USAID for Congress general secretary raising voter turnout in in-charge communications The list also included USD 29 Congress Jairam Ramesh said, "USAID million to "strengthening the Indian is very much in the news political landscape in Bangladesh", USD 20 million for "fiscal federalism" and

USD

"biodiversity conversation" in Nepal as well as USD 47 million for "improving learning outcomes in Asia". While signing executive orders on Tuesday at Mar-a-Lago, Trump had said,"...And USD 21 million for voter turnout in India. Why are we giving USD 21 million to India? They got a lot of On February 16, the India? They got a lot of Department of Government money there. One of the highest taxing countries in the world in terms of us. We can hardly get in there

because their tariffs are so

19 million for

### Centre cracks whip on OTT...

The bench of Justices Surva Kant and N Kotiswar Singh urged Allahbadia to cooperate with investigations. It also came down heavily on adia and instructed Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati to seek assistance from the Attorney General and Solicitor General

on the matter. "We would like you (the government) to do something. If the government is willing to do something, we are happy; otherwise, we will not leave this vacuum and barren area," observed Justice Kant. The court has requested the presence of the Attorney General and Solicitor General at the next hearing. The court while coming down on Allahbadia, also refrained him from doing any shows till further notice. He was

represented by lawyer Abhinav Chandrachud, who had urged an urgent hearing in the matter before the Supreme Court.

A joint statement by Mumbai Guwahati Police and confirmed that Allahabadia remained unreachable despite multiple FIRs against him. The National Women's Commission has also Allahabadia, summoned

Samay Raina and others to appear before it in New Delhi. However, they cited safety and concerns prior engagements for not attending.

Earlier, several complaints seeking legal actions were filed against popular YouTubers Raina, Ranveer Samay Allahabadia, Ashish Chanchlani, and Apoorva allegedly Mukhija over obscene and offensive remarks about parents in the show.

#### Manipur Governor seeks surrender...

From page 3

The governor said this single act of returning weapons can be a powerful gesture towards ensuring peace

"I want to assure you that no punitive action would be initiated if such weapons are returned within the stipulated time. Thereafter, strict action will be taken for possession of such weapons," he said.
The Centre had imposed

President's rule in Manipur on February 13, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post led to political uncertainty in the northeastern state.

The Manipur Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been under suspended put animation, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

### AK Mishra meets Naga groups for peace talks

PTI KOHIMA

peace talks. A K Mishra. on Thursday arrived in Nagaland to hold separate meetings with Naga groups, an official said.

Upon his arrival, Mishra, who is also the Northeast advisor on developing political in the Ministry of Home consensus among Naga Affairs, engaged in dialogue with the Working Committee of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs).

In a statement, the media cell of WC NNPGs said that its leaders led by the newly inducted convener M B Neokpao and working conveners P Tikhak Naga and Isak Sumi met the Centre's representatives headed by A K Mishra at Dimapur.

During the meeting, the WC NNPGs leaders apprised entre's emissary for Naga them of the developments and also the need for an early consolidated and inclusive political solution to the conflict, it

The meeting also deliberated political groups and stakeholders so as to expedite resolving the issue in a broadbased manner without excluding any stakeholder, it said.

The ongoing efforts by various Naga civil society organisations to bring unanimity among conflicting Naga political groups has also been reviewed, the statement

### A FRESH BHAGYA REKHA FOR DELHI, ITS CHIEF MINISTER TAKES OATH ceremony however rebel AAP leader Swati Maliwal graced the occasion. Vijender takes Speaker's chair Ayushman for Delhi, CAG for AAP

Shortly after the swearing-in ceremony, the Modi wrote on 'X', was dance, music and drumbeats with many cather from Modi and a bunch of contraction of the co the grassroots, being active in campus politics, state organisation, municipal municipal dena, Jai Arya Ram". organisation, municipal administration, and now The high on optics event MLA as well as Chief Minister. I am confident she ministers of states ruled by vigour. My best wishes to her for a fruitful tenure."He also congratulated the six new ministers

in another social media post he congratulated Parvesh, Ashish Sood, Sirsa, Ravinder Indraj Singh, Sirsa, Kapil Mishra and Pankaj Kumar Singh on taking oath as Ministers in the Delhi Government. "She (Rekha) has risen from the grassroots, being active in campus politics, state organisation, municipal administration and now MLA as well as Chief

Minister...," PM said.

About 50,000 people Rekha's predecessors Athisi "We will fulfil all the convulsed into the historic and Arryind Kejriwal were commitments made to the

many a rally and protest through the decades, festooned with marigold flowers and bunting. There

will work for Delhi's the BJP and its NDA allies - development with full - Maharashtra's Devendra - Maharashtra's Devendra Fadnavis, Andhra Pradesh's Chandrababu Naidu, Goa's Pramod Sawant, Haryana's Nayab Singh Saini and Conrad Meghalaya's

Sangma. Union ministers, including Amit Shah, party chief JP Nadda, Rajnath Singh and Hardeep Puri, were there too to mark the occasion of the party adding one more electoral win to its kitty. Uttar Pradesh deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, Andhra Pradesh's and Pawan Kalyan were present

ground, which has seen invited butt they skipped the people of Delhi," she said.

Referring to the defeat of From page 3

the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the recent assembly elections, Shah said the people of Delhi have ended the reign of deceit and breach of promise and chosen BJP, which is the synonym of service and dedication. The senior BJP leader said the party government will make Delhi the best capital of the world by making it clean, beautiful and prosperous. After the ceremony, the new cabinet and other dignitaries headed for lunch

at a hotel in the city.

Later, Gupta reached the Delhi Secretariat to take charge as the chief minister of Delhi. She was accompanied by party leaders, including state BJP in-charge Baijayant Panda and state president Virendra Sachdeva among others. After taking charge, Gupta told reporters not a single day would be wasted by her government in realising the

The reports, he claimed, would "expose how the AAP misled the people of Delhi with false promises while engaging in financial irregularities amounting to crores". Vijender also then hit out at the AAP, declaring the party had blocked BJP MLAs' efforts to table these CAG reports. Sources earlier said he was

even on a shortlist for the Chief Minister's post, something that eventually went to Rekha Gupta. Gupta, who belongs to the Baniya community, won the Rohini Assembly seat for a third consecutive time, defeating AAP's Pradeep Mittal by over 37,000 votes.

The veteran BJP leader has also served as the president of the Delhi BJP unit. Born on August 14, 1963, he graduated from Shri Ram College of Commerce. He cut his teeth in politics in 1980 with the Janata Vidyarthi Morcha and later became president of BJP's youth wing

Gupta first tasted electoral

in 1995.

success in 1997 when he became a councillor in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). However, he faced defeat in his first Lok Sabha contest, losing to Congress's Kapil Sibal in 2009 from Chandni Chowk. Four years later, he was defeated by Arvind Kejriwal in the 2013 Delhi Assembly elections. In view of the majority

enjoyed by the BJP in the Assembly, Gupta's elevation to Speaker's post is a foregone conclusion. "The CAG reports will be tabled in the House first of all after I take charge of the Assembly Speaker. It is my duty to bring the reports before the public and I will fulfil it," he said. In a veiled attack on AAP, Gupta said the Assembly is a temple of democracy whose sanctity must be maintained by all. "I pray to God for good senses to prevail among those who ran the Assembly in an anarchic manner in the last year by violating the rules and

expecting the opposition AAP to become a part of

healthy discussion in the

he said.

regulations,"

From page 3

Pravesh Verma will oversee the Public Works Department (PWD), Water, Legislative Affairs, the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, which manages the cleaning of the Yamuna River and Gurudwara elections.

Ashish Sood has been given the Home, Power, Urban Development, Education, Higher Education, Training and Technical Education. Kapil Mishra has been appointed as the new Minister of Law and Justice, Tourism, Art and Culture, and will also hold the Labour Department portfolio. Manjinder Singh Sirsa has been assigned the Forest, Environment, Planning and Industries portfolio, along with the Food and Supplies Department. Ravinder Indraj Singh Indraj will hold the portfolio of Social Welfare, SC and ST Welfare, Elections and Cooperative. Pankaj Kumar Singh will oversee Health and Family Welfare, Information Technology as well as Transport.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta along with her Cabinet colleagues performed Yamuna aarti at Vasudev Ghat-inspired by the daily evening ceremony at the ghats of Ganga at Haridwar and Varanasi. Ram bhajans were played at the ghat, and slogans of "Jai Shree Ram" and "Yamuna Maiya Ki Jai" were raised. The party leaders then headed to the Delhi secretariat for the first

Cabinet meeting.
Gupta, all smiles and wearing a jacket over a red saree. reminiscent of the dress code of BJP stalwart Sushma Swaraj, Delhi's new Chief Minister had a packed schedule on Dav 1 of her government. Soon after taking oath along with her council of ministers of six leaders this afternoon, she went to her office at the Delhi Secretariat and met officials and leaders. Following the meetings and greetings, the first thing the chief minister did was to call a cabinet meeting. The new Chief Minister also went to meet with chief ministers of NDA government at a hotel.

Hours after taking oath at the iconic Ramlila Maidan, Delhi Earlier, Rekha Gupta took oath as the ninth Chief Minister of

Maidan in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several NDA leaders and Chief Ministers. The event was attended by leaders such as Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan, Devendra Fadnavis, Keshav Prasad Maurva, Amit Shah, JP Nadda, and many more. Flanked by her ministers, state BJP in-charge Baijayant Panda and state president Virendra Sachdeva, Gupta took charge at the Delhi Secretariat, shortly after taking oath in a grand ceremony at the sprawling Ramlila Maidan. After assuming the charge, Gupta asserted that not a single day will be wasted in realising the "Viksit Delhi" mission. The 50-year-old ninth chief minister of Delhi also said that the new BIP government will fulfil all the promises made to the people of the national capital. "Not a single day will be wasted in realising our mission of a 'Viksit Delhi' (developed Delhi). We will fulfil all the commitments made to the people of Delhi," she told reporters after taking the

### Hamas returns bodies of 4 Israeli hostages | Indian deportees from

**AP** ■ KHAN YOUNIS (GAZA STRIP)

Hamas on Thursday released the bodies of four Israeli hostages, said to include a mother and her two children who have long been feared dead and had come to embody the nation's agony following the Oct 7, 2023, attack. The remains were said to be of Shiri

Bibas and her two children, Ariel and Kfir, as well as Oded Lifshitz, who was 83 when he was abducted. Kfir, who was 9 months old when he was taken, was the youngest captive. Hamas has said all four were killed along with their guards in Israeli airstrikes.

The militants displayed four black coffins on a stage in the Gaza Strip sur-rounded by banners, including a large one depicting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a vampire. The fighters then carried the coffins over to Red Cross vehicles, where staffers in red vests covered them in white sheets before placing them inside.

The Red Cross convoy headed back to Israel, where authorities will carry out the formal identification of the remains using DNA, expected to take up to two days. Only then will the families be given the final notification. The Israeli military confirmed it had received the coffins.

Thousands of people, including large numbers of masked and armed fighters from Hamas and other factions. gathered at the handover site on the outskirts of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis.

Israeli channels did not broadcast the handover. In Hostage Square in Tel Aviv, where Israelis have gathered to watch the release of living hostages, a large screen showed a compilation of photos and videos of Lifshitz and the Bibas family, including a chuckling baby Kfir and the family dressed up in Batman costumes.

Dozens of residents of Kibbutz Nir Oz, where the four were kidnapped, gathered to wave Israeli flags outside of their temporary home an hour north of the kibbutz.

Israelis have celebrated the return of 24 living hostages in recent weeks under a tenuous ceasefire that paused over 15 months of war. But the handover on Thursday will provide a grim reminder of those who died in captivity as the talks leading up to the truce dragged on

It could also provide impetus for nego-



Red Cross vehicles leave after collecting the coffins containing the bodies of four Israeli hostages, including a mother and her two children, who had long been feared dead, handed over by Palestinian militant groups in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Thursday

tiations on the second stage of the ceasefire that have hardly begun. The first phase is set to end at the beginning of March.

Infant was the youngest taken hostage: Kfir Bibas was just 9 months old, a redheaded infant with a toothless smile, when militants stormed into the family's home on Oct. 7, 2023. His brother Áriel was 4. Video shot that day showed a terrified Shiri swaddling the two boys as militants led them into Gaza.

Her husband, Yarden Bibas, was taken separately and released this month after 16 months in captivity.

Relatives in Israel have clung to hope, marking Kfir's first and second birthdays and his brother's fifth. The Bibas family said in a statement Wednesday that it would wait for "identification procedures" before acknowledging that their loved ones were dead.

Supporters throughout Israel have worn orange in solidarity with the family a reference to two boys' red hair — and a popular children's song was written in their honor.

Like the Bibas family, Oded Lifshitz was abducted from Kibbutz Nir Oz, along with his wife Yocheved, who was freed during a weeklong ceasefire in November 2023. Oded was a journalist who campaigned for the recognition of Palestinian rights and peace between Arabs and Jews. Hamas-led militants abducted 251 hostages, including some 30 children, in the Oct 7 attack, in which

they also killed some 1,200 people,

mostly civilians. More than half the hostages, and most of the women and children, have been released in ceasefire agreements or other deals. Israeli forces have rescued eight and have recovered dozens of bodies of people killed in the initial attack or who died in captivity.

It's not clear if the ceasefire will last: Hamas is set to free six living hostages on Saturday in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, and says it will release four more bodies next week, completing the ceasefire's first phase. That will leave the militants with some 60 hostages, all men, around half of whom are believed to be dead.

Hamas has said it won't release the remaining captives without a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal. Netanyahu, with the full backing of the Trump administration, says he is committed to destroying Hamas' military and governing capacities and returning all the hostages, goals widely seen as mutually exclusive.

Trump's proposal to remove some 2 million Palestinians from Gaza so the US can own and rebuild it, which has been welcomed by Netanyahu but universally rejected by Palestinians and Arab countries, has thrown the ceasefire into further doubt.

Hamas could be reluctant to free more hostages if it believes the war will resume with the goal of annihilating the group or forcibly transferring Gaza's opulation.

Israel's military offensive killed over 48,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its records. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence. The offensive destroyed vast areas of Gaza, reducing entire neighborhoods to fields of rubble and bombedout buildings. At its height, the war displaced 90% of Gaza's population. Many have returned to their homes to find nothing left and no way of rebuilding.

# US arrive in Panama

### **Embassy team gets consular access**

PTI PANAMA CITY

Panama has informed India about the safe arrival of a group of Indians deported from the US and the Indian mission in the country is working closely with the host government to ensure their wellbeing after obtaining consular access to them.

The Embassy of India in Panama, Costa Rica & Nicaragua took to X on Thursday to share the information but did not provide data on the number of Indians arriving in Panama.

The group of Indians is part of a larger group of 299 migrants sent to Panama by the US government.

These people arrived in the country on three flights last week after President Jose Raul Mulino agreed that Panama would become a "bridge" country for deportees.

The Trump administration has pledged to deport millions of people who crossed illegal-

ly into the US. "Panamanian authorities have informed us that a group of Indians have reached Panama from the US," the Embassy of India in Panama,

Nicaragua and Costa Rica posted on X. 'They are safe and secure at a Hotel with all essential facilities. The embassy team has obtained consular access We are working closely with the host Government to ensure their well-

being," it said. Three batches comprising a total of 332 Indians have already been sent back to India from the US amid an intensified crackdown by the Trump administration against illegal immi-

Out of the 299 undocumented migrants who landed in Panama, only 171 have agreed to return to their countries of origin.

Ninety-eight deportees who refused to voluntarily be repatriated to their countries have been sent to a camp in Panama's Darien province. Costa Rica is the second country that agreed to serve as a "bridge" to repatriate illegal immigrants in the US.

Meanwhile, Panama transferred 98 deportees from various nations it had received from the United States to a camp in its Darien province Wednesday, an area that became the main thoroughfare for migrants travelling from South America to the US border in recent years, a government official said.

The migrants sent to Darien had refused to voluntarily be repatriated to their countries and will be held there until third countries can be found

to take them, said the Panamanian official familiar with the situation who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter.

They were part of a larger group of 299 migrants to Panama by the US government as the administration of US President Donald Trump tries to accelerate deportations.

The others remained under police guard in a Panama City hotel awaiting travel arrangements to their countries. The Panamanian government has denied that they are detained, but they are under police guard and not allowed to leave the hotel.

Panama's National Immigration Service had announced earlier Wednesday that one migrant, a Chinese woman, had escaped the hotel, but later authorities reported her recapture.

Security Minister Frank Abrego wrote on a post on social platform X that she was found aban-



doned near a migrant processing facility along the northern Panama-Costa Rica border, a hightransit point for migrants headed toward the US. While it was not clear if she was found in Panama or in Costa Rica, he blamed her brief escape on "human traffickers."

The deportees, primarily from Asian countries, are in a sort of limbo in Panama after the Central American nation agreed to serve as a transit point for migrants who are hard for the Trump administration to deport directly to their coun-

Abrego had said on Tuesday that 171 of the migrants had agreed to return to their countries of origin, although he did not provide a specific timeline. He also noted that an Irish citizen had already been repatriated.

The remaining migrants would be sent to a temporary migration facility near the Darien Gap, a heavily forested region along the Colombian border, until it's clear where they will be sent. The region has historically been used by migrants from Venezuela and other countries to travel north to the US.

## Trump backs idea to send some DOGE savings to American citizens

**AP** WASHINGTON

Dresident Donald Trump said Wednesday that he likes the idea of giving some of the savings from Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency back to US citizens as a kind of dividend.

He said at an investment conference in Miami that the administration is considering a concept in which 20% of the savings produced by DOGE's cost-cutting efforts goes to American citizens and another 20% goes to paying down the national debt.

Trump also said the potential for dividend payments would incentivize people to report wasteful spend-

ing.
"They'll be reporting it themselves," Trump said. They participate in the process of saving us money."

Later, as he flew back to

Washington aboard Air Force One, he was asked by a reporter about the plan floated by Musk.
"I love it," the Republican

president told reporters on the plane.

A day earlier, Musk wrote on his social media platform that he "will check with the President" in response to a suggestion that Trump and Musk should announce a "DOGE Dividend" that would send a refund to taxpayers from part of the savings created by DOGE. Its efforts have already led to thousands of federal government employees being fired or laid off.

#### 'Very unfair' to US if Musk built Tesla factory in India: Trump

**PTI** ■ WASHINGTON

esla built a factory in India to avoid that country's tariffs, it would be unfair to the US. Trump's comments came amid moves by him to

increase tariffs significantly. On February 13, hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bilateral meeting with Trump at the White House, the US President announced reciprocal tariffs. Trump in a recent interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity said during their meeting he told Prime Minister Modi that India charges the

sible" for Musk to sell a car in India. "Every country in the world takes advantage of us, and they do it with tariffs... It is impossible to sell a car, practically, in, as an example, India," he said. "...If he (Musk) built the factory in India, that's okay, but that's unfair to us. It's very unfair," Trump said

highest tariffs in the world. Trump said it is "impos-

in the interview. Musk, who heads the Department of Government

Efficiency, was also present during the interview. A few days back, electric carmaker Tesla opened President Donald Trump has said if Elon Musk's recruitment for various roles in India, including business operations analyst and customer suppo specialist. The move is viewed as a sign of the company's entry into the country.

As per the job postings on the company's website, the posts are for the 'Mumbai Suburban' area. Trump during the interview said he discussed the issue of tariffs with Modi.

"I told Prime Minister Modi... Here's what you do. We are going to... be very fair with you." When asked if the tariffs India charged were 36% Trump said, "Much much higher."

Musk said, "It's 100 per cent on — auto imports are 100 per cent." '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. Musk replied by saying, "It seems fair."

### **President fumes over Boeing delay**

 $P^{\text{resident Donald Trump said Wednesday he}}_{\text{is considering buying used Boeing aircraft}}$ - perhaps from an overseas seller — to use as Air Force One when he's aboard, as he fumes over the US plane-maker's delays in producing two specially modified ones for presidential use. Speaking to reporters aboard one of the two nearly 35-year-old Boeing 747-200 aircraft in current use, Trump said, "We're looking at alternatives, because it's taking Boeing too long."
"We may go and buy a plane," Trump said, adding that he could then "convert it." He later clarified that he was ruling out purchasing aircraft of Airbus, the European company that is the only other global supplier on large wide-body aircraft, but would consider a second-hand

Boeing plane. "I would not consider Airbus. I could buy one from another country perhaps or get one from another country."

Boeing has the contract to produce updated versions, based on the more modern Boeing 747-8, but delivery has been delayed while the aircraft maker has lost billions of dollars on the deal, which was negotiated by Trump during his first term in office. It's not the planes, rather the heavy modification to make them suitable for the requirements of presidential travel and the top-level security clearances required for those involved, that has added to the cost and delays. Trump already dropped a requirement for the new generation of planes, which will be known as the VC-25B, to be capable of air-to-air refuelling, like the pair of existing VC-25As, which were designed during the Cold War.



Republique, in Paris on Thursday. The banner read 'Ukrainian journalist dies in Russian prison. 19 are still imprisoned there. Should we wait for them to die before taking

#### Pope sitting up out of bed at hospital infections in winter.

Pope Francis is continuing his recovery from pneumonia, eating breakfast out of bed on Thursday morning after a sixth peaceful night at the hospital, the Vatican said. Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni issued a new update after confirming late Wednesday that new blood tests showed a "slight improvement" in some inflammation indices for the 88-year-old pontiff, who had an acute case of pneumonia in 2023 and is prone to respiratory

Francis was visited Wednesday by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, his first known VIP visitor. She reported after their 20-minute visit that Francis was in good spirits and had 'joked around as always."

Francis was admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital Feb. 14 after a bout of bronchitis worsened. Doctors on Tuesday diagnosed pneumonia in both lungs, on top of a polymicrobial infection in his respiratory tract, meaning a combination of bacteria, viral and other organisms. He is taking

and cortisone for what doctors also diagnosed as asthmatic bronchitis. Doctors say pneumonia in such a fragile, elderly patient makes him particularly prone to complications given the difficulty in being able to effectively expel fluid

from his lungs.
While his heart is strong, Francis isn't a particularly healthy 88-year-old. He isn't physically active, uses a wheelchair because of bad knees, had part of one lung removed as a young man, and has admitted to being a not-terri-

a combination of antibiotics bly-cooperative patient in the

past.
Meloni said she wanted to bring get-well wishes to the pope on behalf of the government and entire nation. "We joked around as always. He has not lost his proverbial sense of humour," she said in a statement issued by her office. Meloni is the first confirmed

outside visitor known to have called on the pope, beyond his secretaries and medical team, since his admission on Friday at Rome's Gemelli hospital, where popes have their own suite on the 10th floor.

### Germany votes on Sunday; new govt to shape Europe's response

**AP** ■ BERLIN

German voters go to the polls Sunday to elect a new parliament that will determine how the country is run for the next four years.

Europe's biggest economy is the 27-nation European Union's most populous nation and a leading member of NATO, as well as the second-biggest weapons supplier to Ukraine, after the United States, following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Germany's next government will be central to Europe's response to an

tion. Here's a look at what to expect for Sunday and beyond. What happens on election day? Polls are due to open at 8 am and close at 6 pm. Germans can also vote by postal ballot, but their ballot must arrive by the time polling stations close on election day to be counted. Exit polls will come and votecounting will begin immediately after voting ends, and the general picture of the outcome should be clear very quickly. A final official result is expected early Monday.

Who are the contenders?: Four candidates are running to assertive new US administra be Germany's next leader: Merz is favored to replace

incumbent Chancellor Olaf Scholz, of the center-left Social Democrats; Friedrich Merz, the candidate of the mainstream conservative Christian Democratic Union party; current Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck, of the environmentalist Greens; and Alice Weidel, of the far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, or AfD. Preelection polls have put Merz's Union bloc in the lead with support of about 30%, ahead of AfD, with around 20%. Scholz's Social Democrats and Habeck's Greens are further back.

Scholz as chancellor, but it's not yet clear what governing coalitions will be possible after the election. How easy it is to form a government may depend in part on how many parties are in the new parliament. Opinion polls show three parties hovering around the 5% of the vote needed to win

All mainstream parties say they won't work with AfD. What's up for grabs?: At least 59.2 million people in a country of 84 million are eligible to vote for the new Bundestag, or lower house of parliament. It is the 630-member Bundestag that will elect the next chancellor, Germany's equivalent of a prime minister.

There are 29 parties on the ballot, but it's likely that between five and eight of them will get enough votes to win seats in parliament. In most cases, parties must win at least 5% of the vote to get a share of the seats.

What happens after polls close?: Germany's electoral system rarely gives any party an absolute majority and opinion polls suggest that no party is anywhere near one this time. The country has no tradition of minority governments at national level, which means that two or more parties will most likely form a coalition. There is no formal referee for the process of forming a new government, and no set time limit. Parties hold exploratory talks to determine who they have most common ground with, and one combination of

parties then moves on to for-

mal coalition talks. Those negotiations typically produce a detailed coalition agreement setting out the new government's plans. That will typically need approval at least from conventions of the parties involved. Some parties may choose to put it to a ballot of

their entire membership. Once that process is complete, the Bundestag can elect the new chancellor.

What's at stake?: A strong German government would be important to Europe's response to the new US administration and to turmoil in Ukraine and elsewhere.

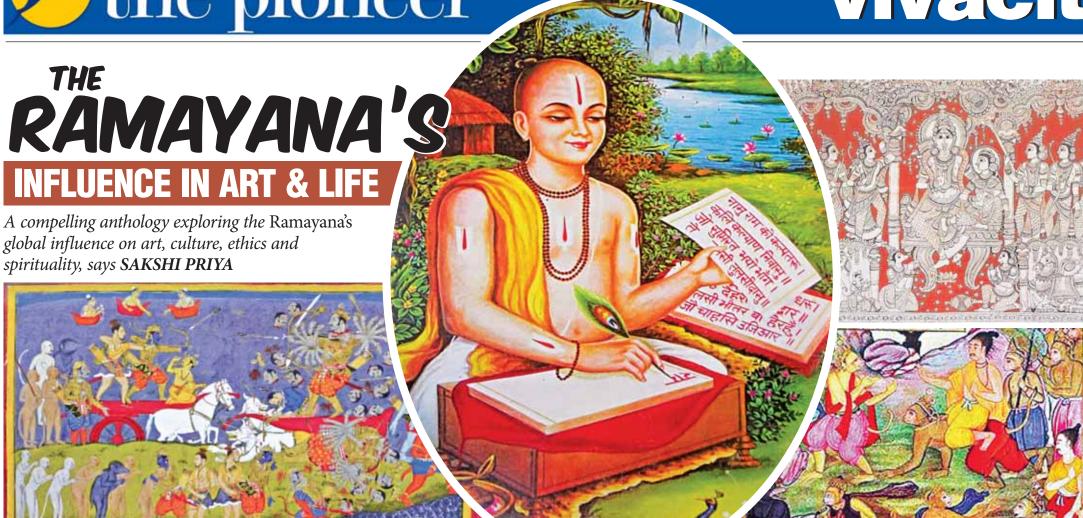
Germany and neighboring France have traditionally been the motor of the EU, but both heavyweights have been consumed by domestic political instability in recent months. This election is being held seven months earlier than originally planned because Scholz's

three-party coalition collapsed in November as it argued about how to reinvigorate the economy, which has shrunk for the past two years. One of the new government's most urgent tasks will be to find a coherent response to that problem. Another challenge will be further reducing irregular migration, which has been a top issue

in the campaign. Merz has said he hopes to form a new government by mid-April if he wins. Scholz's outgoing government will remain in office on a caretaker basis until the Bundestag elects the

new chancellor.

# VIVACITY 11



ew epics have the same influence as the Ramayana. Its impact stretches far beyond the pages of a single book, reaching into cultures, beliefs and art across centuries and continents.

Ramayana in World Art and Thought – An Anthology of Diverse Perspectives, edited by Padmashri Shovana Narayan, is a powerful example of the global reach of this ancient epic. This beautifully com-

piled coffee table book offers a deep dive into the heart of the Ramayana, exploring its impact on art, ethics, spirituality and morality.

With contributions from sixteen distinguished scholars, historians and artists such as Sharon Lowen, Lady Kishwar Desai and Rana Safvi, this anthology sheds light on the wide-ranging influence of the Ramayana and its presence in global thought and art.

The book is the recognition that the Ramayana, a work that has inspired over 300 versions across various cultures, has spread across geographical boundaries. Its stories and characters, from the heroic Rama to the devoted Hanuman, remain as relevant today as they were centuries ago. The book explores these themes, offering fresh perspectives on how the epic has shaped not only the moral and ethical landscapes of various societies but also their artistic and cultural expressions.

One of the most engaging essays in this anthology explores the historical ties between the city of Ayodhya and South Korea, offering a fascinating look at the ancient connections that link different parts of the world through the Ramavana. It's stories like these that highlight how this epic, originally

rooted in Indian tradition, has reached distant corners of the globe. Another compelling piece looks into the Mughal-era depictions of Rama, examining how the warrior prince's persona has been immortalised in art, illustrating his commitment to righteousness

However, it's not the epic's warriors who capture

attention. The book also highlights the immense strength and devotion embodied by the female characters of the Ramayana. The role of Sita, as a symbol of shakti and resilience, is explored in-depth, adding layers of meaning to her character that are often overlooked in traditional readings. Similarly, the devotion of Hanuman, whose loyalty and service to Rama have inspired countless followers, takes centre stage in several of the essays.

diverse natural environments of ancient Bharatvarsha.

the arts and

beliefs of

This provides a unique perspective on how the Ramayana shapes human behaviour and connects humanity to the land, highlighting the relationship between moral values and the natural world.

In exploring these themes, the anthology highlights the remarkable ways in which the Ramayana has influenced not only Indian culture but also cultures across South and Southeast Asia. The essays trace how this epic was carried by traders, priests and adventurers across the seas, shaping RAMAYANA

Book: Ramayana in World Art and

Thought Edited by: Shovana Narayan Publisher: Shubhi Publisher Price: ₹2995/-

distant lands. The Ramayana found its way into the hearts of the people of Southeast Asia, where it became deeply embedded in the region's performing arts, architecture and literature.

One of the more poignant contributions in this collection reflects on the changes brought about by the Partition of India and how the Ramayana's geographical ties to regions like Punjab have been lost in the process. Yet, as Lady Kishwar Desai notes, even amidst The anthology also examines the Ramayana's ecological landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval, the ancient connections between the epic logical landscape, reflecting how the epic portrays the upheaval landscape. archaeological discoveries. Through these insights, the

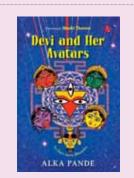
anthology calls for a reevaluation of the spaces where the Ramayana once thrived, especially in regions like Punjab, where the story of Rama and

his companions may have once been a living part of everyday life.

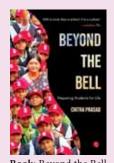
Ramayana in World Art and Thought is an insightful exploration of how an ancient text continues to shape the world we live in. It reminds us that the Ramayana is not only part of the past but remains influential today, affecting everything from art and culture to ethics and morality in the modern world. Whether you are a scholar or simply a reader interested in understanding how this epic has influenced global thought, this book will leave you with a deeper appreciation of the Ramayana's lasting legacy.







Book: Devi and Her Avatars Author: Alka Pande Publisher: Rupa Publication Price: ₹395



Author: Chitra Prasad Publisher: Rupa Publication Price: ₹495



Book: Around Varanasi in Assi Days Author: Raja Venkateswara Publisher: Rupa Publication Price: ₹395

# Plight of 1950s Tamil Nadu Weavers

he English adaptation of *Tho Mu Si* Ragunathan's Tamil novel "Panjum Pasiyum," Hanging by a Thread, is a

Hanging by a Thread talks about the

struggles of weavers caught in the throes

of social change, says ABHI SINGHAL

realistic account of the hardships that Tamil Nadu's handloom weavers endured in the 1950s. Due to a complicated web of political and economic constraints, this was a particularly difficult moment for these artisans. Ragunathan's work stands as a significant document of its time, vividly illustrating the weavers' plight and their resilience

in the face of adversity.

The novel meticulously details the numerous obstacles confronting the handloom industry. Weavers faced stiff competition from the burgeoning mill cloth industry, which offered cheaper alternatives. The cost of yarn, a crucial raw material, soared due to the import of

expensive American cotton. Simultaneously, a stagnation in exports led to a significant accumulation of unsold handloom stock, further exacerbating the weavers' financial woes. Adding to their burden were unscrupulous merchants who often exploited the vulnerable weavers. The government's apparent apathy towards their plight compounded these difficulties, leaving the weavers feeling abandoned and unheard.

Hanging by a Thread doesn't just focus on the economic hardships; it also takes you into the human cost of these struggles. The story centres on two families: that of *Thathulinga Mudaliar*, a



**Book:** Hanging by a Thread Author: Tho Mu Si Ragunathan Publisher: Niyogi Books

deeply in debt to Thathulinga. Through the intertwined lives of their children - Sankar, Kamala, and Mani - the novel explores the personal impact of these broader economic forces. The reader witnesses how these challenges affect their

relationships, aspirations, and daily lives, adding an emotional dimension to the narrative. The novel's strength lies in its ability to weave together these personal stories with the larger

prosperous but exploita-

tive businessman, and

Kailasa Mudaliar, a weaver

socio-political context of the time. It depicts the burgeoning movements of weavers in Madurai and Ambasamudram who, driven to desperation, begin to organise and protest against the government. These protests, born out of necessity, become a powerful expression of their determi-

nation to secure their rights and livelihoods. Ragunathan's depiction of these collective actions is both moving and inspiring, showcasing the weavers' courage and solidarity.

The translation, "Hanging by a Thread," effectively holds the essence of the original Tamil work. The fluid language allows the reader to easily connect with the characters and their experiences. The various threads of the plot, the economic hardships, the human dramas, and the sociopolitical movements are skilfully interwoven, creating a rich and textured tapestry of life in 1950s Tamil Nadu.

"Hanging by a Thread" is an amazing example to the resilience of the human spirit and a reminder of the ongoing struggle for fair treatment and economic justice.

### Stories of Fate & Morality

Book: The Other Choice (A Collection

of Short Stories)

Author: O.P. Arora

Publisher: Authorspress, New Delhi

Price: ₹295/-

O.P. Arora's 'The Other Choice,' is a deeply moving collection of stories exploring life's toughest choices

he Other Choice, is a captivating anthology of short stories that explores significant existential and moral dilemmas encountered by a common individual in modern society. This book, showcases a diverse array of human experiences, covering personal tragedies and extensive philosophical reflections. The anthology explores fundamental concerns of pain, justice, morality and the human condition via evocative writing and thematic depth. The book consists of 14 short tales, each addressing various aspects of human existence. Some narratives focus on per-

dilemmas, while others explore the wider socio-political context. The introductory story, 'Man Has Gone Beyond Me,' presents a poignant depiction of a little girl contending with the

irrational devastation of her family and residence. Her pain compels her to interrogate the reality of God, prompting a philosophical dialogue with an enigmatic divine being. In this story, Arora explores the problem of divine justice, why does evil persist if God is almighty and just?

For example, the stories 'The Green Light' and 'There Is No Eden Here' contest traditional concepts of righteousness by depicting individuals who confront ethical issues in a context where obvious moral boundaries frequently blur. Narratives

such as 'Beyond the Dark' and 'Hollow Beats' portray protagonists grappling with inner turmoil, isolation and psychological anguish. The storylines develop in a manner that obscures the distinction between truth and perception, highlighting the alienation inherent in contemporary living. Certain narratives, such as 'They Know It Better' and 'The Intriguing Riddle,' explore the socio-political realm, question power dynamics, structural injustice and the erosion of innocence in a progressively fractured society.



urgent themes of socioeconomic disparity, ethical relativism and existential longing. The Other Choice effectively engages with intricate philosophical concepts while preserving narrative tension and emotional profundity. The narratives do not provide simple conclusions, instead, they urge readers to contemplate their own moral and existential convictions. Nevertheless, certain narratives often become too didactic, with dialogues that verge on explicit philosophical explication. This enhances intellectual depth but sometimes diminishes the narrative's immersive

effect. Moreover, the characterisation

in specific narratives is often one-dimensional, with protagonists functioning more as conduits for concepts than as fully developed characters. For fans of existentialist literature and philosophical storytelling, The Other Choice is a must-read. Its thought-provoking narratives explore profound questions about existence.

— Dr. Shaleen Kumar Singh is Associate Professor and Head of English at Swami Shukdevanand College, Uttar Pradesh.

### Gill's classy 100, Shami's five-wicket haul power India to 6-wicket win over Bangladesh

C hubman Gill was more artisan than artist en route to his eighth ODI hundred after Mohammed Shami's satisfying five-wicket haul, propelling India to a workmanlike six-wicket win over Bangladesh in their Champions Trophy opener here on Thursday.

Gill's unbeaten innings (101, 129b, 9x4. 2x6) had a mirror image in Bangladesh innings through Towhid Hridoy's 100 (118b) that lifted them to 228 from the depths of 35 for five after batting by choice.

But India negated various pressure points, including a sluggish surface during their chase effectively through Gill's knock full of

for four in 46.3 overs. It's also a nerve-settling victory for India ahead of their muchawaited clash against a more accomplished Pakistan at the same venue on February 23.

substance, and ended up at 231

Gill, the world's No. 1 ODI at a slightly worrying 144 for batter, played a massive role in it, four. dishing out a century which was more remarkable for its restraint than the customary flair.

It was also a reflection of his growing stature as India's new generation batting star. Chasing a modest 229, openers Rohit Sharma (41, 36b) and Gill

gave India a rollicking start. They added 69 runs in 9.5 overs

before Rohit got out to pacer Taskin Ahmed while attempting a mighty heave, leaving India at

69 for 1. The partnership was significant from a game point of view as the pitch slowed down considerably in the middle overs, making batting a tad tougher task.

Virat Kohli looked a over-watchful and circumspect before opening his account after facing 10 balls. Though he grew comfortable, an

uppish cut of leg-spinner Rishad Hossain ended his stay for 22. The quick wickets of Axar Patel, who was once again promoted to No. 5, and Shreyas Iyer had India

But KL Rahul, who was dropped on nine by Jaker Ali off Taskin, ensured that there were no further hiccups and played a resolute unbeaten innings of 41 off 47 balls.

Gill and Rahul added 87 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket alliance to carry their side home. Earlier, a cramping Hridoy, who made a courageous maiden ODI hundred and an equally gutsy Ali (68, 114b, 4x4) added 154 for a doughty sixth-wicket stand to give some respectability to Bangladesh total.

Shami impresses: India also found another shining shard of positive in Shami's outing. Shami also eased a lot of worries over the absence of injured pace ace Jasprit Bumrah with a five for 53 effort, and during the spell he also became the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 ODI

Hridoy's innings was an example of how to construct an innings yet maintain a healthy run-rate as he reached the milestone in just 114 balls. He and Ali also showed excellent composure under pressure.



batters benefited from the largesse of Indian fielders, as Ali was dropped on zero off the first after he dismissed Mushfigur

However, both the Bangladesh ball he faced off left-arm spinner

Axar (2/43). It also robbed Axar of a hat-trick Hridov had the fortune when he

Rahim and Tanzid Hasan off successive deliveries.

mid-off off Kuldeep Yadav when he was on 23.

Rahul, who was sharp behind the stumps, floored a stumping chance to give the second reprieve for Hridoy.

But those moments of slip-ups should not take anything away from the way Indian bowlers, especially Shami, used the new ball on a rather slow but smooth pitch.

Shami, who had an average outing against England in T20I and ODI series recently at home, did not disappoint on the big stage and took the wicket of opener Soumya Sarkar in the first over itself.

grab his second wicket when he ousted Mehdy Hasan Miraz caught brilliantly by Shubman Gill in the slips.

The Bengal pacer later returned to break the determined stand

He did not take much time to

between Hridoy and Ali, dismissing the latter.

He later took two more wickets, and now the 34-year-old is India's highest wicket taker in ICC tournaments, going past former pacer Zaheer Khan (59). Harshit Rana (3/31) gave good was grassed by Hardik Pandya at backing to his senior partner.



### WPL: RCB eye hat-trick against Mumbai Indians

**PTI** ■ BENGALURU

Having set the pace with back-to-back emphatic defending victories, champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru would be eyeing a hat-trick of success against a star-studded Mumbai Indians in a WPL match at home on Friday.

Smriti Mandhana's RCB hasn't put a foot wrong so far, be it chasing an imposing 200-plus target against Gujarat Giants or overhauling a tricky 140-odd runs against Delhi Ćapitals.

Their overall strength has come to the fore in the two But Mumbai Indians, the games they have played this inaugural edition champions, season and are now leading would be tough customers the five-team chart with four points and a healthy net run Harmanpreet a rate. No other team so far has

season at their iconic Chinnaswamy Stadium, and Mandhana, who had broken DC's back with a blazing 47ball 81 in the previous game, would be eyeing an encore.

The India vice-captain has been in red-hot form, bagging the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year award for 2024 and also being named to the ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year, and that streak of genius was evident in the way she disdainfully amassed her runs

international women's cricket. The likes of Ellyse Perry, Raghvi Bist, Richa Ghosh and young Kanika Ahuja rose to the occasion to make the task look easy, winning by six wickets with plenty of balls to

spare.
Though RCB looked a bit thin on the bowling front, leaking far too many runs with teenage pacer VJ Joshitha conceding 43 in her four overs and Australian stalwart Georgia Wareham giving away 50 in her three overs, it was a much-improved bowling performance against

taskmaster.

won all its matches.

RCB would be guaranteed of an incredible reception when they play their first game this taskindster.

They did lose to DC despite Nat Sciver-Brunt's peerless batting (80 off 59 balls) and they 73-run run partnership

To add to the batting firepower is one of the most destructive top-order batters Havley Matthews, along with Amelia Kerr. But MI's batting will still revolve around Sciver-Brunt, who has scored consecutive half-centuries, and Harmanpreet.

If the team wants to go the distance, the two will, however, need the help of against DC. others. On the bowling front, If it was a one-player show the side has performed against DC, the resilience of admirably with Sciver-Brunt the middle-order came to the and Shabnim Ismail creating a fore against GG, whose lineup is a virtual who's who in with the pace they generate.

### Having smile solves half the problem: MS Dhoni

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

Even if it's tough to do... Just forgive and move on." Mahendra Singh Dhoni became a life coach for once to share his secrets for a stressfree existence, describing himself as a careless person who would not give up on a good night's sleep by paying attention to what others think

wickets.

The 43-year-old former India wicketkeeper-batter, considered one of the game's greatest for captaining India to two World Cup titles in a storied international career, set a high benchmark for a leader with his calm and focused approach on the field.
He is now gearing up for what most believe is his final IPL

season as a player with Chennai Super Kings and at an event here, he turned philosophical when asked to give advice to fans and followers.

"I think, keep life simple. Be honest to yourself, have gratitude towards people for whatever they have been doing for you. Don't always think, 'this is my birthright' and ask for more," the enigmatic big-



hitter said here on Wednesday evening during the launch of his app 'DHONI' powered by Single. Id where injured India keeper-batter Sanju Samson was also present.

"I know the whole app (DHONI) says 'thoda aur' (a little more), but the whole thing is to have that gratitude, to say thank you, to respect the elders (and) to give love to the younger ones," he added. He then went on to stress on the need to have a forgiving attitude, which he feels is in

short-supply right now.
"I always felt having a smile on your face solves half the problem. Even if you're not in a comfortable position, even if it's tough to do, have the power to forgive. That is one thing that not many of us have," said the cricketer who has never responded to the personal attacks on him by anyone, including former teammates or critics, some of whom have even accused him of hurting

'We have become a very revengeful people. Isne mujhe aisa bola, main aisa bola (He said something to me, I said something back)... Just forgive, move on, be happy in life, because whatever we do... When we're growing up, we always wanted to be happy in life," he further stated.

Dhoni said being careless towards a few things helps in balancing the pressure of day-

to-day life. "We all feel the pressure. We always say the grass is greener on the other side. We always feel that his or her life is better, but what is important is how you manage that stress, how prepared you are," he said.

'I keep it very simple. Growing up, we were told 'you cannot be careless'. But I feel in today's environment, it is important to be a bit careless because you can't worry about each and everything that is happening around you. You cannot do things that are not in your control," he added.

Dhoni said those who are obsessed with perception are not particularly constructive. He felt not every opinion merits a response or even consideration.

"If you get carried away with what others are feeling, then that important thing of what needs to be done, often you are not really giving utmost attention to that," he said. "I am a bit careless in life. I

don't give everything my 100 per cent attention because I feel this is important, (or) that's not important," he explained.

### Imam-ul-Haq replaces injured Fakhar Zaman in Pakistan squad

PTI KARACHI

The Pakistan cricket team I suffered a setback ahead of its Champions Trophy (CT) clash against India after opener Fakhar Zaman was ruled out owing to a recurring knee injury, prompting the inclusion of Imam-ul-Haq in the squad that left for Dubai on Thursday.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) made the change after getting the approval from the International Cricket Council's Event Technical
Committee. The match
against India is to be held on Sunday at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

"Twenty-nine-year-old Imam, who has played 72 ODIs, was named as a replacement after Fakhar was ruled out due to an oblique injury," said an ICC media release. Zaman had suffered an injury during the opening Champions Trophy match against New Zealand here on

February 19. "Unfortunately I am now out

of ICC Champions Trophy 2025 but surely Allah is the best planner. Grateful for the opportunity. I will be backing our boys in green from home," Zaman posted on 'X'. The 34-year-old, who has played 86 ODIs and averages a little over 46, had suffered a muscle strain while fielding in the New Zealand innings and remained away from the field for most part of the innings. The injury happened while he was chasing a ball to the boundary in the first over of the contest. Zaman's ouster is

He wasn't able to open the batting in the second innings on Wednesday, forcing Saud Shakeel to take stance as a stop-gap opener. Zaman batted at No.4, scoring scored 24 off 41, but seemed visibly struggling during his knock during the match which Pakistan lost by 60 runs.

a blow to the side as he has

been in reasonably good

form.

### **Real Madrid pushes Manchester City out of Champions League**

ylian Mbappé scored a hat trick, Erling Haaland stayed on the bench injured and Real Madrid dumped Manchester City out of the Champions League.

Mbappé's stellar trio of goals in the fourth, 33rd and 61st minutes in a 3-1 win gave Madrid a 6-3 victory on aggregate over the 2023 champion in their two-leg knockout

"This has been the complete performance — attack, defense, with the ball and without the ball, we showed such high levels of quality," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "Almost the perfect night."

One superstar striker was watched by another from the sidelines. Haaland was not fit to start for an ultimately overmatched Man City because of a knee injury sustained late in a Premier League game Saturday.

Paris Saint-Germain beat French rival Brest 7-0, to run up a 10-0 aggregate score, and will play either Liverpool or Barcelona in the round of 16.

PSV Eindhoven ousted Juventus in the only one of the eight playoffs this week that went to extra time. Defender Ryan Flamingo scored in the 98th minute for a 3-1 win on the night and 4-3 on aggregate. United States international Timothy Weah scored

for Iuventus. "Honestly, we slipped up," Weah said. "I felt like they were more aggressive on the night and we lacked a bit of aggression and hunger." In the early game Wednesday, Borussia Dortmund started with a 3-0 lead at home to Sporting Lisbon and was barely stretched in a 0-0 draw. Sporting's Champions League campaign imploded after coach Ruben Amorim left for Manchester United in

### Shami becomes fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 ODI wickets

Star pacer Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 ODI wickets during the ICC Champions Trophy (CT) match against Bangladesh on Thursday.

Returning to international cricket after a long injury layoff, Shami grabbed three wickets to reach the milestone in his 104th match and better former India pacer Ajit Agarkar's record of reaching the mark in 133 matches.

Jaker Ali, who made 68, was his 200th wicket. Overall, the 34-year-old fast bowler is the second quickest



to 200 ODI wickets, behind Australian left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc, who needed 102 games.

One of India's finest seamers, Shami averages less than 25

in the ODI format and has already taken five fifers and 10 four-wicket hauls. Shami is the eighth Indian to complete 200 wickets in ODI

### South Africa seek to shed chokers tag against Afganistan

PTI KARACHI

Debutants Afghanistan will aim to continue their impressive rise in white-ball the top order, the big-hitting cricket, while South Africa trio of Heinrich Klaasen, cricket, while South Africa will once again attempt to shed the 'chokers' tag when the two sides kick off their Champions Trophy (CT) campaign here on Friday.

The inaugural Champions Trophy in 1998 which was trio of Heinrich Klaasen, David Miller and Tristan Stubbs are well-equipped to provide the final flourish. South Africa's biggest challenge heading into the tournament is their depleted bowling attack as key pacces.

Trophy in 1998, which was called the Knockout Trophy at that time, remains the only Trophy at the Industrial Continuous Con ICC men's senior title that South Africa have secured despite having produced some of the world's greatest cricketers, especially in limited-overs format. The Proteas boast of a well-

Aiden Markram will anchor

ruled out due to injuries. Known for his pace,

aggression, and the knack of striking at crucial moments, Kagiso Rabada will be the Proteas' key weapon in both the powerplay and death balanced squad with a overs. formidable batting lineup. Marco Jansen, too, will be multiple reasons.

While skipper Temba expected to step up Bavuma, Tony de Zorzi, significantly. His ability to Rassie van der Dussen, and build pressure and deliver build pressure and deliver impactful spells will be

Meanwhile, Lungi Ngidi will be looking to rediscover his rhythm and confidence after a below-par showing in the recent tri-series. In the spin department, Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz

Shamsi will have vital roles. Since the 2023 ODI World Cup, South Africa have won only four of the 14 ODIs they have played. They enter the tournament on the back of a six-match losing streak. But one cannot overlook the

fact that they were not able to

field a full strength team in

any of these games due to



Clubbed alongside an offcolour England, injury-plagued Australia and Afghanistan, South Africa have a good chance of advancing to the knockout semifi stage. But the Afghans could Their

banana peel. The war-torn nation has emerged strong contenders to make the semifinals.

performances in recent ICC events include dominant wins over England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in the 2023 ODI World Cup and reaching the semifinals of the T20 World Cup last year.

They have proved more than once that they are no longer underdogs but a force to be reckoned with.

The Adghans have won four of their five bilateral series since the ODI World Cup, including one against South Africa in the UAE. Their

biggest strength expectedly remains their spin attack comprising the redoubtable Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and leftarmers Noor Ahmad and spin will be a decisive factor. Pacer Azmatullah Omarzai has been a key figure in Afghanistan's ODI success, with his ability to swing the new ball providing them the

powerplay edge.
Fazalhaq Farooqi will be another crucial weapon with ability to provide early breakthroughs and effective variations at the death.

In the batting department, Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran will once again be expected to provide

a solid start. Their weakness, however, lies in their middle order, which has often struggled to maintain momentum. This

matches in Pakistan where will be crucial for their success in the tournament. Squads: South Africa: Temba

Bavuma (c), Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Rassie van der Dussen, Corbin Bosch. Afghanistan: Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Ikram Alikhil,

Gulbadin Naib, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Kharoti, Noor Nangeyalia Kharote. inconsistency has been a Fazalhaq Farooqi, Farid impressive They will play all three group concern, and addressing it Malik, Naveed Zadran.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.