



# Established 1865 sunday pioneer

## BUDGET 2025

RAIPUR, SUNDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3

www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

# BUDGET 2025 FOR MIDDLE INDIA AND BIHAR



PROF. GOURAV VALLABH  
GUEST REPORTER

The Union Budget 2025-26 has been presented, reaffirming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unwavering vision for a Viksit Bharat. Over the past decade, while the goal has remained steadfast, everything else has evolved-transformative reforms spanning agriculture, MSMEs, youth empowerment, global trade, and middle-class welfare have redefined India's economic trajectory. In these turbulent global times, the budget emerges as a beacon of hope. Pragmatic yet bold, visionary yet rooted in reality, it reaffirms the government's unwavering commitment to building a future where growth is inclusive, opportunities are boundless, and India's rise on the global stage remains unstoppable.

The Indian middle class is no longer a silent observer; it is a dynamic force shaping the nation's future. Over the past decade, more than 25 crore Indians have transitioned out of poverty, fueling aspirations in fields such as sports, start-ups, space exploration, and technological advancements. This budget builds upon previous commitments, ensuring continued financial relief and empowerment.

Steady rise in tax exemption limits, offers greater financial relief and empowers millions of taxpayers. From ₹2.5 lakh in 2014 to ₹5 lakh in 2019, then ₹7 lakh in 2023, and now a remarkable ₹12 lakh in 2025-this consistent expansion has, for the first time, left a vast majority of the middle class completely out of the burden of paying personal income tax. Under the new tax regime, a taxpayer earning ₹12 lakh will receive a substantial benefit of ₹80,000-effectively eliminating their entire tax liability under the existing rates. This

means 100% of the tax payable as per previous slabs is now saved, allowing individuals to retain more of their hard-earned income. And this comes at a time when the share of income tax in total government receipts has actually increased from 19% to 22%. This makes it even more impressive-stronger tax compliance and a rapidly expanding formal economy have ensured that despite widespread tax relief, revenues remain robust and sustainable.

In a deeply considerate step, the government has doubled the tax deduction limit for senior citizens from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh, recognizing their evolving financial needs and ensuring a dignified, secure future. Yet, even as tax relief is extended to millions, fiscal prudence remains paramount. The fiscal deficit target has been firmly set at 4.4% of GDP, reinforcing the government's commitment to responsible economic management.

At the heart of India's economic fabric lies agriculture-the lifeblood of millions. This budget further strengthens the government's commitment to our farmers with transformative initiatives: enhanced credit through Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) will benefit 7.7 crore farmers, providing them with greater financial stability. A visionary 5-year mission to boost cotton productivity will enhance India's textile competitiveness, while the establishment of a dedicated Makhana Board in Bihar will offer vital institutional support to farmers engaged in niche agri-products. Additionally, a six-year roadmap for Aatmanirbharta in pulses will reduce import dependence, ensuring food security and improving rural incomes.

In India, MSMEs have often remained small, not just by circumstance but sometimes by choice-to evade regulatory complexities and compliance burdens. However, this government does not see MSMEs as entities meant to stay small; it envisions them as dynamic engines of growth, capable of scaling, innovating, and driving economic transformation. In line with this vision, the budget introduces structured interventions to propel MSMEs forward so that they are not just surviving



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presents the Union Budget 2025-26 in the Lok Sabha

but thriving, contributing more significantly to India's industrial and economic landscape. In a significant move, the MSME classification criteria have been revised, with turnover and investment limits more than doubling-easing regulatory constraints and enabling more businesses to thrive. The credit guarantee cover has been doubled to ₹10 crore for Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs) and ₹20 crore for start-ups, ensuring greater financial security and access to capital. To facilitate financial inclusion, 10 lakh credit cards with a ₹5 lakh limit will be issued to micro enterprises, enabling them to expand operations with ease. Additionally, a special scheme has been introduced to

provide term loans of up to ₹2 crore for 5 lakh first-time entrepreneurs, with a special focus on women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. These transformative measures will not only fuel growth but also drive formalization and job creation across the sector. Recognizing that India's youth are its greatest asset, the budget places a sharp focus on education, research, and skill development. The expansion of IIT capacities and the introduction of the Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak scheme will strengthen higher education and promote learning in regional languages. To foster innovation from an early age, 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs will be set up in government schools over the next 5 years,

igniting young minds with hands-on scientific learning. Increased investment in medical education will help meet the growing healthcare demands of the nation, ensuring a skilled workforce in critical sectors. Furthermore, broadband connectivity for all government secondary schools and primary health centers will bridge the digital divide, ensuring equitable access to knowledge and healthcare services. A significant ₹20,000 crore allocation for private-sector-driven research, development, and innovation initiatives will accelerate India's technological advancements and global competitiveness.

The government's unwavering commitment to infrastructure development remains a defining pillar of this budget, reinforcing India's journey toward economic transformation. With a ₹1.5 lakh crore outlay for 50-year interest-free loans to states for capital expenditure-linked to incentives for structural reforms-the focus is firmly on sustainable and inclusive growth. The Asset Monetization Plan 2025-30, targeting ₹10 lakh crore in investments for new projects, will unlock value from existing assets while fueling fresh infrastructure expansion. Meanwhile, the extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission till 2028 ensures that the dream of 100% safe drinking water coverage becomes a reality for every household, improving public health and quality of life. These strategic investments will drive economic expansion, generate employment, and elevate India's global competitiveness.

To make India a more business-friendly destination, the budget introduces progressive regulatory reforms - A regulatory framework based on trust and principles to boost productivity and employment. A High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms to ease compliance burdens and Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to decriminalize over 100 provisions in various laws will enhance ease of doing business and attract both domestic and foreign investments. With an eye on global leadership, the government has launched key initiatives to integrate India into global supply chains. 'BharatTradeNet' (BTN), a

unified digital public infrastructure platform for international trade documentation and financing. A National Framework for Global Capability Centers (GCCs) to promote emerging Tier-2 cities as investment hubs. Exemptions on key imports, including 36 lifesaving drugs, LED/LCD TV components, 35 capital goods for EV battery manufacturing, and 28 capital goods for mobile phone battery manufacturing, are expected to boost domestic production and affordability. Rationalization of the customs tariff structure will take place, removing seven tariff rates to enhance trade competitiveness.

The 2025-26 budget is not merely a budget but a bold statement of vision, defining India's path towards self-dependency, global competitiveness, and shared prosperity. With a sharp accent on farmers, MSMEs, infrastructure, and ease of compliance, it creates a strong platform for long-term growth and yet keeps in consideration that anyone and everyone in India must have an opportunity to flourish. Despite budgeted consolidation, the government has delivered a citizen-first, progressive budget-one that inspires hope, induces investments, and accelerates national development.

Gone are the days when India was counted among the Fragile Five. Today, we stand on the cusp of greatness-soon to be recognized as one of the world's foremost economic powerhouses, a leader in business, resilience, and global influence. With structural reforms, strategic investments, and a future-ready approach, India is not just navigating change but shaping it. The journey toward Viksit Bharat is well underway, and this budget ensures that no Indian is left behind. From the fields of our farmers to the ambitions of our entrepreneurs, from the aspirations of our youth to the well-being of our senior citizens-this is a budget that empowers, uplifts, and inspires. The future belongs to India, and with unwavering resolve, we are building a nation that is strong, self-reliant, and unstoppable.

— The writer is a professor of finance at Xavier School of Management, XLRI

## Aggressive push to Agriculture



BINOD ANAND  
GUEST REPORTER

Makhana board, investment in Western Koshi command area Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana' for 100 districts with low productivity, moderate crop intensity and below-average credit parameters, customised Credit Cards with a ₹5 lakh limit for micro enterprises registered on Udyam portal are the few revolutionary steps which will not only Check un mindful and forced migration but will create a farmer centric, robust Agriculture Value chain. India's agricultural sector has long been the backbone of its economy, but its true potential remains untapped due to a lack of value addition and processing infrastructure. Traditionally, farmers have been confined to primary production, leaving them vulnerable to price fluctuations, middlemen, and post-harvest losses. However, Budget 2025 lays a strong foundation for an agri-led manufacturing economy, recognising that the future of rural prosperity lies in food processing, agro-industrial clusters, and cooperative-based manufacturing. This shift from a raw-produce-based economy to a value-added agricultural powerhouse will not only boost farmers' incomes but also generate large-scale rural employment, reduce distress migration, and foster self-reliant rural communities. With a focus on pulses, oilseeds, Natural farming, and farm-to-factory linkages, India is poised to become a global leader in high-value agri-products and rural industrialisation.

The government's renewed Pulses Mission is a key step towards achieving nutritional security and self-sufficiency in pulse production. India is the world's largest producer and consumer of pulses, yet it relies on imports to bridge domestic demand. To address this, Budget 2025 prioritises assured procurement on MSPs

(Minimum Support Prices), enhanced procurement through cooperatives, and incentives for startup led processing industries which will create insitu employment. By promoting FPO-led (Farmer Producer Organisation) supply chains, decentralised pulse-processing units, and research-driven yield improvements, the government is ensuring that pulses become a profitable crop for farmers rather than just a subsistence crop. This mission will not only reduce India's dependence on imports but also create employment in rural processing units, packaging industries, and export logistics, reinforcing the role of pulses as an economic driver. The budget's emphasis on food processing and rural industrialisation marks a paradigm shift in how agriculture contributes to economic growth. India's agrich rich states-Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and the Northeast-are blessed with unique agricultural produce but suffer from inadequate processing and market linkages. To address this, the government is investing in farm-to-factory models that integrate small farmers into formalised supply chains, cold storage and logistics hubs to reduce post-harvest losses, and cooperative-led food processing units that ensure farmers retain value in their produce. Additionally, branding and global marketing of region-specific products, such as Bihar's makhana Board, maize, and litchi, Himachal's apples and walnuts, and the Northeast's organic spices and medicinal plants, will boost exports and enhance rural incomes.

By shifting from raw exports to high-value agri-based manufacturing, India can significantly enhance its agricultural GDP, boost rural wages, and create new employment avenues in food processing, packaging, and distribution. One of the most promising aspects of Budget 2025 is its strengthening of the cooperative movement through the PACS-to-APEX model. Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) will now function as multi-sectoral agribusiness hubs, connected to state and national cooperative federations. This

model will enable direct market access for farmers, reducing dependency on middlemen; technology-driven processing units at the village level, enhancing value retention; financial and credit linkages, ensuring timely support for small farmers; and e-market platforms for transparent pricing and better market intelligence. By embedding AI and blockchain into cooperative transactions, the budget ensures fair pricing, traceability, and financial inclusion, making rural entrepreneurship more viable than ever.

Beyond manufacturing, the future of Indian agriculture lies in integrating primary production with high-value services. Agri-tourism, AI-driven farm advisory, blockchain-backed supply chains, and rural fintech hubs are poised to revolutionise the employment landscape in villages. Key initiatives under the budget include rural startups and ease of getting credit, 5 Lakh Rs Credit card to those registered with UDYAM portal for those and fintech hubs, enabling digital banking, crop insurance, and agri-finance services; AI-powered soil testing and precision farming, reducing input costs and enhancing productivity; drone-assisted irrigation and weather forecasting, mitigating climate risks for farmers; and e-commerce platforms for farmers, allowing direct-to-consumer sales of organic and specialty crops. This multi-sectoral approach ensures that rural youth no longer must migrate to cities for employment. Instead, they can become Agri-entrepreneurs within their own villages, engaged in logistics management, organic certification, digital marketing, and farm consulting services. The integration of AI, IoT, and blockchain in Indian agriculture is set to revolutionise productivity, transparency, and financial security for farmers. Some key developments include AI-driven commodity trading, where a National AI-Powered Agri Commodity Exchange will eliminate middlemen and ensure transparent pricing, benefiting small farmers in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar and other producer states. Blockchain-backed cooperative networks will use

smart contracts to ensure timely payments, prevent fraud, and build trust in rural financial transactions. AI-powered logistics planning will optimise transportation networks to ensure that perishable goods reach markets efficiently, reducing waste and increasing farmer incomes. Additionally, data-driven lending and insurance models will allow small farmers to access credit and insurance without bureaucratic hurdles. By embedding AI into PACS-led financial models, warehouse management, and e-trading platforms, Budget 2025 is democratising access to technology for rural India. The comprehensive focus on agri-led industrialisation, technology-driven services, and cooperative empowerment ensures that India's villages become self-reliant economic hubs, rather than sites of agrarian distress. This transformation also has socio-political ramifications-economic security and cooperative-led development will diminish rural unrest, insurgency, and distress migration. Furthermore, this budget aligns with the Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat vision by ensuring regional economic parity and integrating rural economies into national and global markets. By fostering rural entrepreneurship, cooperative wealth creation, and AI-driven agricultural solutions, India is positioning itself as a global leader in sustainable agribusiness. Towards 21st century with geopolitical headwinds suggesting lower global economic growth over the medium term, certainly our aspiration for a Viksit Bharat inspires us, and the required transformative action point will fuel the Bio-Energy led growth. Budgetary provision is helpful in turning our fastest growing towards a Net Zero Emitter. Our development track record of the past 10 years and structural reforms have drawn global confidence in India's capability and the potential will exponentially grow as an effect of this budget. We see in the next five years a unique opportunity to realise 'Sabka Vikas', stimulating balanced growth of all regions.

— Writer is Executive President World Cooperation Economy Forum

## Please Join the DIGITAL JOURNEY OF LIC

**24 X 7 Digital Payment at your Fingertips:**

- Pay Premium through UPI, Credit Card, Debit Card or Net Banking/ BBPS and Policy Bazaar apps/ Direct Debit, Bill Pay and e-NACH
- Register on our Customer Portal at [www.licindia.in](http://www.licindia.in) or LIC Digital App:
- Pay Premium or avail services
- Get revival quotations & revive with Declaration Of Good Health
- Register your Bank & PAN details to receive claim benefits promptly
- Get your Premium Paid Certificate
- Change your address
- Switch fund type
- Apply for loan, pay loan interest and repay loan online

भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम  
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Har Pal Aapke Saath

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch or SMS YOUR CITY NAME to 56767474

Our WhatsApp No. 8976862090

Download LIC Mobile App

Visit: [licindia.in](http://licindia.in)

Call Centre Services (9322) 6827 6827

Follow us:

LIC India Forever

IRDAI Regn. No.: 512

BEWARE OF SERVICIOUS PHONE CALLS AND EXCITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS. IRDAI or its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.





# 200 cancer centres to launch in 2025

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
The government will facilitate setting up of daycare cancer centres in all district hospitals over the next three years and 200 of these will be established in 2025-26, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Saturday. Presenting the 2025-26 Union Budget, Sitharaman said 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and hospitals next year towards the goal of adding 75,000 seats in the next five years. She further announced that gig workers will be provided healthcare facilities under PM Jan Aarogya Yojana (PM-JAY) and this measure is likely to assist nearly one crore workers. The government will facilitate

setting up of daycare cancer centres in all district hospitals in the next three years, Sitharaman said. She said, "200 centres will be established in 2025-26 itself." To provide relief to patients, particularly those suffering from cancer, rare diseases and other severe chronic diseases, 36 lifesaving drugs and medicines are proposed to be added to the list of medicines fully exempted from basic customs duty (BCD). "I also propose to add six lifesaving medicines to the list attracting concessional customs duty of 5 per cent. Full exemption and concessional duty will also respectively apply on the bulk drugs for manufacture of the above," the

minister said. Specified drugs and medicines under Patient Assistance Programmes run by pharmaceutical companies are fully exempt from BCD, provided the medicines are supplied free of cost to patients, she said. "I propose to add 37 more medicines along with 13 new patient assistance programmes," she said. On adding seats in medical colleges and hospitals, Sitharaman said, "Our government has added almost 1.1 lakh undergraduate and postgraduate medical education seats in 10 years, an increase of 130 per cent." "In the next year, 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and

hospitals towards the goal of adding 75,000 seats in the next five years," she said. The finance minister said medical tourism and Heal in India will be promoted in partnership with the private sector along with capacity building and easier visa norms. Also, broadband connectivity will be provided to all government secondary schools and primary healthcare centres, the minister said. The Union Health Ministry has been allocated Rs 99,858.56 crore in the Budget 2025-2026, an around 11 per cent hike over the Rs 89,974.12 crore in the budget (revised estimates) of 2024-2025 with the government announcing setting up daycare cancer centres at all district hospitals over the next three years. The budgetary allocation for

the AYUSH ministry has been increased from Rs 3,497.64 crore to Rs 3,992.90 crore, recording a 14.15 per cent increase. Of the Rs 99,858.56 crore allocated for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Rs 95,957.87 crore have been earmarked for the Department of Health and Family Welfare and Rs 3,900.69 crore to the Department of Health Research. Among the centrally sponsored schemes, the allocation for the National Health Mission has been increased from Rs 36,000.00 crore in 2024-25 to Rs 37,226.92 crore in 2025-26. Moreover, the allocation for Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) has been hiked from Rs 7,605.54 crore to Rs 9,406.00 crore.

# Budget allocates ₹2.52 Lakh Crore for Indian Railways

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Saturday said the Budget 2025-26 maintained the government's continuous push to improve Railways by allocating Rs 2.52 lakh crore to it and approving projects such as manufacturing 17,500 general coaches, 200 Vande Bharat and 100 Amrit Bharat trains, among others. "New projects worth Rs 4.6 lakh crore have been included in the budget which will be completed in four to five years. These are related to laying of new lines, doubling, quadrupling, station new constructions, redevelopment, flyover, underpasses among many others," the Railway minister told

reporters at Rail Bhawan here. He added that 100 Amrit Bharat, 50 Vande Bharat and 200 Vande Bharat -- both sleepers as well as chair car variants -- will be manufactured in the next two to three years. "With new Amrit Bharat trains, we will connect many more short-distance cities." Regarding general coaches, Vaishnaw said 17,500 such coaches have been approved for manufacturing in the coming years. "The manufacturing of general coaches is already going on and 1400 such coaches will be manufactured by the end of March 31. In FY 2025-26, our target is to manufacture 2,000 general coaches. Besides, 1,000 new flyovers have been approved for construction," Vaishnaw said.

"Another big milestone which the Railways is going to achieve by March 31 is regarding our cargo carrying capacity. We will achieve the target of carrying 1.6 billion tonnes of cargo by March 31 to become the second largest cargo-carrying railways in the world after China." The minister also announced, "We are going to achieve 100 per cent electrification by the end of this financial year." Highlighting the government's focus on investment in the safety of rail operation, Vaishnaw said the allocation for it has been increased from Rs 1.08 lakh crore to Rs 1.14 lakh crore. In the next financial year, it will be further enhanced to Rs 1.16 lakh crore."

# New fund to complete stalled housing projects

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced a fresh Rs 15,000 crore 'SWAMIH Fund' for completion of 1 lakh units in stalled housing projects, a move aimed at providing relief to homebuyers whose investments are stuck. In November 2019, the Centre announced a stress fund named 'Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing' (SWAMIH), to complete stalled housing projects across India. The fund is being managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd, a State Bank Group company. Sitharaman, in her budget speech, announced the SWAMIH Fund-2 following the success of the first fund. Under the SWAMIH Fund-1, the finance minister highlighted that 50,000 dwelling units in stressed housing projects have been completed and keys have been handed over to homebuyers. Another 40,000 units will be completed in 2025, further helping middle-class families who were paying EMIs (equated monthly installments) on loans taken for apartments, while also paying rent for their current dwellings, the finance minister said.

# Sitharaman announces Maritime Development Fund of ₹25,000

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said a Maritime Development Fund with a corpus of Rs 25,000 crore will be set up for long-term financing for the maritime industry. Presenting the Budget for 2025-26, Sitharaman said the amount will be used to support and promote competition. This will have up to 49 per cent contribution by the government, while the balance will be mobilised from ports and the private sector. She also announced continuation of customs duty

exemption on inputs and components used for manufacturing of ships for another 10 years. The announcements assume significance as the country is looking to promote domestic ship building to boost international trade. Sitharaman also said the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy will be revamped to address cost disadvantages. This will also include credit notes for shipbreaking in Indian yards to promote the circular economy, she added. The minister also said large ships above a specified size will be included in the

infrastructure harmonised master list (HML). "Shipbuilding clusters will be facilitated to increase the range, categories and capacity of ships," she said, adding that this will include additional infrastructure facilities, skilling and technology to develop the entire ecosystem. Pointing out that presently the tonnage tax scheme is available to only sea going ships, the minister said the benefits of existing tonnage tax scheme are proposed to be extended to inland vessels registered under the Indian Vessels Act, 2021 to promote inland water transport in the country.

# Center cuts borrowing target to ₹11.54 Lakh Crore

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
The government has reduced its borrowings estimate for next financial year to Rs 11.54 lakh crore on net basis as it expects an improvement in tax collection. The government has to borrow by issuing dated securities to meet its fiscal deficit target. However, gross market borrowings have now been revised upward to Rs 14.82 lakh crore from Rs 14.01 lakh crore estimated for the current financial year. "Coming to 2025-26, the total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at Rs 34.96 lakh crore and Rs 50.65 lakh crore respectively. The net tax receipts are estimated at Rs 28.37 lakh crore," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech. Fiscal deficit is estimated to be 4.4 per cent of GDP for FY26 as compared to 4.8 per cent of the GDP estimated for current financial year. In absolute terms, fiscal deficit is pegged at Rs 15,68,936 crore for financial year 2025-26.

# India-US nuclear cooperation to benefit from legal reforms

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
India on Saturday announced plans to set up a nuclear energy mission and proposed to amend the liability laws governing the sector, a move that came ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's likely visit to the US. New Delhi made public its decision to amend the nuclear liability laws a little over two weeks after Washington lifted restrictions on three Indian nuclear entities saying the move will open up new avenues for India-US collaboration in the civil-nuclear field. Certain clauses in India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 have emerged as hurdles in moving forward in implementation of the historic civil nuclear deal that was firm up between the two strategic partners around 16 years ago. Modi is expected to visit Washington this month to hold wide-ranging talks with US President Donald Trump

with a focus on further shoring up bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including trade, energy and defence. India's decision to set up a 'Nuclear Energy Mission' with an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore and plans to amend the nuclear liability laws were announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Union budget for 2025-26 in Parliament. "Development of at least 100 G W (Gigawatt) of nuclear energy by 2047 is essential for our energy transition efforts," she said. "For an active partnership with the private sector towards this goal, amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act will be taken up," she added. The finance minister said the 'Nuclear Energy Mission' for research and development of Small Modular Reactors (SMR) with an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore will be set up. "At least five indigenously developed SMRs will be

operationalised by 2033," she said. Modi described the decision to promote the private sector in the nuclear energy sector as "historic." "This will ensure a major contribution of civil nuclear energy in the development of the country in the coming times," he said in his reaction to the Union budget. Modi said civil nuclear energy will ensure a significant contribution to the country's development in the future. The US last month removed restrictions on Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (IGCAR) and the Indian Rare Earths (IRE). The decision came after then NSA Jake Sullivan announced that Washington was finalising steps to "remove" hurdles for civil nuclear partnership between Indian and American firms. India and the US unveiled an ambitious plan to co-operate in civil nuclear energy in July 2005 following then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's meeting with American President George W Bush. The historic civil nuclear agreement was finally sealed around three years later following a series of negotiations.

# Budget hikes DoNER allocation by 47% for Northeast

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Union Budget 2025-26 has allocated Rs 5,915 crore for the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), which is a significant 47-per cent hike over the ongoing fiscal's allocation. The budget 2024-25 had allocated Rs 4,006 crore for the Ministry of DoNER. Officials said other initiatives that will indirectly benefit the northeastern region include expansion to 120 new destinations, including enhanced connectivity for the region, under the UDAN -- the regional connectivity scheme. There will be a focus on smaller airports and helipads in hilly and remote districts to boost regional air travel, with a target to carry four crore passengers in the next 10 years. The additional 0.5 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) borrowing will allow the states to implement electricity distribution and augment intra-state transmission, and it is expected to improve energy availability and reliability in the northeast, the officials said. For "atmanirbharta" (self-reliance) in urea production, the government has reopened three dormant urea plants in the eastern region. To further augment the urea supply, a plant with an annual capacity of 12.7 lakh metric tons will be set up at Assam's Namrup.

# Congress slams Budget, calls it 'election-focused'



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Opposition parties on Saturday said budget 2025 has nothing to offer to the common people and the middle class, and the government has brought the document with upcoming Bihar elections in mind. Asserting that the government has no new ideas, the Congress said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is walking on the "worm-out path" and is not willing to break free as its governments had done in 1991 and 2004. The opposition party said the take away from Budget 2025-26 is that the BJP is wooing the tax paying middle-class and the Bihar electorate. Former Congress chief and Leader of Opposition in Lok

Sabha Rahul Gandhi slammed the Union Budget as a "band-aid for bullet wounds," saying that the Centre was "bankrupt of ideas". He said solving the economic crisis demanded a paradigm shift. Addressing a press conference on the Budget, senior Congress leader and former finance minister P Chidambaram said these announcements will be welcomed by the 3.2 crore tax-paying middle-class and the 7.65 crore voters of Bihar. But for the rest of India, the finance minister had no more than soothing words, punctuated by the applause of BJP members led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said. Trinamool Congress national general secretary and Lok

Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee said there was nothing for West Bengal in the Budget. "There is nothing for common people in the Budget. They have presented the Budget with the upcoming Bihar elections in mind. Last time as well, all announcements were for Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. Andhra Pradesh elections are over, Bihar polls are upcoming, so the state is in focus," Banerjee told reporters in the Parliament complex. "As far as West Bengal is concerned, it has not got anything in the last ten years, nor was there anything today. This is unfortunate," he said. DMK Lok Sabha MP Dayanidhi Maran called the Budget a "big letdown" for the country.

# Union Budget cuts allocation for aviation by 10per cent, UDAN gets ₹540 Crore

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
The budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Civil Aviation has been cut by nearly 10 per cent to Rs 2,400.31 crore for the next financial year, with the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN set to get a lower amount of Rs 540 crore. The allocation in the Union Budget 2025-26, presented by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Saturday, is less compared to Rs 2,658.68 crore in the revised 2024-25 Budget. Out of the total allocation for the next fiscal starting from April 1, 2025, UDAN will get Rs 540 crore, which is 32 per cent lower compared to Rs 800 crore in the year-ago period. Interestingly, Sitharaman has announced that UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme will be modified to connect 120 new destinations. As per the budget papers, the allocation for the DGCA and BCAS have increased marginally to Rs 330 crore and Rs 95 crore, respectively, for 2025-26. For the Customs Cost Recovery (CCR) charges to Airport Authority of India (AAI) and AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd (AAICLAS) for tier II / III cities' airports, the allocation has been raised to Rs 142.75 crore from Rs 124.17 crore in the same period a year ago. In the next fiscal, Air India Asset Holding Ltd will get a slightly higher allocation of Rs 1,025.51 crore compared to Rs 1,017.67 crore in the

current financial year. The budgetary provision is for servicing of loan transferred to AIAHL as a result of financial restructuring of Air India. In her Budget speech, Sitharaman said UDAN has enabled 1.5 crore middle class people to meet their aspirations for speedier travel. "Inspired by that success, a modified UDAN scheme will be launched to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and carry 4 crore passengers in the next 10 years. The scheme will also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North East region districts," the minister said. According to the budget papers, UDAN allocation is for revival of airports and for commencement of RCS routes, Viability Gap Funding for North East Connectivity. "To improve connectivity in NE region, a new scheme has also been formulated for providing air connectivity and aviation infrastructure," it added. India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets. Airlines welcomed the proposal to modify UDAN scheme to provide regional air connectivity to 120 new destinations, saying the move will make air travel more accessible as well as help boost overall economic growth. Presenting the Union Budget for 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) has enabled 1.5 crore middle-class people to meet their



aspirations for speedier travel. SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said the budget is forward-looking and middle class-friendly and aims to boost spending and stimulate development. "With the launch of a modified UDAN scheme that will introduce 120 new destinations and bring 4 crore additional passengers into the fold over

the next decade, the aviation landscape in India is set for a transformative shift. This initiative will not only make air travel more accessible to remote regions but will also drive economic growth and tourism, further empowering local economies," he said in a statement. Regional airline FLY91's MD and CEO Manoj Chacko said UDAN scheme has been a pathbreaking initiative in enhancing regional air connectivity. "Regional aviation has the potential to be a key driver of growth, connecting underserved cities and unlocking their economic potential. As a pure play regional airline focused on Tier 2 and Tier 3 destinations, we at FLY91 see this as a transformative step that will accelerate air travel accessibility and drive growth across India," he said.



CM hails Union Budget 2025



STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Praising the Union Budget 2025, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said on Saturday that it was a document of India's golden future.

The Centre has set total expenditure at Rs 50.65 lakh crore in the 2025-26 budget.

This budget will be historic and revolutionary for the upliftment of the middle class and working classes. It has provisions for every section of society, he said.



But former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel has criticised the budget.

He said that it had nothing for the middle class, lower class, poor, farmers, and infrastructure sector, and it was also impractical.

Meanwhile, trade unions have hailed the budget and praised it for its potential for growth.



Chairman of the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industries states, Pradeep Tandon, said that the investment limit of 2.5 times for MSME classification will boost opportunities.

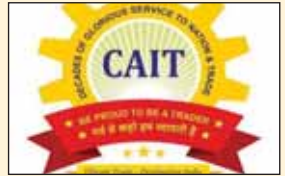
The focus on inclusive development and boosting middle-class spending will enrich the economy, he said.

The budget aims to accelerate growth and unlock the nation's potential while initiating reforms in taxation, urban development, mining, the financial sector, power, and regulatory reforms, he added.



The Chhattisgarh Chamber of Commerce and Industries praised it for the Rs 10,000 crore provision for startups.

They said that it will enable young entrepreneurs to become self-employed and promote innovation.



The Confederation of All India Traders in Chhattisgarh too heaped praise on union budget.

Chhattisgarh's Raigarh reports bird flu

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Avian influenza or bird flu was detected at a state-run poultry farm in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district, officials said on Saturday.

Taking the matter seriously the Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai issued necessary instructions to the district collectors across the state to stay vigilant to contain the disease.

A state level rapid response team was formed looking at the threat of spread of the disease.

According to an official statement from Raigarh

district administration, at least 17,000 chickens and quails were culled in the district after the case was detected.

Besides, the authorities have stepped up vigil within a 10 km radius of the affected area.

"After some chickens were recently found dead at the poultry farm in Chakradhar Nagar in Raigarh, samples were sent to the Bhopal-based National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) for testing", the statement said.

The tests confirmed the H5N1 virus on Friday night, following which Raigarh Collector Kartikeya Goel



convened an emergency meeting with senior officials on Saturday to devise a

strategy to deal with the situation.

An official said that as per

the standard procedure, personnel from the municipal corporation and veterinary and health departments conducted a joint operation overnight; culling 5,000 chickens and 12,000 quails and destroying 17,000 eggs and poultry feed on the farm.

He said the concerned departments were activated to ensure the situation was brought under control before sunrise and the infection did not spread outside that area.

He added that the affected premises were sanitized.

The affected poultry farm was sealed, and the 1 km radius of the farm has been declared an 'infected zone'

and the 10 km radius 'surveillance zone', the official said.

As per protocol, poultry birds, eggs, and poultry feed will be destroyed within the 'infected zone', and their movement will be completely banned.

For this, the animal husbandry department will provide compensation to owners of poultry birds.

Poultry and egg shops will be closed in the 'surveillance zone', the statement said.

Officials have confirmed that no human population was affected due to the bird flu outbreak.

Security forces gun down eight Maoists

STAFF REPORTER BIJAPUR

Security forces on Saturday eliminated eight Maoists in a gunfight in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.

The gun battle ensued around 8.30 am in a forest near Todka village in Gangaloor area when the security personnel were out on an anti-Naxal operation, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Chandrakant Governa said.

The District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF), both units of state police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and its elite Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) were involved in the operation launched on Friday based on the inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to West Bastar Division of the outlawed Maoist outfit in the area, he



added.

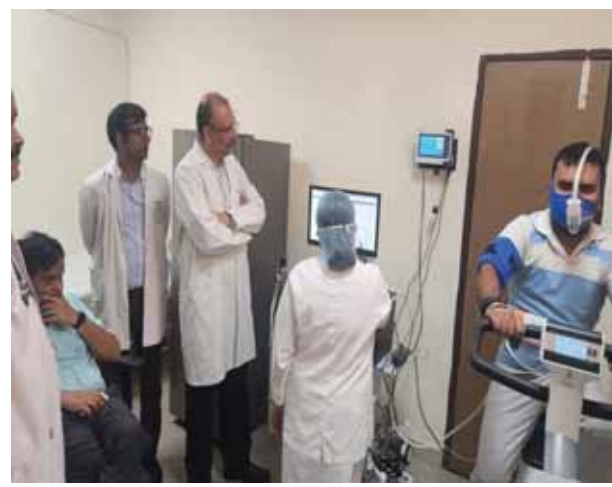
After the guns fell silent, the bodies of eight Maoists were recovered from the encounter site besides an INSAS rifle, a barrel grenade launcher (BGL), two .12 bore guns and four muzzle loading guns, the official said.

The slain Maoists are yet to be identified, he said.

A total of 50 Maoists have been killed in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh this year so far.

Maoists are on the run in Chhattisgarh for the past one year after Union Home Minister Amit Shah has set a deadline to make India free from Naxal menace by March 2026.

AIIMS-R introduces advanced diagnostics in pulmonary dept



STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Strengthening its commitment to high-quality healthcare and research, Chhattisgarh's All India Institute of Medical Sciences Raipur (AIIMS-R) continues to advance patient care by integrating cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic technologies.

A press communiqué said on Saturday that the institute has now introduced Cardiopulmonary Exercise Testing (CPET) and Exhaled Nitric Oxide (FeNO) estimation in the outpatient department (OPD).

Prof. (Dr.) Sajal De, Head of the Department of Pulmonary Medicine, highlighted that CPET is a specialized, non-invasive test

The institute has now introduced Cardiopulmonary Exercise Testing (CPET) and Exhaled Nitric Oxide (FeNO) estimation in the outpatient department (OPD).

assessing the combined function of the heart, lungs, and muscles during exercise. It plays a crucial role in evaluating unexplained exertional breathlessness, determining exercise capacity, and guiding treatment for various cardiac and pulmonary conditions.

Budget Reactions on X



Former Deputy Chief Minister and Congress leader TS Singh Deo said that it was disappointing as expected.

The BJP has again done what it's known for—favouring the rich and ignoring the poor, he said.



Raipur MP Brijmohan Agrawal said this budget will give a direction to economic progress as it will promote innovation and self-reliance.



Assembly Speaker Raman Singh said increasing the limit of Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to Rs 5 lakh was a huge step towards the prosperity of farmers.



Finance Minister OP Choudhary said that historic decisions have been made for small traders, employees, and the tourism sector in Chhattisgarh.



Forest Minister Kedar Kashyap said that there will be unprecedented improvement in education and health.

HNLU holds capacity building programme for cops

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

A Capacity Building Programme on New Criminal Law Reforms for Police Officers of Chhattisgarh was organized by Chhattisgarh's Hidayatullah National Law University (HNLU) Raipur in collaboration with the Chhattisgarh Police.

A press statement from the university on Saturday said that the event was held at the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose State Police Academy, Chandkhuri, Raipur.

Speaking on this occasion Prof. (Dr.) V.C. Vivekanandan emphasized the role of technological advancements in crime investigation, evidence collection, and law enforcement.

He highlighted that the integration of law and technology is crucial for effective policing and to



maintain law and order. He also spoke about the significance of law and law-making in a democracy. HNLU remains committed

to organizing similar capacity-building programs for police officers in the future, he said.

He further stressed the importance of both theoretical

knowledge and practical training in equipping officers with the necessary tools to uphold justice.

Dr. Ratan Lal Dangi (IPS),

Prof. (Dr.) V.C. Vivekanandan highlighted that the integration of law and technology is crucial for effective policing and to maintain law and order. He also spoke about the significance of law and law-making in a democracy.

Director of the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose State Police Academy, extolled the participating officers to implement their learning in their respective fields and train their juniors, ensuring the effective execution of the training lessons in real-world policing.

Dr. Abhishek Pallava, IPS, Superintendent of Police at the State Police Academy, spoke on the significance of such training programs in equipping police officers with the latest legal knowledge and investigative techniques.

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.

Printed and Published by Vijay Budhia for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Limited, "The Pioneer Building", 11, Civil Lines, Near Raj Bhavan, Opp. Sanskriti Bhavan, Raipur-492007 Telephone(0771) 2223260/70 and Printed at Kavya Prakashan, Express Tower, Adarsh nagar, Mowa, Raipur-492005, Editor-in-Chief Shobori Ganguli, Resident Office: Sujeta Kumar, Delhi Office: 100k Milap Bhawan, 8/A Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Corporate Office:- 201-205, 208-210, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-46035729, 011-69342500, Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow 226016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.





# PM Modi terms Union Budget 2025-26 as "people's budget"

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday termed the Union Budget as a "people's budget" that fulfils the dreams of every Indian and said that it is a "force-multiplier" that will boost consumption, investment and growth.

In televised remarks after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Budget in the Lok Sabha, Modi highlighted a host of measures for different sectors and noted that budgets generally look to fill the government's treasury but this one seeks to put more money in people's pockets and increase their savings.

This Budget focuses on making people a partner in India's development journey, he said, describing it as a historic and important milestone on the

road to the country's progress. It lays the foundation for attaining these goals, he added.

"The Budget lays a strong foundation to increase savings and make citizens partners in development," Modi said, adding that its welfare initiatives for gig workers underscore the government's commitment to the dignity of labour.

He said the measures presented in the Budget for the manufacturing sector will allow Indian products to shine globally.

The tax relief will provide big benefits to the middle class and salaried employees, he said, adding the Budget announcement that those earning up to ₹12 lakh will have to pay no income tax will present those entering the job sector with a big opportunity.

The prime minister praised the "historic" decision to pro-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi reacts on the Union Budget 2025-26, in New Delhi

mote the private sector in nuclear energy, saying civil nuclear energy will ensure a sig-

nificant contribution to the country's development in the future.

Stressing that the Budget has prioritised all employment generating sectors, he highlighted

two key reforms, including granting infrastructure status to shipbuilding that will boost the construction of large ships in India and accelerate the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programme. Including hotels in 50 tourist destinations under the infrastructure category will provide a major fillip to tourism, Modi said, noting that the hospitality industry is the largest employment sector. He said the country was progressing with the mantra of 'Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi' (development as well as heritage).

He asserted that the announcements for farmers will lay the foundation for a revolution in the agricultural sector and the entire rural economy, as he highlighted that under the PM Dhan-Dhanya Krishi Yojana irrigation and infrastructure development will take place in 100 districts. Increasing the

limit of Kisan Credit Card from Rs three lakh to Rs five lakh will provide greater assistance to farmers, he added.

"The Budget has a 360-degree focus on manufacturing to strengthen entrepreneurs, MSMEs and small businesses, creating new jobs," the prime minister said, underlining that sectors like clean tech, leather, footwear and toy industries have received special support under the National Manufacturing Mission. He stressed that the goal is to ensure that Indian products shine in the global market.

Modi said the Budget places special emphasis on creating a vibrant and competitive investment environment in the states. In this context, he mentioned the announcements to double the credit guarantee for MSMEs and startups besides the introduction of a scheme to provide

loans up to ₹2 crore without guarantee for SCs, STs and first-time women entrepreneurs.

The prime minister said the announcements for gig workers, including their registration on the e-Shram portal for the first time, and enabling them to access healthcare and other social security schemes reflect the government's commitment to the dignity of labour. He said regulatory and financial reforms, such as Jan Vishwas 2.0, will strengthen the commitment to minimum government and trust-based governance.

This Budget not only addresses the current needs of the country but also helps in preparing for the future, Modi asserted, highlighting the initiatives for startups, including the Deep Tech Fund, Geospatial Mission and Nuclear Energy Mission.

## Purvodaya: Budget pushes for Bihar Ministry of Education allotted ₹1.28 Lakh Crore

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

With almost one-third electorates in the poll bound Delhi are people hailing from Bihar, the Union Budget on Saturday made several announcements for Bihar, including setting up of a Makhana Board, financial support for the western Koshi canal project, and support for enhancing the capacity of IIT Patna. Bihar, currently ruled by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), will go to polls later this year.

In her budget speech in the Lok Sabha, the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman also announced that the Centre will set up a National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Management in Bihar, besides facilitating greenfield airports in the state to meet future needs, in addition to the expansion of the capacity of the Patna airport and a brownfield airport in Bihta.

"In line with our commitment towards 'Purvodaya' (rise of eastern states), we will establish a National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management in Bihar, besides facilitating greenfield airports in the state to meet future needs, in addition to the expansion of the capacity of the Patna airport and a brownfield airport in Bihta.

"In line with our commitment towards 'Purvodaya' (rise of eastern states), we will establish a National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management in Bihar, besides facilitating greenfield airports in the state to meet future needs, in addition to the expansion of the capacity of the Patna airport and a brownfield airport in Bihta.

"In line with our commitment towards 'Purvodaya' (rise of eastern states), we will establish a National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management in Bihar, besides facilitating greenfield airports in the state to meet future needs, in addition to the expansion of the capacity of the Patna airport and a brownfield airport in Bihta.



employment opportunities for the youth," she added.

A Makhana Board will be established in Bihar to improve production, processing, value addition, and marketing of the nut, Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

The finance minister also said the Centre will provide financial support to Bihar for the western Koshi canal project, benefiting a "large number of farmers" cultivating over 50,000 hectares of land in the Mithilanchal region of the state. The Centre will create additional infrastructure in five IITs and provide support for enhancing the capacity of IIT Patna, she said.

"The total number of students in 23 IITs has increased 100 per cent from 65,000 to 1.35 lakh in the past 10 years. Additional infrastructure will be created in the five IITs started after 2014 to facilitate education for 6,500 more students," Sitharaman said, adding,



"Hostel and other infrastructure capacity at IIT Patna will also be expanded." Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar lauded the Budget 2025-26 as one that was "positive" and would help in accelerating development of the state. Kumar, whose JD(U) is a key constituent of the ruling BJP-led NDA at the Centre, also thanked Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

He also said greenfield airports proposed in the budget will go a long way in improving flight connectivity, which would give a fillip to the state's economic growth. While Union Minister for Food Processing Industry and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan hailed the budgetary announcements, JD (U) working president Sanjay Jha hailed the announcement of setting up of a Makhana Board in Bihar, saying it will unlock new opportunities for farmers and entrepreneurs.

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Infrastructure expansion at the five new IITs to accommodate 6,500 more students, 10,000 new medical seats and an allocation of ₹500 Crore to set up a Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence for education. These are among the big announcements for the education sector in the 2025-26 budget.

The Ministry of Education has been allocated more than ₹1.28 Lakh Crore in the Union Budget 2025-26, higher than the revised estimate of ₹1.14 Lakh Crore in 2024-25.

While the Higher Education department has been allocated an amount of ₹50,067 Crore, the school education department has received ₹78,572 Crore.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who presented her eighth straight Union Budget, also said the government will launch 'Bharatiya Bhasha Pushtak' scheme to provide digital form of Indian language books for schools and higher education. She announced the government will create additional infrastructure at five Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and expand IIT Patna.

"The total number of students in 23 IITs has increased by 100 per cent from 65,000 to 1.35 lakh in the past 10



years. Additional infrastructure will be created in the five IITs started after 2014 to facilitate education for 6,500 more students. Hostel and other infrastructure capacity at IIT Patna will also be expanded," she said. The five new IITs are at Jammu, Bhilai, Dharwad, Palakkad and Tirupati.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan welcomed the announcement, saying it will lead to "leapfrogging" in various parameters. "Additional 6,500 seats will be added in these IITs over a period of five years and infrastructure will be upgraded to cater to them. The budget emphasises on investing in people and facilitating all-round development of India's human capital. "With poor, youth, farm-

ers and women as the pillars, this is a budget that will uplift sentiments of the poor and middle class, accelerate spending, catalyse investments, spur growth, remove regional imbalances, build rural prosperity, nurture research, innovation and entrepreneurship, invigorate our education and skilling landscape, lead to employment-led development and unlock the tremendous potential of Brand India," Pradhan told reporters.

The IITs have been allocated an amount of Rs 11,349 Crore in the union budget, up from a revised estimate of ₹10,467 Crore in the current financial year.

Sitharaman announced that 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and hospitals next year

towards the goal of adding 75,000 seats over the next five years.

"Our government has added almost 1.1 Lakh undergraduate and postgraduate medical education seats in 10 years, an increase of 130 per cent. In the next year, 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and hospitals towards the goal of adding 75,000 seats in the next five years," she said.

The Finance Minister also announced 10,000 fellowships will be provided for technology research in IITs and IISc over the next five years. "Five national centres for excellence for skilling with global expertise and partnerships will be set up and 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs will be set up in government schools in the next five years to cultivate scientific temper in young minds," she said.

Sitharaman said broadband connectivity will be provided to all government secondary schools and primary healthcare centres in rural areas. "I had announced three centres of excellence in AI for agriculture, sustainable cities, and health in 2023.

Now, a Centre of Excellence in AI for education will be set with an outlay of Rs 500 crore," she said, in a big push in education. From University Grants

Commission (UGC) to National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), most bodies under the Ministry of Education have received an increased allocation.

Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), the country's top business schools that witnessed consistent cut in their allocated budget in a push to make them self-reliant, have also received an increased allocation of ₹251 Crore against a revised estimate of ₹227 Crore last year.

However, the budget granted to Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISERs) has seen a drop of ₹137 Crore. Similarly, the allocated amount for World Class Institutions, has been reduced by more than 50 per cent. Last year, the amount allocated was ₹1000 Crore which has now been reduced to ₹475 Crore. The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), which runs residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas across the country, have got a reduced allocation of ₹5,305 Crore from the revised estimate of ₹5370 Crore this fiscal.

However, there has been a notable increase in the allocation for the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, which runs Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs), from ₹8,727 crore to ₹9,503 crore.

## ₹1 Lakh Crore, Urban Challenge Fund announced to boost city growth

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

In a significant move aimed at accelerating urban development and addressing key housing and infrastructure needs, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday unveiled a series of bold proposals as part of the Union Budget 2025-26. Among the major announcements was the creation of an Urban Challenge Fund worth ₹1 lakh crore, designed to help transform India's cities into vibrant growth hubs, promote creative redevelopment, and improve urban water and sanitation systems.

Presenting the Union Budget 2025-26, Sitharaman explained that the Urban Challenge Fund will play a pivotal role in the



government's mission to enhance urban infrastructure. The fund is set to finance up to 25% of the cost of bankable urban development projects. To encourage collaboration and wider financial participation, the fund has specific stipulations: at least

50% of the project cost must come from other sources, such as bonds, bank loans, and public-private partnerships (PPPs). This model aims to leverage both private and public sector contributions to ensure the efficient and sustainable

development of urban areas. For the fiscal year 2025-26, the government has allocated Rs 10,000 Crore to the Urban Challenge Fund.

These funds will be directed towards enhancing urban infrastructure in cities across India, with a focus on developing cities as growth hubs, creative redevelopment, and improving water and sanitation facilities. Through these targeted investments, the government intends to address several critical issues facing urban centres, including inadequate infrastructure, poor sanitation, and rapid urbanisation.

This initiative is expected to play a key role in the development of sustainable, liveable cities. By focusing on improving essential services

and creating more efficient urban spaces, the Urban Challenge Fund aligns with the government's broader goals of promoting economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity.

The finance minister also said that under the Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH), 50,000 dwelling units have been completed in the stressed housing projects, with keys handed over to the homebuyers.

Another 40,000 units will be completed in 2025, further helping middle-class families which were paying EMIs on loans taken for apartments, while also paying rent for their current dwellings, she said.

"Building on this success, a SWAMIH Fund 2 will be

established as a blended finance facility with contributions from the government, banks and private investors.

This fund of ₹15,000 Crore will aim for expeditious completion of another one Lakh units," Sitharaman said.

The finance minister also announced that the PM Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) will be revamped with enhanced loans from banks, UPI-linked credit cards with ₹30,000 limit, and capacity-building support. The scheme has benefited more than 68 Lakh street vendors, giving them respite from high-interest informal sector loans, she said.

PM SVANidhi is a special micro-credit facility for providing affordable loans to street vendors.

## Ministers allotted higher budget for hospitality and entertainment

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

The Union Budget 2025-26 has allocated ₹1,024.30 Crore for expenses incurred by the Council of Ministers, the Cabinet Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office, and for hospitality and entertainment of state guests. The allocated amount is slightly higher than the ₹1,021.83 Crore earmarked in 2024-25.

A total of ₹619.04 Crore has been allotted for the expenses of council of ministers in the coming fiscal. It was ₹540.95 Crore in 2024-25. This allocation is for expenditure on salaries, sumptuary and other allowances and travel by Cabinet ministers, ministers of state, and former prime ministers. It also includes a provision for special extra session flight operations for VVIPs.

The National Security Council Secretariat has been allocated ₹182.75 Crore, against ₹270.08 Crore allotted in 2024-25. The provision is for meeting the administrative expenses and space programme of the National Security Council Secretariat.

A total of ₹70.12 Crore has been allotted to the office of the principal scientific advisor (₹65.72 Crore in 2024-25) for meeting the administrative expenses of the office and the National Research Foundation. The Cabinet Secretariat has been allocated ₹75.68 Crore, against ₹73.98 crore in 2024-



25, for meeting the administrative expenses of those of the Cabinet Secretariat and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has been allocated ₹70.91 Crore (₹65.30 Crore in 2024-25) for meeting administrative expenses. The Budget also allotted Rs four crore for hospitality and entertainment expenses, the same as that allocated in 2024-25.

This provision is for expenditure on government hospitality and entertainment of foreign state guests, official entertainment arranged at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on behalf of the vice-president and the prime minister, reception on national days, and investiture and ceremonies for presentation of credentials, among others.

The Budget also allocated Rs 1.80 crore for expenditure on payments of secretariat assistance to former governors, the same as that allocated in 2024-25.

## Major boost to defence spending, focus on might and modernisation

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Keeping up the momentum of modernization and operational readiness, ₹6,81,210 Crores is allocated to defence for next fiscal. It is a hike of 9.53 per cent over current year's allocation of ₹6,21,940 Crore. The allocation for the defence budget is estimated at 1.91 per cent of the projected GDP in 2025-26.

The government has assured that funds will not be a constraint and if need be additional finance will be available to ensure to meet any challenge in the back drop of



fast evolving regional security scenario, sources said here on Saturday. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated Finance Minister Sitharaman for presenting a budget towards

fulfilling the Prime Minister's resolve of Viksit Bharat. "This budget will promote the development of youth, poor, farmers, women and all other sections of society. Recognising the contribution of the middle class, the budget has brought an unprecedented gift," he said. As regards procuring state of the art weaponry including aircraft, warships and systems, a total of ₹1,80,000 Crore crore has been allocated for capital outlay for 2025-26. The capital outlay in 2024-25 was ₹1.72

Lakh Crore. Moreover, ₹1.12 lakh crore is earmarked for 2025-26 for procurement from domestic industries. ₹1,11,544.83 Crore i.e. 75% of modernisation budget has been earmarked for procurement through domestic sources and 25% of domestic share i.e. ₹27,886.21 Crore has been provisioned for procurement through do 1,60,795 Crore i.e. 23.60% and balance ₹28,682.97 Crore i.e. 4.21% is for civil organisations under defence ministry.

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has been allotted ₹9,676.70 Crore under Capital and Revenue Head which is 26.50% more than the allocation for FY 2024-25 at Budget Estimate (BE) stage. This increase is primarily in line with the focus of the Government on capability development of ICG and equipping them with modern equipment. ICG not only strengthens coastal security, but also provides assistance to neighboring countries and commercial ships during emergency through faster response. A jump of 43% in Capital Budget i.e. from ₹3,500

Crore for FY 2024-25 to ₹5,000 Crore for FY 2025-26 will provide adequate financial space for acquisition of Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH), Dornier Aircraft, Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs), Training Ships and Interceptor Boats. On revenue head, the allocation has been increased from ₹4,151.8 crore for FY 2024-25 to ₹4,676.70 Crore for FY 2025-26 which shows an increase of 12.64%. The increase will be utilised to fund the expenditure to be incurred on additional deployments of manpower and resources in addition to addressing the inflation.

## Major boost to defence spending, focus on might and modernisation





# Budget promotes rural industrialisation and export growth



DR VIJAY G KALANTRI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget 2025-26 can be described as well-balanced and progressive, emphasising growth and development by boosting consumption, rationalising taxes, introducing compliance reforms, and promoting the 'Make in India' initiative. It caters to all sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing,

and services by introducing 8 National Missions across these sectors, while also fostering research and innovation. One of the key highlights of the budget is the enhanced access to credit for MSMEs and startups, along with technical and technological upgradation support. The increase in investment and turnover limits for MSME classification will broaden the scope of MSME schemes, improving access to credit and bringing a wider range of businesses under the micro and small enterprise categories, thereby strengthening domestic manufacturing. To further support exporter MSMEs, the credit guarantee cover for term loans has been increased to INR 20 crores.

Additionally, a customised credit card with a limit of INR 5 lakh has been introduced for micro-enterprises registered under the Udyam Portal. Significant enhancements have also been made to credit cover for startups, with a moderated guarantee fee for 27 priority sectors, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. The budget places a strong emphasis on rural industrialisation, particularly through the expansion of logistics via India Post. This initiative is expected to drive industrial development in rural areas, helping shift the labor force from agriculture to more productive manufacturing and service sectors. Additionally, the introduction of special national missions, such as



'Aatmanirbharta in Pulses,' high-yielding seeds, and cotton, aims to improve crop productivity through investments in infrastructure, research and development, and export promotion. Several provisions have also been made to promote skill development and employment generation. A key focus has been placed on

labor-intensive manufacturing sectors, including leather, footwear, toys, and food processing. The announcement of a National Mission for Manufacturing aims to drive growth through five key focus areas such as ease of doing business, workforce development, MSME growth, technology advancement and

quality production. A National Mission for Exports has been introduced to strengthen India's export ecosystem. The mission focuses on improving export credit, supporting MSMEs in overcoming non-tariff barriers, and simplifying tariff structures. The budget also rationalises import duties and taxes across several industries, including electronics, IT, marine products, textiles, leather, and minerals. These measures are expected to significantly reduce operational costs for domestic manufacturers, thereby enhancing their global competitiveness. Another major reform in the budget is the enhancement of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector to 100%, specifically

for companies that reinvest 100% of their premium earnings. This move is expected to attract significant investments in the insurance sector while also stimulating domestic economic growth. Additionally, the budget outlines targeted investment initiatives to spur growth, including the establishment of fund of funds that focus on deep tech, artificial intelligence (AI), innovation, and electronics. A renewed thrust on infrastructure development has also been introduced, particularly through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). The budget encourages state governments to adopt similar initiatives, ensuring widespread infrastructural expansion and economic advancement. The budget seems to have delivered on industry expectations. There has been a long-standing demand to reduce compliance costs and rationalise taxation, which has been fulfilled to a large extent. However, the execution of these policy reforms holds equal importance, and it must be ensured that these initiatives are implemented unconditionally and in the true spirit of their announcements. The tax relief provided to the middle class is one of the significant features of the budget, as it is expected to boost consumption and stimulate economic growth in the short to medium term. (The writer is Director, World Trade Centers Association (WTCA), NY)

## Budget full of rhetoric, old announcements repackaged: Tejashwi



PNS ■ PATNA

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday charged the NDA government at the Centre with indulging in "rhetoric" in the Union Budget, and presenting announcements made in the past with "repackaging". The former Bihar deputy CM, who addressed a press conference in Vaishali district, also slammed Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, whose JD(U) is a crucial ally of the BJP, for his inability to secure a fair deal for the state. "Just look at TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu, who has secured benefits to the tune of Rs 1 lakh crore for Andhra Pradesh. The Budget presented today is silent on any such help for Bihar. We also do not know where the Rs 59,000 crore promised last year has been spent," said Yadav, who is now the leader of the opposition. Training his guns at Kumar, who dumped RJD last year to realign with BJP, Yadav said, "We could not expect the CM to secure a better deal, since he no longer seems to be in his senses and has lost the ability to discern where not to clap his hands." The allusion was to an incident of January 30, when at the government function organised on the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Kumar, who is in his 70s, had started clapping. The inadvertence has provided fresh ammunition to detractors of the JD(U) supremo who have been

claiming that the longest-serving CM had grown mentally unstable and was, therefore, unfit for the top job. Yadav alleged, "The CM seems to have already abandoned the demand for special status, on which Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman did not speak a word while presenting the budget. There is not even a special economic package for the poor state which is being cheated by Modi government as all good things are being done for the prime minister's home state Gujarat." When his response was sought on announcements in the budget for Bihar, like setting up of greenfield airports, the young leader dismissed these as "rhetoric (jumlebaazi)" and asked, "Where is the budgetary allocation?" "These are all old things with some repackaging. Why is the Centre silent on projects like a new airport at Bihta, on the outskirts of Patna? When we were in power, we had acquired land for the purpose and handed it over to the Airports Authority of India," said the RJD leader. Yadav, whose father Lalu Prasad, the RJD president, is a former railway minister, also said that "the Modi government has done away with a separate Rail budget, which the people used to wait for as announcements used to be made on passenger fares in trains. The budget is silent on that".

## Promising Budget accelerating the path for Viksit Bharat



DINESH JOSHI ■ NEW DELHI

The Budget 2025 delivered by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is a well-balanced and inclusive budget, ensuring economic growth, ease of doing business, and empowerment across multiple sectors. A major highlight is the significant relief given to the middle class through direct

tax exemptions. By exempting income tax up to Rs 12 lakh, the government has provided much-needed liquidity, allowing people to spend and save simultaneously. With an estimated Rs 1 lakh crore flowing into the hands of the middle class, consumption is expected to rise, benefiting key industries like FMCG, automobiles, and banking. This boost in demand will create a ripple effect across the economy, strengthening domestic growth. Additionally, this influx of liquidity is expected to drive positive sentiment in the stock market, leading to a rally in key sectors such as infrastructure, consumer goods, banking, and

manufacturing. However, despite these positive measures, the stock market remained volatile on Budget day, with the Sensex closing nearly flat at 77,505.96 (+5.39 points) and the Nifty 50 dipping slightly to 23,482.15 (-26.25 points). While the market initially reacted with enthusiasm, it later stabilised as investors assessed the long-term impact. Sectors like FMCG, real estate, media, and automobiles saw gains, while PSU banks, metals, pharma, and oil & gas declined. Beyond tax relief, the budget emphasises manufacturing, infrastructure, and ease of doing business. Measures such as compliance relaxations and simplified

KYC norms will make it easier for businesses to operate, attract investments, and scale efficiently. A stable and growth-oriented framework is essential for long-term sustainability, and this budget effectively addresses it. The National Manufacturing and Export Promotion Missions are another significant step. As global markets focus on self-reliance and resilient supply chains, these initiatives will boost India's competitiveness in global trade. Reforms aimed at industrial growth and export enhancement will strengthen the 'Make in India' movement, positioning India as a key player in the international market.

The budget also maintains an inclusive approach, addressing diverse stakeholders. It caters to startups, women entrepreneurs, farmers, MSMEs, and the common citizen. Key measures include support for small businesses, skill development programs for youth, and incentives for women-led enterprises, ensuring economic growth benefits all sections of society. Infrastructure development has received a significant push, with investments in roads, highways, and smart cities expected to improve connectivity and create employment opportunities. The focus on renewable energy and sustainability highlights the government's

long-term vision for green growth, aligning with India's commitment to a sustainable future. Overall, Budget 2025 strengthens economic foundations while prioritising inclusive growth. It lays a strong path for Viksit Bharat, ensuring industries, businesses, and individuals benefit from progressive reforms. With a forward-looking approach, this budget is set to drive economic momentum, reinforce investor confidence, and position India as a global economic powerhouse in the coming years. (The writer is Chairman & MD, SatyaGiri Group, and Co-Chair of FICCI Maharashtra State Council)

## Himanta hails new urea plant in Namrup as 'game changer' for NE

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday hailed the announcement of a urea plant in the state in the Union Budget for 2025-26, stating that it would be a "game changer" for the entire Northeast. He said it was a long-standing demand of the people of the state. "What a historic day for Assam! #UnionBudget2025 has announced a 12.7 lakh MT urea plant in Namrup, a long standing demand of the people of Assam," he said in a post on X. It will not only help the state achieve self-sufficiency in fertiliser availability but also better channelise the natural gas resources, he added. "After the semiconductor plant in Jagiroad, this urea facility will be a game changer for the entire North East. On behalf of the people of Assam my heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji and



Hon'ble Finance Minister Smt @nsitharaman Ji," Sarma said. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech said that for self-sufficiency, the government had reopened three dormant urea plants in the eastern region. "To further augment urea supply, a plant with annual capacity of 12.7 lakh metric tons will be set up at Namrup, Assam," she added. PSU Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corp Ltd (BVFCL) is the only urea-making facility in the entire eastern



## Budget more about political interests than people: Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Saturday said that the BJP government's Budget, like that of the Congress previously, seems to be more about political interests and less about the people and the country. In a post on X in Hindi, Mayawati said, "Due to the tremendous impact of inflation, poverty, and unemployment in the country, along with lack of basic amenities like roads, water, and education, people's lives in India which has a huge

population of about 140 crore are quite troubled, which needed to be resolved through the Union Budget." But the Budget presented by the BJP government, like those by the Congress previously, seems to be more about political interests and less about the people and the country, she said. "If this is not the case, why are the lives of people continuously troubled, miserable and unhappy under this government? The dream of a 'Viksit Bharat' should also be in the interest of the Bahujans," she said.

## Telangana Minister Surekha calls Union Budget disappointing



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister Konda Surekha on Saturday said she was completely "disappointed" with the union budget. "I have no words to express the sadness of not receiving enough allocation to the younger state of the country, Telangana, from India's Finance Minister, @nsitharaman," she said, in a post on X. Surekha further claimed that the requests from southern states were "overlooked", and "Telangana's promises were 'harshly ignored'".

## Jharkhand as State, its people neglected completely in Union Budget, alleges JMM

PNS ■ RANCHI

The ruling JMM on Saturday claimed that the Union Budget 2025-26 has nothing for Jharkhand as the state and its people were "neglected completely" by the Centre. Earlier in the day, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget for the 2025-26 fiscal in Parliament. "Nothing has been proposed for Jharkhand in the budget. The neighbouring Bihar has been given many projects but Jharkhand and its people have been neglected completely," JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey said. Bihar remained in focus in the presentation of the Union Budget for the 2025-26 fiscal with Sitharaman making several announcements for the state, including setting up of a makhana board, financial assistance for western Kosi canal and support for enhancing the capacity of IIT Patna, Jharkhand's minerals



contribute significantly to the country's economy but a "step-motherly treatment has been meted out" to the state, the JMM leader alleged. "We had expected that the Centre would announce payment of its due of Rs 1.36 lakh crore to the state. But, there is no mention of it in the budget. We want to ask why such an ignorant approach was taken towards Jharkhand," he said. The state BJP, however, claimed that the union budget has taken care of all sections of society, particularly women, youth, students, entrepreneurs and middle-class families. "The development-oriented budget further boosts Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas' and it will help achieve the dream of 'Vikshit Bharat' by 2047," Jharkhand BJP president Babul Marandi said. He said that salaried class and small entrepreneurs were given a major relief in the budget by increasing the income tax exemption limit to Rs 12 lakh. "This is not a small thing but a big jump," he said. Asked about what Jharkhand got in the budget, he said that the benefit of infrastructure development would help the state. "Many investors want to come to Jharkhand. It is the Jharkhand government's responsibility to create an environment for them," he said. BJP leader Champai Soren said that the "holistic, all-encompassing and inclusive" budget is the blueprint of the vision of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre towards building a self-reliant India.

## Punjab once again ignored in Union Budget: CM Mann

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann expressed disappointment over the Union Budget on Saturday, claiming that the border state has been "ignored" once again and not given anything. Describing it as an "election budget", the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said it only made announcements for Bihar. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented her eighth budget in Parliament on Saturday. Reacting to the budget, Mann alleged that Punjab has once again been "ignored" in the budget presented by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre. "The Union government has not given anything to the farmers and youngsters of Punjab," he said in a post on X. The chief minister criticised the Centre for not announcing a minimum support price (MSP) for crops or any



package for the state's industry. "The Centre has neither given an MSP to farmers on their crops nor has the state been given any package for any industry. Punjab has not been given anything that can improve its economy and future," he said. "This budget is only an election budget, in which there are announcements only for the state of Bihar," Mann added. Once again, the Centre has meted out step-motherly treatment to Punjab and Punjabis in the budget, he said, adding, "But we will make Punjab stand on its own feet."

## Budget announcement on MSMEs will greatly benefit Manipur: CM N Biren

PNS ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Saturday said the enhancement of investment and turnover limits for the classification of MSMEs proposed in the Union Budget will be highly beneficial for the state. He also hailed the zero tax on income up to Rs 12 lakh per annum as a significant step towards alleviating the "financial burdens of hardworking families". "The New Classification Criteria for MSMEs will be greatly beneficial to Manipur which has been a major contributor to the MSME business registration among the North East states," the CM said in a post on X. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that to help MSMEs achieve higher efficiencies of scale, technological upgradation and better access to capital, the investment and turnover limits for classification will



be enhanced to "2.5 and 2 times, respectively". "I thank Hon'ble PM @narendramodi and Finance Minister, Smt @nsitharaman ji for the expansions in the investment limit & turn over limits which will further boost entrepreneurship, local businesses, trade and commerce," Singh said. He said the announcement made on income tax was a testament to the government's commitment to the aspirations and welfare of the middle class. "The announcement to exempt income tax on earnings up to Rs 12 lakh is a

significant step toward alleviating the financial burden on hardworking families. This initiative is part of a broader income tax bill, which is scheduled to be introduced next week. The reform is a testament to the government's commitment to the aspirations and welfare of the middle class, reflecting a step towards a more inclusive and prosperous future," he said. Singh also lauded the enhancement of regional connectivity under the UDAN scheme. "Manipur and the rest of the North East region have already seen a transformative change in air connectivity under the UDAN scheme which has boosted travel, tourism, and trade & commerce, contributing to the growth of the entire region. With additional airports across the country, the middle class will realise their aspirations for faster and more affordable travel," he said.



**ODISHA STATE CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING FEDERATION LTD.**  
**MARKFED-ODISHA**  
 Old Station Road, Bhubaneswar-751006  
 E-mail- odishamarkfed@gmail.com  
 "e" Procurement Notice  
 Bid Identification No. MARKFED/01/2024-25  
 Civil/392/24-25  
 No. 352 Date: 31-01-2025  
**CAD-2444**


1. Name of the work- Construction of godown, Office building, RCC drain with culvert, CC approach road, WBM road of MARKFED at different locations in Odisha.  
 2. No. of works - 5 (five)  
 3. Estimated cost - Rs.130.00 lakh to Rs.356.00 lakh  
 4. Period of completion- 9 months.  
 5. Date & time of availability of Bid document in the portal: - From 11.00 AM of 04.02.2025 to 5.00 PM on 27.02.2025.  
 6. Last date/time of receipt of Bids in the portal:- 5.00 PM on 27.02.2025.  
 7. Date of opening of Bid from portal:- 12.00 hours on 28.02.2025  
 8. Name & address of the officer inviting Bid:- Managing Director, MARKFED- Odisha, old station road, Bhubaneswar-751006.  
 9. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website "e-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in." & Any addendum, corrigendum, cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-  
 Managing Director  
 MARKFED-ODISHA.

OIPR-39017/11/0003/2425

**ITL FINLEASE & SECURITIES LIMITED**  
 CIN: L65910DL1991PLC045090  
 Registered Office:- B-08, GD-ITL Tower, Top Floor, Netaji Subhash Place, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, Ph No- 011-41572981  
 E-Mail: csitlfinlease@gmail.com, Website: www.itlfinlease.in,

**Un-Audited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended on December 31, 2024**  
 In continuation to the Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter ended December 31, 2024, published on January 25, 2025, the said financial results along with the limited review report of the Statutory Auditor thereon are available on the website of the Stock Exchange www.mse.in and Company's website www.itlfinlease.in. The same can also be accessed by scanning a Quick Response Code given below:



Scan the QR Code to access the Financial Results on the Website of the Company  
 For ITL FINLEASE & SECURITIES LIMITED  
 Sd/-  
**B.L.GUPTA**  
 (DIRECTOR)  
 DIN : 00143031

Place : Delhi  
 Date : 23.01.2025

**Format C-1**  
 (for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

**Declaration about criminal cases: (As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)**  
 Name and address of candidate: Anil Bhardwaj R/o. C-4/160-B, Keshav Puram, Delhi-110035  
 Name of political party: Indian National Congress (Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)  
 Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025  
 \*Name of Constituency: AC-19, Sadar Bazar  
 I Anil Bhardwaj, a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

**A. Pending Criminal Cases**

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	Sh. Deepak Vats, ACJM, North-West District, Rohini Court, Delhi	540628/2016 Dated 05.05.2025	Prosecution Evidence	Section 3 of Delhi Prevention of Defacement Property Act 2009

**B. Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences**

Sl. No.	Name of Court & dates(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed
1.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

\*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.  
 Note:  
 a. The particulars regarding criminal cases pending against the candidate shall be in bold letters.  
 b. The matter in newspapers shall be published in font size of at least 12.  
 c. Details should be given separately for each case in separate rows.  
 d. If a candidate is contesting an election on the ticket of a particular party, he/she is required to inform the party about the criminal cases pending against him/her.  
 e. The candidate shall report about publishing of declaration regarding criminal cases immediately after such publication to the Returning Officer. In addition, he shall submit a report about publishing of the declaration regarding cases in Format C-4 along with the account of election expenses within 30 days of declaration of result of election. (a) In case of elections to the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies, this shall be submitted to District Election Officer concerned, (b) In case of elections to the Rajya Sabha and the State Legislative Council, this shall be submitted to the Returning Officer concerned.

This may be published in Newspapers and TV from the day following the last date for withdrawal of candidature and upto two days before the date of poll.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 The general public is hereby informed that the Freeze Strength of the Padmini CGHS Ltd. (Regd. No. 1282 dated 12.08.1983) registered office at Regd. Office at 216, Vardhman Star City Mall, Sector-7, Dwarka, New Delhi-75105 members. The society enrolled total 277 members since inception onwards. Out of them, the membership of 172 members have been cancelled due to cessation/expulsion/resignation & rejection from time to time as per the provisions of DCS Act & Rules. The vacancies created have been fulfilled as per the provisions of prevalent DCS Act and Rules. Present strength of the members in the society is 105. Now the managing committee of the society has submitted a list of bonafide 105 members of the society, the name and details of whom are given below, to the Office of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Government of NCT of Delhi, Old Court Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001 for forwarding their names to DDA for allotment of land to the society as per directions issued from time to time by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and Hon'ble High Court of Delhi.

**List of 105 valid Members as on date:**

Sr. No.	M.S. No.	Name of the Member	Father's/Husband's Name	Date of Enrolment
1.	02	Ashok Kumar Grover	Sh. Kedar Nath	29.10.1983
2.	03	Madhuri Aggarwal	Atul Kumar Aggarwal	29.10.1983
3.	19	Triok Chand Jain	Aggar Sain Jain	29.10.1983
4.	22	Sunder Sharma	P.D. Sharma	29.10.1983
5.	23	Rakesh Kumar Grover	Kedar Nath Grover	29.10.1983
6.	29	Kanwarjit Singh Sandhu	Sh. Sajjan Singh Sandhu	29.10.1983
7.	33	Pawan Kumar Mehta	Sh. Lal Kumar Mehta	29.10.1983
8.	40	Suresh Chandher Dhall	Sh. Hans Raj Dhall	29.10.1983
9.	43	Smt. Varsha Sethi	Sh. Vinod Sethi	29.10.1983
10.	51	Mahender Prasad Gupta	Sh. Attar Chand Gupta	29.10.1983
11.	53	Subhash Chand Sharma	Sh. Lalit Kumar Sharma	29.10.1983
12.	65	Yash Pal	Sh. Chanan Dass	29.10.1983
13.	69	Smt. Urmila Goel	Sh. Surendra Dev Goel	29.10.1983
14.	70	Alok Goel	Sh. Niranjani Dev Goel	29.10.1983
15.	80	Joginder Kumar	Hari Ram	29.10.1983
16.	82	Subhash Chandher Mittal	Sh. Suraj Bhan	29.10.1983
17.	86	Sushil Kumar Gupta	Sh. R.B. Gupta	29.10.1983
18.	97	Mahabir Prasad	Sh. Sat Narain	29.10.1983
19.	101	Parveen Kumar Jain	Sh. Makhan Lal Jain	29.10.1983
20.	103	Sat Pal Arora	Sh. Bal Mukand	29.10.1983
21.	112	Smt. Prem Wati	Sh. Attar Chand Mittal	11.07.1984
22.	113	Pushpa Gupta	Sh. Suresh Kumar	11.07.1984
23.	123	Sunil Sharma	Umendra Prakash Sharma	25.06.1987
24.	129	Rajender Prasad Mangla	Sh. Vasu Dev Mangla	31.08.1987
25.	137	Smt. Indeerjeet Teja	S. Surjeet Singh Teja	30.08.1988
26.	138	Smt. Ravinder Kaur	Major Gurbrinder Singh	30.08.1988
27.	140	Smt. Pushpa Jain	Sh. Kimat Rai Jain	30.08.1988
28.	148	Aditya Singh	Sh. M.B. Singh	05.08.1995
29.	152	Dr. Sanjiv Sobti	Sh. L. K. Sobti	01.03.1996
30.	163	Rajeev Kheror	Sh. K.K. Kheror	31.07.1996
31.	164	Rajender Nagal	Sh. M.R. Nagal	31.07.1996
32.	170	Col. Chandher Mohan Ray	Sh. K.M. Ray	21.08.1996
33.	178	Sh. Harish Singh Nara	Sh. R.S. Rana	15.10.1996
34.	179	Sh. Sunil Kumar Rangaraj	Sh. Sikandar Lal	15.10.1996
35.	180	Sh. Alok Bhattacharjee	Sh. K.R. Bhattacharjee	15.10.1996
36.	182	Sh. Charanjit	Sh. Kartar Chand	15.10.1996
37.	184	Sh. Shailender Arora	Sh. I.J. Arora	15.10.1996
38.	189	Sanjay Kumar	Sh. Laya Ram	12.04.1997
39.	192	Ms. Punita Aggarwal	Sh. A.K. Aggarwal	11.06.2003
40.	193	Ms. Neha Jain	Sh. Satish Kumar Jain	11.06.2003
41.	195	Ashok Kumar	Sh. Ajit Singh	11.06.2003
42.	196	Anil Kumar	Sh. Ajit Singh	11.06.2003
43.	197	Inderjit Singh	Sh. Prakash Singh	11.06.2003
44.	198	Gaurav Manchanda	Sh. Gurbachan Lal	11.06.2003
45.	199	Ranjay Mann	Sh. Jai Singh Mann	11.06.2003
46.	200	Abi Sharaf Md. Asif Rashidi	Late Sh. Abdul Haan Rashidi	11.06.2003
47.	201	Vivek Sharma	Sh. V.P. Sharma	11.06.2003
48.	202	Ms. Promila Chugh	Sh. V.P. Chugh	11.06.2003
49.	204	Ajay Chopra	Sh. Rajesh Kumar Chopra	11.06.2003
50.	205	Ms. Sangeeta Sahni	Sh. Jitender Kumar Sahni	11.06.2003
51.	206	Mannohan Sethi	Sh. M.S. Sethi	11.06.2003
52.	222	Raj Kumar Yadav	Sh. Chahey Ram Yadav	27.07.2003
53.	224	Mrs. Meena Prasad	Sh. Umesh Prasad Uday	27.07.2003
54.	225	Baljeet Singh Sethi	Sh. Mohinder Singh Sethi	27.07.2003
55.	226	Mrs. Raj Kumari Arora	Sh. Prem Prakash Arora	27.07.2003
56.	227	Arun Dagar	Sh. Brij Raj Singh Dagar	13.08.2003
57.	228	Ms. Geetu Dagar	Sh. Ranjan Dagar	13.08.2003
58.	229	Bikram Singh	Sh. Asa Ram	20.05.2007
59.	230	Rakesh Sharma	Sh. Jagdish Lal Sharma	20.05.2007
60.	231	K.P. Prabhakaran	Sh. Padmanabhan	20.05.2007
61.	232	Minakshi Saxena	Sh. Atul Saxena	30.05.2010
62.	233	Jyotika Choudhary	Sh. Arun Chaudhary	30.05.2010
63.	234	Praveen Dhallwal	Sh. Harjit Singh	30.05.2010
64.	236	Amrit Nurpuri	Sh. J.B. Singh	30.05.2010
65.	237	Sandeep Sahajpal	Sh. Mahendra Kumar	30.05.2010
66.	238	Maninder Singh Ahluwalia	Sh. Rajinder Singh	30.05.2010
67.	239	Pradeep K. Sahajpal	Sh. Mahendra Kumar	30.05.2010
68.	240	Amrit Kumar	Sh. Jaipal Singh	30.05.2010
69.	241	Ankush Boora	Sh. Chatter Singh Boora	30.05.2010
70.	242	Anil Arora	Sh. H.L. Arora	30.05.2010
71.	243	Satish Pandey	Sh. D.N. Pandey	30.05.2010
72.	244	Shashi Khanna	Sh. Jugal Kishore Khanna	22.03.2012
73.	245	Anil Kumar	Sh. Ramji Das	22.03.2012
74.	246	Sunil Kumar	Sh. Ramji Das	22.03.2012
75.	247	Kavita Awasthi	Sh. Sandeep Awasthi	22.03.2012
76.	248	Akshay Dawar	Sh. S.P. Dawar	22.03.2012
77.	249	Prem P. Khandwal	Sh. K.P. Khandwal	22.03.2012
78.	250	Mohit Gulati	Sh. D.L. Gulati	22.03.2012
79.	251	Mrs. Pavan Lakhnampal	Sh. Ashok Lakhnampal	22.03.2012
80.	252	Sh. Veerendra Pratap Singh	Lt. Sh. Meghnath Singh	28.04.2014
81.	253	Sh. Vipin Kumar Singh	Sh. Verendra Pratap Singh	28.04.2014
82.	254	Sh. Anil Kumar Singh	Sh. Verendra Pratap Singh	28.04.2014
83.	255	Ms. Aarti Gulati	Sh. Mohit Gulati	28.04.2014
84.	256	Sh. Anil Manan	Sh. Trilok Manan	28.04.2014
85.	257	Sh. Ripu Daman Chanan	Lt. Sh. C.L. Chanan	28.04.2014
86.	258	Sh. Virendra Sharma	Sh. Radha Krishan Sharma	28.04.2014
87.	259	Sumit Aggarwal	Sh. Atul Kumar Aggarwal	25.08.2024
88.	260	Shardha Bhatia	Sh. Raj Kumar Bhatia	25.08.2024
89.	261	Rahul Aggarwal	Late Kishan Gopal	25.08.2024
90.	262	Shiv Kumar Gupta	Late Shree B.P. Gupta	25.08.2024
91.	263	Kirti Agnihotri	Sh. Rajneesh Kumar	25.08.2024
92.	264	Kamlesh Kumar	Sh. Janki Prasad	25.08.2024
93.	265	Roshan	Dinesh Prasad Singh	25.08.2024
94.	266	Ashish Patel	Sh. Hari Kishan	25.08.2024
95.	267	Charan Singh	Sh. Jormal Singh	25.08.2024
96.	268	Shayamji	Sh. Visheshwar Dayal	25.08.2024
97.	269	Tilak Singh	Sh. Jaswant Singh	25.08.2024
98.	270	Devashish	Sh. Hari Kishan	25.08.2024
99.	271	Tushar Patel	Sh. Jai Kishan Patel	25.08.2024
100.	272	Rama Aggarwal	Late Kishan Gopal	25.08.2024
101.	273	Sangeeta	Sh. Kishan Patel	25.08.2024
102.	274	Arvind Kumar	Sh. Dinesh Chandra	25.08.2024
103.	275	Ankit Gupta	Sh. Shiv Kumar Gupta	25.08.2024
104.	276	Pushank Agnihotri	Sh. Vinod Kumar Agnihotri	25.08.2024
105.	277	Ram Dia Kaushik	Late Sh. Kehar Singh Kaushik	25.08.2024

Objections are invited from the general public/members of the society and all concerned, who may file their objection, if any, before the President/Secretary of the Padmini CGHS Ltd. (Regd. No. 1282 dated 12.08.1983), Regd. office at 216, Vardhman Star City Mall, Sector-7, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 or before the office of the Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Old Court Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001 within 5 days of the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection(s) shall be entertained/considered thereafter in any manner whatsoever.

For Padmini Cooperative Group Housing Society Ltd.  
 Sd/-  
 (Sanjay Kumar)  
 Secretary

# Hamas frees 3 hostages, Israel begins releasing Palestinian prisoners

**PTI ■ KHAN YOUNIS (GAZA STRIP)**

Hamas militants released three male hostages being held in the Gaza Strip on Saturday and Israel began releasing 183 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, part of a ceasefire deal that has halted 15 months of intense fighting.

Militants handed Yarden Bibas and French-Israeli Ofer Kalderon to Red Cross officials in the southern city of Khan Younis, while American-Israeli hostage Keith Siegel, looking pale and thin, was released to the Red Cross later Saturday morning in Gaza City to the north.

All three were abducted during the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, that sparked the war. Their release brings to 18 the number of hostages released since the ceasefire began on January 19.

Both of Saturday's events were quick and orderly, in contrast to chaotic scenes that unfolded on Thursday when armed militants appeared to struggle to hold back a crowd during a hostage release. In both of Saturday's releases, masked and armed militants stood in lines as the hostages walked onto a stage and waved before being led off and handed over to the Red Cross.

In Tel Aviv's Hostages Square, thousands of people gathered to watch the releases being transmitted live on a large screen, waving signs and cheering.

Shortly after Siegel arrived in Israel, a bus departed Ofer Military Prison with some 32 prisoners bound for the West Bank. About 150 other prisoners were being sent to Gaza or deported. According to Palestinian authorities, a total of 183 Palestinian prisoners are to be released Saturday, including dozens serving lengthy sentences or life sentences, and 111 people from the Gaza Strip who were arrested after October 7, 2023 and held without trial.

Crowds of well-wishers greeted the bus, cheering and hoisting the released prisoners on their shoulders in scenes of jubilation.

The ceasefire is aimed at winding down the deadliest and most destructive war ever fought between Israel and Hamas. The deal has held for two weeks, allowing for increased aid to flow into the tiny coastal territory and for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to the remnants of their homes in the north of the strip.

During the truce's six-week first phase, a total of 33 Israeli hostages are to be freed in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israel says it has received information from Hamas that eight of those hostages were either killed in Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack or have died in captivity.

Also on Saturday, a group of 50 sick and wounded Palestinian children left Gaza for treatment through the Rafah border crossing to Egypt, in the first opening of the enclave's sole exit since Israel captured it nine months ago. A European Union civilian mission was deployed Friday to prepare for the reopening.

The reopening of Rafah marked another key step in the first phase of the ceasefire. Israel and Hamas are set next week to begin negotiating a second phase of the ceasefire, which calls for releasing the remaining hostages and extending the truce indefinitely. The war could resume in early March if an agreement is not reached.

Israel says it is still committed to destroying Hamas, even after the militant group reassigned its rule over Gaza within hours of the latest ceasefire. A key far-right partner in Netanyahu's coalition is calling for the war to resume after the ceasefire's first phase. Hamas says it won't release the remaining hostages without an end to the war and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client i.e. ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mrs. Sherida Ahuja and Mr. Manu Ahuja are claiming to be owners of Property (Plot bearing No. 31, area measuring 130.50 sq. mtr., Block-G, in sector 41, situated in New Okhla Industrial development area, Gurgaon, Haryana, U.P. 'the said property' by virtue of Transfer Deed Cum Sale Deed dated 20.09.2023, Registration No. 8359, executed by Mr. Soman Dhar. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owners want to mortgage the said property to our client i.e. ICICI Bank Ltd. If anybody has any objection upon the said property, its title & mortgage, & any kind of litigation etc. and ownership of Mrs. Sherida Ahuja and Mr. Manu Ahuja, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 10 days of the present.  
**Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)**  
 200, 1st Floor, 23, Sivali Nagar, Mehli Nagar, N. Delhi-15  
 Ph: 011-41112277-28, legal@knaegal.com

**GANGOTRI OVERSEAS PRIVATE LIMITED**  
 Corporate Office: C-62, Sector-65, Noida-201301, U.P.  
 Tel. No: 0120-4898903, Email: support@govestock.in  
 CIN: U74890DL1995PTD074105  
**Form No. INC-26**  
 [Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]  
 Before the Central Government Northern Region, New Delhi  
 In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014  
**AND**  
 In the matter of Gangotri Overseas Private Limited having its registered office at 102-D, Arunachal Building, 19 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001.  
 Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting held on 12th December, 2024 to enable the company to change its Registered Office from "National Capital Territory of Delhi" to "State of Uttar Pradesh".  
 Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing internet complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director at the address B-2 Wing, 2nd floor, Pt. Deenayee Anandya Bhanu, 2nd floor, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003 within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company at its corporate office at C-62, Sector 65, Noida-201301.  
 For and on behalf of the Applicant  
 Sd/-  
 Gopal Krishan Agarwal  
 Director  
 DIN: 00226120

**CORRIGENDUM NO. 02**  
 Corrigendum of Works against E-Tendering of works contract vide DRM(Works)/Katihar Notice No. KIR/Engg/55 of 2024 dated 23-12-2024 (Item No. 2) against the work - Katihar - Renovation of ORH Suit No. A, B, E & F and Room No. 1 & 2 including outside painting etc. treated as cancelled on administrative ground, due to reason of One work for the construction of Rest House Building near construction Suite at Total cost Rs.21900 (Figure in Thousand) has been shortlisted by GM/NFR. Further, ADMR/Katihar verbally instructed to cancel this instant tender and will be floated again by clubbing it with this shortlisted work after sanctioning.  
**DRM(W), Katihar**  
 NORTH EAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
 Serving Customers With A Smile

**Format C-1**  
**DECLARATION ABOUT CRIMINAL CASES**  
 (As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No.536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)  
 Name and Address of Candidate: **RAGINI NAYAK W/O ASHOK BASOYA, IA-10C, ASHOK VIHAR, PHASE-I, DELHI-110052**  
 Name of Political Party: **Indian National Congress**  
 Name of Election: **DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTION-2025**  
 Name of Constituency: **WAZIRPUR-AC-17**  
 I, **RAGINI NAYAK**, a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

**A) PENDING CRIMINAL CASES**

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and Dated	Status of case (s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	JMFC-02, Central District, Tis Hazari Courts	119/M/2009, 289901/2016, 21/12/2024	Pending	U/S 147/148/427/186/332 IPC
2.	JMFC-07, PHC/ND	16471/2018, 05/09/2024	Pending	U/S 186/188/353/332/34 IPC

**B) DETAILS ABOUT CASES OF CONVICTION FOR CRIMINAL OFFENCES**

Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of Order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment Imposed
1.	NA	NA	NA

**CORRIGENDUM NO. 1 OF TENDER NOTICE NO. AP/EL/30/24-25 DATED 30-01-2025**  
 Corrigendum against Tender No. AP/EL/30/24-25 Dated: 27-01-2025.

Code	Field Name	Existing Value	Modified Value
	Supply, installation & testing and commissioning of Single Phase Smart Prepaid meter System :- 240VAC, 1 phase 2 wire, (IS: 13779 IS:16444, IS 15884 & IS: 15959 Part 1 & Part 2 with latest amendments) Marked, 10-60 Amps., Calibration LED & Load controlling feature & provisions for TOD (Time of Day) tariff and R.T.C. (Real Time Clock) in a suitable tamper proof hinge type Box with provision of recharging through vending station. Provided Android/iOS/Windows mobile apps should have provision of Payment gateway for online Vending token process. The communication module (Cellular based) with NB IoT GPRS/4G enabled SIM card fallback to 2G mode. Optical Port for local communication/ WAN (Cellular) communication for data acquisition. All Smart Prepaid meters should be provided with integrated cloud system. Implementation of cloud hosted head end and meter end data management including mobile network system. Meter should have connect/disconnect functionality operation from prepaid billing software. The meter should work either in prepaid and postpaid mode. The meter shall have suitable provision to consumer token entry locally in case of no WAN/communication scenario and monitoring consumption information through mobile app. Warranty of meter should be 10 years from date of commissioning. Meter should be embossed with 'Property of N.F. Railway'. Released materials should be dismantled and deposited to the consignee. The rates are inclusive of SIM and data charges for a period of first 5 years with all necessary accessories. Pre-inspection of materials by RITES should be imparted. Make : Secure, LK, Genus	Supply, installation & testing and commissioning of Single Phase Smart Prepaid meter System :- 240VAC, 1 phase 2 wire, (IS: 13779 IS:16444, IS 15884 & IS: 15959 Part 1 & Part 2 with latest amendments) Marked, 10-60 Amps., Calibration LED & Load controlling feature & provisions for TOD (Time of Day) tariff and R.T.C. (Real Time Clock) in a suitable tamper proof hinge type Box with provision of recharging through vending station. Provided Android/iOS/Windows mobile apps should have provision of Payment gateway for online Vending token process. The communication module (Cellular based) with NB IoT GPRS/4G enabled SIM card fallback to 2G mode. Optical Port for local communication/ WAN (Cellular) communication for data acquisition. All Smart Prepaid meters should be provided with integrated cloud system. Implementation of cloud hosted head end and meter end data management including mobile network system. Meter should have connect/disconnect functionality operation from prepaid billing software. The meter should work either in prepaid and postpaid mode. The meter shall have suitable provision to consumer token entry locally in case of no WAN/communication scenario and monitoring consumption information through mobile app. Warranty of meter should be 10 years from date of commissioning. Meter should be embossed with 'Property of N.F. Railway'. Released materials should be dismantled and deposited to the consignee. The rates are inclusive of SIM and data charges for a period of first 5 years with all necessary accessories. Pre-inspection of materials by RITES should be	



# Team India focuses on form of Surya, Samson

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The series already in their pocket, India would look to address their nagging batting woes against an England team gunning for revenge after feeling hard-done by a debatable concussion substitute when the two teams clash in the fifth and final T20 International here on Sunday. The hosts will hope that struggling skipper Suryakumar Yadav and Sanju Samson are back among runs and adding spice to the otherwise inconsequential match is the resentment that England is carrying after the 15-run loss in the fourth game. India's 15-run win in the fourth T20 at Pune on Friday gave the hosts an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match affair, but left England exasperated over the choice of the concussion replacement who played an impactful role. Fast bowler Harshit Rana replaced all-rounder Shivam Dube after the latter copped a blow to his head while batting and the former returned 3/33 in his maiden T20I, derailed England's progress in the chase. The choice of replacement was approved by ICC match referee Javagal Srinath at half-time leaving the visitors complaining as India had a more like-for-like replacement in Ramandeep Singh available in the dugout.



England captain Jos Buttler remembered thinking "who's Harshit on for" as he strode out to bat but his team was also guilty of succumbing to pressure and squandering a perfect start on a flat deck at the MCA Stadium to concede the series. England were 65/1 in the seventh over chasing 182 and lost wickets in a heap once again to Indian spinners Varun Chakravarty (2/28) and Ravi Bishnoi (3/28), with the former stretching his tally in the series to 12.

However, despite the series in bag, India's concerns remain the same - Samson and Suryakumar's lean patch with the bat. Samson, who missed the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Kerala, came into the series evidently lacking match practice and has struggled against the express pace of Mark Wood and Jofra Archer who have troubled the Indian opener consistently. With only 35 runs in four matches so far, Samson's returns have been

'Sky' will be keen to shrug off the string of poor performances when he returns to his home ground Wankhede Stadium here, a venue which has played an indomitable role in building his reputation as a T20 specialist. Rinku Singh's 30 on Friday settled a lot of concerns around the swashbuckling left-hander, whose form and fitness were both in question going into the fourth match. Hardik Pandya and Dube's fifties powered India's charge in the fourth T20I with the all-rounders filling in for the batters' failure but another batting-friendly wicket here will give the Indians a chance to make amends one last time in the shortest format. Spoil for choices in the bowling department, India could rest and play both their front-line pacers Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Shami through the course of this series. But Sunday's contest could be another opportunity for the team management to test the readiness of Shami who is back after a lengthy injury-forced lay-off. For England, it has been a series of more misses than hits but they have been outplayed generally across departments. Harry Brook finally got a big knock on the board on Friday but his struggles persist against spin and particularly Chakravarty, while young guns like Jacob Bethell and Jamie Smith have had their struggles on their maiden Indian sojourn.



## Gukesh draws with Wei Yi, Praggnanandhaa outwits Caruana in Tata Masters

PTI ■ WJJK AAN ZEE

World champion D Gukesh maintained his half-point lead with an easy draw against Wei Yi of China, while R Praggnanandhaa outwitted top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States to come within striking distance of the leader after the 11th round of Tata Steel Masters here. Playing the white side of an Italian game, Gukesh went for a relatively new plan by pushing his central pawn in the opening that just helped Wei Yi maintain parity after the trade of queens. The Indian was up a pawn when the endgame surfaced but the position was level and the peace was signed in 30 moves. The draw helped Gukesh jump to eight points out of a possible 11 in the first major tournament of the year, while Praggnanandhaa stunned Caruana with black pieces to move to 7.5 points. Sharing the second spot is Nodirbek Abdosattorov of Uzbekistan, who played out a draw with German Vincent Keymer. It was a Queen's gambit declined by Praggnanandhaa and Caruana went for one of the complex variations to show his intent after getting some mediocre results in the tournament thus far. Praggnanandhaa has seldom had trouble fighting complicated positions with loads of tactical possibilities, and Friday was no different as he went for an attack quickly against the white queen after the players had castled on opposite wings. As it happened, Caruana's 32nd move was a huge blunder giving Praggnanandhaa another victory five moves later. On a good day for their Indians too, P Harikrishna

accounted for Alexey Sarana of Serbia while Leon Luke Mendonca put it across Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia. Arjun Erigaisi, meanwhile, played out another draw with Jorden van Foreest of Holland. In the penultimate round now, Gukesh is set to meet Forest with black pieces and chess buffs expect some fireworks as the world champion will be keen to push ahead of the field. Praggnanandhaa will play his last white game in the tournament against Sarana while Nodirbek has to play another black against Erigaisi, who is yet to win a game having lost four and drawn seven. In the Challengers' section, Divya Deshmukh got a much-needed victory over Irina Bulmaga of Romania but R Vaishali found the going tough and lost to Aydin Suleymanli of Azerbaijan. Divya, on three points, still has a lot of catching up to do while Vaishali remained on five points. Meanwhile, Dutchman Erwin L'Ami regained the sole lead in this section after a finely-crafted victory over Chinese teenager Mioyi Lu. L'Ami, on eight points, benefited as the overnight sole leader Nguyen Thai Dai Van was outdone by Svane Frederik of Germany.

**Results Round 11:** Masters: Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 4.5) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 3.5); D Gukesh (Ind, 8) drew with Wei Yi (Chn, 6); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5.5) lost to R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 7.5); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4.5) drew with Nodirbek Abdosattorov (Uzb, 7.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 6) beat Max Warmerdam (Ned, 3.5); Alexey Sarana (Srb, 5) lost to P Harikrishna (Ind, 5.5); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6) lost to Leon Luke Mendonca (Ind, 4).



## Either Dube has become fast or Rana a batter: Jos Buttler

PTI ■ PUNE

England skipper Jos Buttler didn't hide his displeasure at how India used specialist fast bowler Harshit Rana as a like-for-like 'Concussion Sub' for all-rounder Shivam Dube, who bowls military medium, in the fourth T20I here which the hosts won by 15 runs to take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series. Dube, who scored 53 off 34 balls on Friday, was hit on the helmet by a Jamie Overton delivery in the second-last ball of India's innings, leading to the concussion protocol being followed. Although Dube faced the last ball, but when India came out in defence of 181, Rana walked out to field instead of him. The concussion protocol allows a like-for-like replacement and Rana was a tearaway quick replacing medium pacer Dube, who the Chennai Super Kings uses as an Impact Player in the IPL. Rana took 3/33, each wicket at a critical juncture, as India won by 15 runs. But the move by the Indian team management (read head coach Gautam Gambhir) left the England team high and dry. Buttler claimed that his team wasn't consulted and they would seek clarity from match referee Javagal Srinath about

# Batting has always been close to my heart, says Hardik Pandya

PTI ■ PUNE

Hardik Pandya may be an all-rounder but he holds his batting exploits close to his heart because it gives him a "wonderful feeling" every time he scores big runs and guides India to victory. Pandya produced another sterling performance with the bat in the fourth T20I against England on Friday, emerging as the joint-highest scorer with Shivam Dube on 53 runs in the match here.



His half-century not only guided India to a 15-run win but also helped the hosts take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series. "Batting has always been my number one (love) or close to my heart. That's a very satisfying day (on Friday), and at the same point of time before sleeping (it) gives me a wonderful feeling and I've

always had a good sleep post that," the all-rounder said in a video posted by BCCI on 'X', formerly twitter. Pandya, who played a pivotal role with the ball in helping India defeat South Africa in the T20 World Cup in the West Indies last year, said cricket is a way of life for him and he prioritises it over everything else.

"For me, I love this sport way too much; it's been my life, it's been my priority, it's been my first love. The sport does not wait much, your first love always gives you the kiss back," he said. "The sport has given me so much love that I always feel like I have to turn up and be very, very honest and very loyal to the sport," said

Pandya, who bagged three wickets in the final against South Africa as India lifted their second T20 World Cup trophy after a gap of 17 years. Pandya added that his fans are his biggest asset and he wants to give them as much joy as possible. "I have always been someone who has played for the fans. When fans are there, when fans are chanting, it gives me the added motivation. At the same point of time, I really want to do well for them," he said. Winning the T20 World Cup in the Americas was a dream come true and Pandya acknowledges things have changed quite a lot for him post the global success. "A lot of things have changed post World Cup. I really love to entertain the crowd and make sure every penny that they've spent is worth it," he added.

# Ranji Trophy: Three fans breach security to get near Virat Kohli

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A major security lapse occurred at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground in a mad rush to get near Virat Kohli as three over-enthusiastic fans barged into the field of play on day three of the Ranji Trophy game between Delhi and Railways despite a large presence of security personnel. It is normal for fans to breach security in a desperate attempt to be up and close to their cricketing heroes but those scenes are usually reserved for international games. However, Kohli's return to Ranji Trophy after 13 years has turned the country's attention towards the first-class game which would have been otherwise played in front of empty stands. A heavy security cordon around the

field of play was breached when three fans managed to hoodwink a group of more than 20 guards to make their way into the middle. The private security force was caught-off guard but got hold of the overzealous Kohli fans just in time to ensure no harm was done. "It is just Virat bhैया's craze that this happened. It shouldn't have happened. Someone could have come in carrying anything. Virat bhैया said to security that 'kisi ko maarna mat' (Don't beat up anyone)." Delhi off-spinner Shivam Sharma said on the incident Kohli was fielding at cover when the incident took place in the penultimate over before lunch. The DDCA (Delhi and Districts Cricket Association) closed the Bishan Bedi Stand, which was open for public on the first two days.



This was done after around 500 fans stood perilously close to the grill separating the stand and the dressing room where Kohli was

sitting after being dismissed for six runs off 15 balls. Those who showed up to watch Kohli bat in the second innings left disappointed as Delhi completed an innings and 19 runs win, ensuring that the superstar batter did not get to bat in the second essay. On day one, a fan managed to touch Kohli's feet with the Indian superstar requesting the security officials to go easy on the intruder. As many as 12,000 had turned up on the opening day to see Kohli in flesh and blood. He only got to bat

on day two. Pacer Himanshu Sangwan took the prized wicket of the former India captain as he uprooted his off-stump. Kohli will now be linking up with the Indian team for the ODI series against England starting February 6 in Nagpur, followed by the Champions Trophy from February 19. He showed up for the Ranji fixture following a BCCI diktat, which made it mandatory to play domestic cricket whenever the international calendar allows.

# Neymar returns to his boyhood club

PTI ■ SANTOS

A tearful Neymar was welcomed back to his boyhood club on Friday by thousands of Santos fans and a concert in the home stadium beneath an electronic sign saying, "The prince is back". The 32-year-old signed a six-month contract, which he said could be extended. Neymar later admitted his return was also due to his feeling unhappy at Saudi Arabian club Al-Hilal earlier this year as he struggled to get playing time. He said he would be ready to play for Santos at least 30 minutes in a match scheduled for Saturday if he was given the go-ahead by local soccer authorities. About 20,000 raucous Santos fans filled their Vila Belmiro Stadium in the rain outside Sao Paulo to celebrate the Brazilian's return. His evening arrival highlighted by fireworks capped a three-hour fiesta which also featured local singers. "I am very happy. We lived great moments here. There's still a lot that could come," Neymar said on



the pitch. Neymar said at a media conference that he and his family had adapted well to Saudi Arabia, but his lack of playing time since his return from an ACL injury — he hasn't played since November — forced his move. "Some decisions are not about soccer logic," Neymar said. "I started getting sad in training sessions (at Al-Hilal), and it wasn't good for my head. So there was the chance to come back and I did not think twice. Since the first day I decided I wanted to come back, I told my father (and agent) and it all worked." The striker signed his contract upon arrival and added it is "too soon to speak" about extending his

deal until the 2026 World Cup, which he says will be the last he will play in his career. He also said his return home is a "rescue" for his own soccer soul. "Santos gave me the chance to come back. I gave away a lot of things to be here. It was a perfect marriage at an unimaginable moment for both parts. Still, it happened," Neymar said. "We have a six-month contract that can obviously be extended. Two weeks ago I didn't even think I would be here." Neymar also said he has "one more thing to win, a mission that will be the last." "I am going after this World Cup trophy in any way I can. I have goals," said Neymar, who is Brazil's all-time top goal scorer with 79 goals in 125 matches. Shortly before, Neymar greeted his future teammates and club executives at the Santos training ground. Neymar's private jet landed in the Sao Paulo state countryside from Saudi Arabia in the morning but he requested a few hours of rest before

being flown into Santos by helicopter. Banners reading "The prince is back" were selling for 10 reais (\$1.50) outside the 20,000-seat Vila Belmiro Stadium. Graffiti inspired by artificial intelligence outside the stadium showed Neymar looking more mature and with a crown on his head — no small feat in a city where Pelé was king for decades until he died in December 2022 at age 82. Video posted by Santos on social media showed Neymar not wearing the No. 11 that was his during his first spell from 2009-13. He will wear Pelé's No. 10. "It will be an honor to wear this sacred jersey," Neymar said in the video. Saudi club Al-Hilal terminated Neymar's contract with mutual consent this week, six months early, after playing only seven matches and scoring once since September 2023. The ACL injury sidelined him for a year until October. Al-Hilal said Neymar could no longer perform like he used to.

Reqd. Off: 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Antriksh Bhawan, 22, K.G. Marg, New Delhi-110001, Ph: 011-23357171, 23357172, 2305414, Web: www.pnbhousing.com

Branch Off: Office No. 111-112, First Floor, Plot No. 1, Block No. 9, DB Corporate Park, Rajbandha Maidan, Raipur, Chhattisgarh - 492001

**NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF CHAPTER III OF SECURITIZATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002, READ WITH RULE 21(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 AMENDED AS ON DATE 12.12.2024**

We, the PNB Housing Finance Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "PNBHFL") has issued Demand notice U/s 13(2) of Chapter III of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the "Act") by our RAIPUR, Office Situated At Office No. 111-112, First Floor, Plot No. 1, Block No. 9, DB Corporate Park, Rajbandha Maidan, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001. The said Demand Notice was issued through our Authorized Officer, to you all below mentioned Borrowers/Co-Borrower/Guarantors since your account has been classified as Non-Performing Assets as per the Reserve Bank of India National Housing Bank guidelines due to nonpayment of instalments/interest. The contents of the same are the defaults committed by you in the payment of instalments of principals, interest, etc. The outstanding amount is mentioned below. Further, with reasons, we believe that you are evading the service of Demand Notice and hence this Publication of Demand Notice which is also required U/s 13(2) of the said Act. You are hereby called upon to pay PNBHFL within a period of 60 Days of the date of publication of this demand notice the aforesaid amount along with up-to-date interest and charges, failing which PNBHFL will take necessary action under all or any of the provisions of Section 13(4) of the said Act, against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and guarantors. Your kind attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act and Section 13 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 where under you can tender/pay the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the PNB HFL only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Please also note that if the entire amount of outstanding dues together with the costs, charges and expenses incurred by the PNB HFL is not tendered before publication of notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty, you may not be entitled to redeem the secured asset(s) thereafter. FURTHER you are prohibited U/s 13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale, lease or in any other way the aforesaid secured assets.

Loan Account Number(s)	Name & Address of Borrower & Co-borrower	Name & Address of Guarantor(s)	Property(ies) Mortgaged	Date of Demand Notice	Amount O/s as on date Demand Notice
HOU/RAI/0919/061392	Mr./Ms. Abhinav Shandilya (Applicant), Mr./Ms. Anurag Shandilya (Co-Applicant) Residential Address: H No G 12, Forest Colony, Pandri, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492004, Permanent Address: No-1/8, Forest Colony, Pandri, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001; Syndicate India Tailor Transport, Gursingar Nagar, Ward No 13, Tatibandh, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492099.	NA	Flat No B302, 3rd Floor, Shre Karsan Heritage, Ph No 39/41, Kushi Bhai Thakre Ward No 26, Maja Datsai Seoni, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001	13-Dec-2024	INR 38,76,574.76 (Thirty Eight Lakhs Seventy Six Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Four and Seventy Six Paise Only)
HOU/RAI/11/11/29246	Mr./Ms. Dilip Singh Tikaraha (Applicant) & Sunita Singh Tikaraha (Co-Applicant) Residential Address: Steel No 4, Near Varan Apartment, Siroes, Sector 3, Professor Colony, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, Permanent Address: Steel No 4, Near Varan Apartment, Siroes, Sector 3, Professor Colony, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, Office Address: M/S Ashwari Infocoff Pvt Ltd, Street No 2, Behind Union Bank Of India, Priyadarshini Nagar, Pachpedi Naka, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001	NA	Plot No : A - 9 And A - 10, Gram Mathpura P H No : 105/47, Chandrashekhar Ajjad Ward No : 52, Kh No : 404/1, 407/1, 407/2, 407/3, 407/4, 407/5, 407/6, 407/7, 407/8, 407/9, 407/10, 407/11, 407/12, 407/13, 407/14, 408/1, 408/3, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001	13-Dec-2024	INR 42,44,026.62 (Forty Two Lakhs Forty Four Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Six and Two Paise Only)
HOU/RAI/0618/549951	Mr./Mrs. Premchand Bisen (Applicant) & Mr./Mrs. Reshmi Bisen (Co-Applicant) Residential Address: NIK Kendriya School, Halkachora, Dri Abdul Kalam Ward, Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh-494001, Bastari, Permanent Address: Village Malhan, H No 157/1, Post Khamhariya, Block Nagri Dist. Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh-493778, Office Address: Kendriya Vidyalay, Halkachora, Jagdalpur, Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh-494001	NA	1, Sai Ashwari Pride City, B-36, Sai Ashwari Pride City, S. No. 1158, 1161, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1156/1, 1158, 1146/1647, P. H. No. 81, Mouza Pacheda, Tehsil Arang, District Raipur, Co. Near Disha College, Vidhan Sabha Road, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, Kaniha Vihar, G. B. 22, Kaniha Vihar, Kh No 917 918 by 1 to 2 919 920 by 1 to 2 921 by 1 to 4 921 by 1 922 923 924 925 by 1 to 2 926 927 by 1 to 3 928 929 930, 932 by 1 to 2 933 to 12 934 to 3 to 6 to 7 Ph No 14, Village Armer Tehsil Abhanpur District Raipur, Chhattisgarh-493773	15-Jan-2025	INR 10,94,955.42 (Ten Lakhs Ninety Four Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Five and Forty Two Paise Only)
HOU/RAI/0917/432652	Mr./Mrs. Fateh S Sandhu (Applicant) & Mr./Mrs. Nirmaljit Kaur (Co-Applicant) Residential Address: H No 82, Balaji Green City, Hirapur, Tatibandh, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-494001, Permanent Address: H No 82, Balaji Green City, Hirapur, Tatibandh, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-494001, B.O. No. 38, Tonva Bilaspur, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh-495004, Office Address: M/S Sandeepan Enterprises, S/O S S Roy Ward No 38, Near Mundul Ti House, Hemu Nagar, Tonva Bilaspur, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh-495004	NA	Lotus City - Phase 4, 111.0, Lotus City - Phase 4, Lotus City - Phase 4, Gram Parsada Patan, 23/1, 23/2, 23/3, 23/4, 24, Part Of Kh. No.9/2, 11/1, 11/2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 21, 22, 2, Ph.No.04, Bhalai, Chhattisgarh-494337	15-Jan-2025	INR 7,56,276.81 (Seven Lakhs Fifty Six Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Six and Eighty One Paise Only)
HOU/RAI/11/11/29246	Mr./Mrs. Aparna Roy (Applicant) & Mr./Mrs. Sanjay Shib Roy (Co-Applicant) Residential Address: Flat No A 101, Varan Apartment, Amindih, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492006, Permanent Address: S/O S S Roy, Near Mundul Ti House, Hemu Nagar, Tonva Bilaspur, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh-495004, Office Address: M/S Sandeepan Enterprises, S/O S S Roy Ward No 38, Near Mundul Ti House, Hemu Nagar, Tonva Bilaspur, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh-495004	NA	Flat No 404, 4th Floor, Block A, Varan Apartment, Dr Rajendra Prasad Ward No 46, Ph No 45 Rmrt, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492006	15-Jan-2025	INR 37,55,484.09 (Thirty Seven Lakhs Fifty Five Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Four and Nine Paise Only)

PLACE:- RAIPUR, DATE:- 31-01-2025, SD:- AUTHORIZED OFFICER, PNB HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED





PHOTOS : PANKAJ KUMAR

# SILENT TEARS of SACRIFICE

Surya Ki Antim Kiran Se Pehli Kiran Tak portrays the struggle against societal expectations, says SAKSHI PRIYA



Some plays stay with you, not just because of their story but because of how they make you feel. *Surya Ki Antim Kiran Se Pehli Kiran Tak*, performed at *Bharat Rang Mahotsav*, is one such production that draws the audience into its world with raw emotions and a compelling narrative. Directed by *Satyendra Parmar* and written by *Surendra Verma*, this powerful drama from *Upasana School of Performing Arts, Gujarat University*, takes the audience into the depths of personal struggles shaped by social customs.

### A Story That Demands Reflection

Set in the 10th century BCE, the play follows Queen Sheelavathi, a woman of strength and dignity, who is forced into the ancient practice of *Niyog*, a tradition that allows a woman to conceive with a man other than her husband if the king is unable to father an heir. Sheelavathi, despite her unwavering devotion to her husband, finds herself bound by this custom. What follows is an emotionally charged night where both Sheelavathi and King Okkak struggle with their inner conflicts, she with the burden of an unwanted fate, and he with the helplessness of being unable to protect the woman he loves.



The narrative explores personal loss, sacrifice and the weight of expectations. Sheelavathi's silence is heavy with emotion, her pain evident in every scene. The dialogues are sharp and thought-provoking, forcing the audience to question societal norms that impose restrictions on individual choices.

The emotional depth of the play is enhanced by its powerful direction and script, which leave no room for

distractions. The focus remains entirely on the characters and their struggles, making the audience feel their turmoil. The pacing of the play is steady, allowing each scene to breathe and impact the viewers.

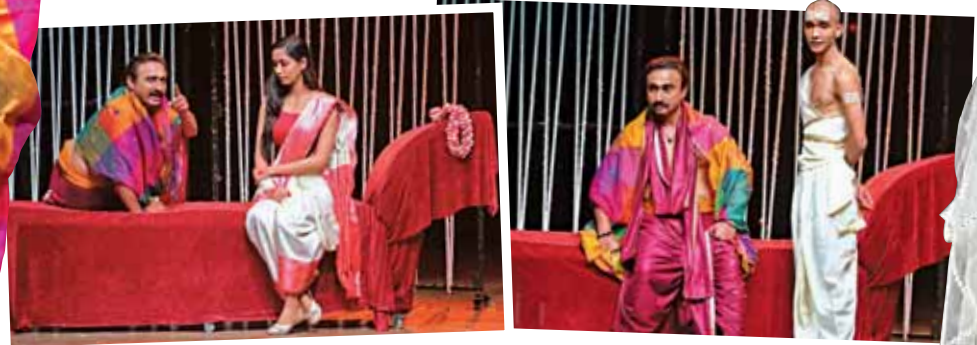
### A Performance That Stays With You

The success of a play like this depends on its performances, and the cast delivers with conviction. The actress portraying Sheelavathi captures her emotional turmoil with piercing intensity. Every expression, every hesitation, and every unspoken plea adds depth to her character. The actor playing Okkak is equally compelling, portraying a man torn between love and duty with

remarkable restraint.

The stage design is minimalistic and allowing the focus to remain on the performances. The lighting is particularly striking, deep shadows heighten the tension, while golden hues symbolise the hope that still remains. The use of silence is just as powerful as the words spoken, making the audience feel the weight of Sheelavathi's suffering.

The play's strength lies in how it connects with the audience, evoking empathy and prompting reflection. Every moment is carefully crafted, ensuring that the emotions feel real and raw.



### WHY SHOULDN'T YOU MISS

If theatre that challenges societal norms and provokes thought is what you seek, *Bharat Rang Mahotsav* is where you need to be. Hosted by the National School of Drama (NSD) at Mandi House, Delhi, this prestigious theatre festival is showcasing some of the most compelling productions from across the country. Running until 16th February, the festival promises a new play every day,

bringing fresh narratives and unforgettable performances to the stage.

Whether you're a theatre enthusiast or just looking for a meaningful experience, this festival is a celebration of storytelling in its purest form. Make sure to catch a play, immerse yourself in a new world and witness the magic of live theatre.

# GAZE WITH GRACE



By TEAM VIVA

In the world of fashion, eyewear has moved from being a simple necessity to a bold statement of style and personality. It's no longer just about protecting your eyes, it's about framing your face with pieces that reflect your individuality. *John Jacobs* captures this transformation with frames that embody individuality and confidence.

The *Gilded collection*, celebrates elegance and inner strength. Crystal embellishments and timeless designs create a refined look, reflecting a journey of self-expression and resilience. Inspired by the gripping series *Squid Game*, the collection brings the iconic symbols and distinct green of the contestants' jerseys into a unique eyewear design. Each frame merges pop culture with striking aesthetics.

*The Break The Frame collection* dares to defy norms, offering bold shapes and vibrant colors for those who embrace their multifaceted identity. It's a call for authenticity in a world that often asks us to conform. In collaboration with *Outhouse Jewellery*, this collection takes eyewear into a futuristic realm, blending avant-garde design with luxury. This collection features innovative materials and sharp, modern silhouettes.

Each frame tells a story, offering the wearer the opportunity to express their unique style and view the world through a bold lens.



# The Essence of Satyajit Ray



The Storyteller comes to life with Paresh Rawal's masterful performance turning out as a clash between artistry and commercialism, writes ABHI SINGHAL

RATING ★★★★★



He sells cotton; I spin yarns - The dialogue made me start my sayings from this as it showed a powerful impact of brilliant acting by the protagonists.

*The Storyteller* streaming on Disney Plus Hotstar is an adaptation of Satyajit Ray's short story *Golpo Boliye Tarini Khuro*. The story follows a storyteller hired by a wealthy businessman suffering from insomnia to narrate bedtime tales so that the businessman can sleep peacefully.

Set with the backdrop and vibes of Kolkata and Ahmedabad, with the essence of Bengali language in each line, *The Storyteller* will take

you back to the old times of *Satyajit Ray* and his classics. The movie is made with all of today's technology but still feels like every scene takes you back in time.

*Tarini Bandopadhyay* played effortlessly by *Paresh Rawal* as a gifted storyteller from Kolkata who has never penned down his tales, fearing criticism and rejection. An eccentric socialist, he has held 75 different jobs, changing every six months. After



bidding farewell to *Amrit Publication*, he comes across an unusual newspaper ad of *Ratan Garodia* played by *Adil Hussain*, a business tycoon from Ahmedabad who is in search of a storyteller to narrate original bedtime stories, having failed to cure his insomnia.

*Tarini* relocates to Ahmedabad, embarking on a new chapter in his life. The story line is a cult classic with deep message and dialogue writing. The story explores the clash between commercialism and

artistry, touching upon themes of plagiarism, self-discovery, and overcoming self-doubt.

I wouldn't be wrong in saying that *Paresh Rawal* consistently surpasses his own performances with each film, embodying the depth and composure of his characters. His portrayal of *Tarini* leaves a lasting impact on the story. Meanwhile, *Adil Hussain* delivers a standout performance as *Ratan Garodia*, exuding sharpness and cunning, revealing it only when necessary.

The only soft background music changing at times bringing emotions on the screens and the audience's mind enhances the feels of the film. Despite their brief appearances, *Revathy*, *Jayesh More* as *Garodia's* house help *Manikchand*, and *Tannishtha Chatterjee* as the librarian *Tarini* befriends, make a strong impact.

### SUGGESTED BINGES



**The Recruit Season 2**  
IMDB Rating - 7.4/10  
OTT - Netflix  
Cast - Noah Centineo, Teo Yoo, Young-Ah Kim, Felix Solis



**Pushpa 2: The Rule**  
IMDB Rating - 6.3/10  
OTT - Netflix  
Cast - Rashmika Mandanna, Allu Arjun



**The Storyteller**  
IMDB Rating - 7.3/10  
OTT - Disney+ Hotstar  
Cast - Paresh Rawal, Adil Hussain, Revathi



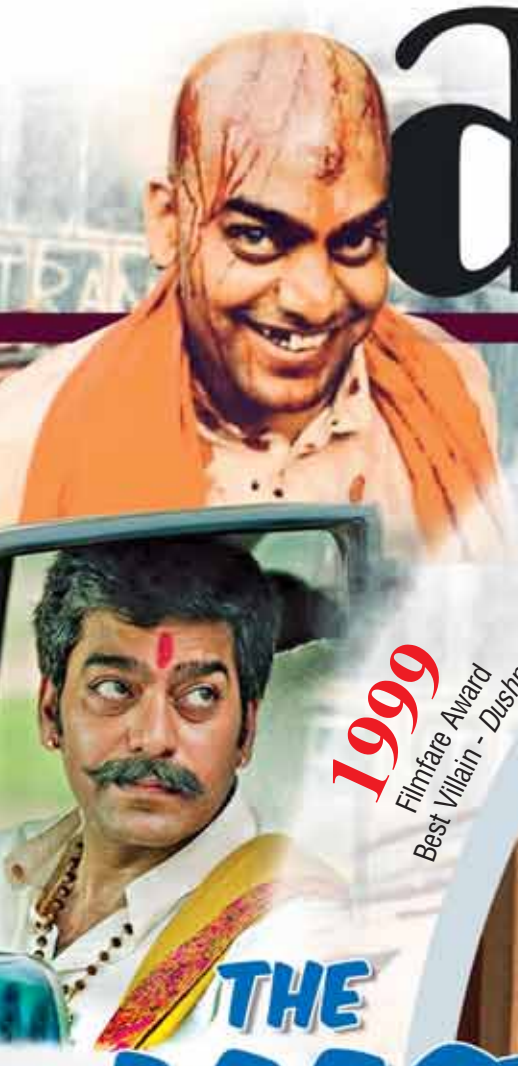
**Mythic Quest Season 4**  
IMDB Rating - 7.7/10  
OTT - Apple TV  
Cast - Rob McElhenney, Charlotte Nicdao, David Hornsby, Danny Pudi



**You're Cordially Invited**  
IMDB Rating - 5.5/10  
OTT - Amazon Prime Video  
Cast - Will Ferrell, Reese Witherspoon, Geraldine Viswanathan



"Don't stop when you're tired, stop when you're done"  
— David Goggins



**2000**  
Filmfare Award  
Best Villain - Sangharsh

**1999**  
Filmfare Award  
Best Villain - Dushman



# THE MASTER OF VILLAINY

From *Dushman* to fanaticism of *Sangharsh*, to the courtroom intensity of *Mulg*, **Ashutosh Rana** has mastered every shade of villainy with effortless ease, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Indian cinema has always celebrated its heroes, but some actors have carved their legacy by embracing roles that challenge conventions. **Ashutosh Rana** is one such artist who has left an indelible mark with his fearless choice of characters. Known for his spine-chilling performances in films like *Dushman* and *Sangharsh*, **Rana** redefined villainy in the Hindi film industry. His performances were not just menacing but deeply impactful, leaving audiences captivated and disturbed in equal measure.

With a career spanning decades, **Rana** has mastered the art of bringing authenticity to every role, whether it's the calculated cruelty of a villain or the depth of a vulnerable, layered character. Films like *Raaz* and *Shorgul* showcased his ability to connect with audiences on an emotional level, proving that his craft is rooted in versatility.

Recently, **Rana** has been performing in 'Humare Ram,' where he plays the role of **Ravan**. In this portrayal, he brings a fresh perspective to the character, showing **Ravan** as not only a figure of ambition and power but one with deep emotional layers.

**Rana** reflected on his journey, his thoughts on storytelling and the challenges of balancing cinema and theatre. Here's what he shared.

### Breathing Life into Villains

"Even with negative characters, the aim is always to go beyond the expected. Take *Dushman*, for instance. The character is negative, but it operates in a different emotional space than, say, my role in *Sangharsh*. These characters may share the label of being 'negative,' but they each carry unique baggage, emotions and complexities.

The idea is to bring something new every time. If you watch my work, my goal is that you shouldn't see traces of my past performances in the current role. You come to watch **Ashutosh Rana** in a new avatar, not as a repetition of something you've already seen."

### Choosing the Road Less Taken

"All the characters you have seen, I have always selected roles I have not done or explored before. As an actor, you must decide whether you want to be an actor or an artist. If you are an actor, you repeat yourself. But if you are an artist, you must break yourself in each and every performance. This diversity is what defines an artist. My effort has always been not to repeat a character I've already portrayed."

### The Evolution as an Actor

"I do not do any film in which I am not involved. Acting is not only my passion; it is my profession and my education. My education is acting, my profession is acting and my learning is acting. I do not take up any work in which I am not involved from within. Whether it is a full-length central character or just two scenes in a film like *Fighter*, I do not play any role unless it allows me to evolve as a person and as an actor. Every character I play must push me forward."

### Becoming Ravan

"Before doing this, I had written a book, *Ramrajya*, which became a bestseller and won awards. That process itself was a form of preparation. **Ravan** is not a character bound by a single emotion; he operates on multiple levels. He has divinity, aggression, wisdom, purity and even impurity. Like the seven notes of music, to embody **Ravan**, I did not need to build him; I had to break myself. It is not a role where you add layers to create drama; it is one where you strip away everything until the essence of **Ravan** emerges. The process is not about constructing a persona; it is about deconstructing **Ashutosh Rana** so that **Ravan** can come through."

**2021**  
Filmfare OTT Award  
Supporting role - Pagglaait

**2014**  
SIIMA Award (Nominated)  
Negative Role - Tadakkha



### Do you feel that a role as iconic as Ravan leaves something within you?

"No, I believe everything is already within us. If we refer to the Gita, it teaches that all emotions come from within. Whether it is love, anger, or wisdom, they exist inside us, we just express them differently."

### Drawing a Line Between Performance and Reality

"But it depends, do you see yourself as a player or a spectator? If you remain a spectator, the role will not consume you. But if you allow it to, it may shape your thoughts, whether it's **Ravan's** wisdom or dominance. That is why I have set clear boundaries. I do not take my home to the market, nor do I bring the market into my home. If you carry your emotions everywhere, they will consume you. My performance happens in the green room. The moment I wear **Ravan's** attire, I become **Ravan**. But the moment I remove my makeup, **Ravan** stays behind and **Ashutosh** walks out."

### RAVAN: A HERO IN HIS OWN STORY?

### Do you think Ravan could be considered the hero of his own story?

"Yes, absolutely. If you look at it from his perspective, he had his own beliefs, his own dharma. Every story has two sides. Even the gods had to take birth on Earth for a reason. That in itself shows the complexity of his character."

### On Playing Mythological Characters

"I want to widen my spectrum in terms of mythology and historical roles. I would love to play **Krishna**. I would love to play **Chanakya** because that is also a very versatile character."

### No Regrets

"I have no regrets in life. Whatever decisions you made were the only ones possible at that moment, which is why you made them. Life is not about correcting the past; it is a process of evolving. You either grow with age or simply grow old. I believe I am growing."

### A New Perspective on Ravan

"My portrayal of **Ravan** in *Humare Ram* also challenges clichés. Traditionally, we view **Ravan** through a set image, an archetype that doesn't emotionally connect or move us. The characters I choose, whether negative or otherwise, have a wider horizon. They challenge the audience to look beyond the surface. When you engage with the story, the character naturally resonates. But my goal is never to create a character so overwhelming that you forget the story."

### On Performing Across Different Mediums

"I have had the opportunity to perform in all mediums and I believe that every medium is just a means of expression. If your expression is true, it will connect with people, regardless of the medium, whether it is theatre, film, or television."

### UNFORGETTABLE PRESENCE

For **Ashutosh Rana**, acting is not about playing a character, it is about becoming, breaking and rebuilding. With every role, he steps into uncharted emotional depths, revealing not just a character but fragments of life itself. Be it a formidable villain, a layered mythological figure, or a storyteller who makes us pause and reflect, **Rana's** performances do not just entertain, they resonate. Long after the lights dim and the curtains fall, his stories remain, echoing in the minds of those who dare to look beyond the screen. Recently, **Rana** has been performing in the theatre production 'Humare Ram,' where he plays the role of **Ravan**. In this portrayal, he brings a fresh perspective to the character, showing **Ravan** as not only a figure of ambition and power but one with deep emotional layers.





# Where Ambience Meets Flavour

Delhi NCR gets an aesthetic addition of a new  
culinary scene with the launch of CAMO -  
Modern Cookhouse, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



**C**AMO - Modern Cookhouse, has opened its doors promising to transform the way food is experienced in the city. Blending bold flavours, artistic presentation, and a thoughtfully curated ambience, CAMO sets the stage for a culinary adventure that is equal parts comforting and sophisticated.

**INVITING AMBIANCE:** With greenery inside the place, which is rare to see, makes the ambience aesthetic with lights. CAMO stands out with its unique design that seamlessly integrates indoor and outdoor spaces, creating an environment that is both dynamic and welcoming. The skylight bathes the space in natural light, making it an ideal venue for both casual outings and refined gatherings.

**MODERN INDIAN & PAN-ASIAN DELIGHTS:** The menu at CAMO is a testament to innovation, bringing together the richness of modern Indian and Pan-Asian cuisines in a way that both honours tradition and pushes creative boundaries. Standout dishes include the *Matar Hummus & Lavash Chaat*, the *Parmesan Charred Broccoli*, and the playful yet intriguing *Mushroom Chai*—a dish that encapsulates CAMO's commitment to reimagine classics.

**SMALL PLATES THAT PACK A PUNCH:** CAMO's small plates selection is designed for those who love to sample and share, offering a



range of exciting flavours and textures. The *Puchka Tray* is a refreshing take on the classic street food favourite, served with mint guava water and anaar corn salsa for a sweet, tangy twist. The *Basil Spring Rolls*, packed with roasted peanuts and accompanied by Thai sweet



chili sauce, bring a crunchy delight with every bite. Meanwhile, the *Cheddar Soya Tikka* impresses with its smoky flavours, complemented by a rich tomato chutney and pickled onions. For non-vegetarian aficionados, the *Katsu Chicken Tenders* are a must-try. These crispy, golden-fried delights are served with burnt citrus and togarashi mayo, adding a depth of umami that lingers on the palate.

**SUSHI SELECTIONS FOR EVERY PALATE:** CAMO's *Uramaki Sushi* menu offers a mix of vegetarian and non-vegetarian options that cater to diverse tastes. The vegetarian selection includes the *Avocado and Cream Cheese*, as well as the *Korean Kimchi Kimbab*, which delivers a fiery, tangy punch. For seafood lovers, the *Citrus Salmon Mousse* and the *Loaded Crispy Dynamite* provide a perfect balance of



flavours, with fresh ingredients and expert craftsmanship evident in every roll.



**SWEET ENDINGS WITH DECADENT DESSERTS:** No meal at CAMO is complete without indulging in its delightful dessert offerings. The *Milk Cake Khurchan* is a rich and creamy homage to traditional Indian sweets, while the *Gulab Jamun & Pista Rabri* brings together two beloved classics in a harmonious fusion. For those who crave a taste of nostalgia, the *Purani Dilli Ka Kulfya* is a must-try, featuring flavours of mango, akhrot anjeer, and jamun that transport diners to the bustling streets of Old Delhi.

**A VISION TO REDEFINE DINING IN NOIDA:** Vikas Khurana, the mind behind CAMO - Modern Cookhouse, is passionate about reshaping Noida's dining culture. "Noida is rapidly evolving into a gastronomic hub, with diners seeking experiences that go beyond the ordinary. At CAMO, we've embraced this change, introducing a menu that pays tribute to tradition while pushing creative boundaries. Familiar dishes are reimaged with ingenuity, passion, and love, delivering something truly distinct. Our mission is to create moments that stay with our guests long after their meal. CAMO isn't here to follow trends; we're here to reshape how dining is perceived in this dynamic city."

**FACT SHEET**

**ADDRESS:** CAMO, SH 02 & 03, Near Embassy Oxygen Business Park, Sector 144, Noida  
**COST FOR TWO:** 2000 + taxes (exclusive of drinks)  
**OPERATIONAL TIME:** 12pm to 11:30 pm

## ITALY'S BEST, SERVED HERE

*Pizza Pazzi* offers a delectable Italian dining experience, serving authentic pizzas, pasta, and fresh salads, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

**W**hether you're a fan of classic Margherita or adventurous gourmet combinations, *Pizza Pazzi* caters to diverse palates, ensuring a satisfying dining experience. *Pizza Pazzi* at *Select Citywalk Mall*, Delhi, is a hidden gem for Italian food lovers. While their pizzas are the star attraction, the restaurant also serves delicious pasta and fresh salads that deserve just as much praise. Inspired by the charm of Naples and the Italian phrase "Pazzi" meaning "crazy about pizza", founder *Utsav Khaitan* envisioned *Pizza Pazzi* as a place where the essence of Italian dining could be cherished in a modern, accessible way. At the heart of the concept is a menu designed by *Chef Riccardo*, whose expertise brings Italian flavours to life with authenticity and flair. Guests can look forward to a selection of masterfully prepared *Neapolitan pizzas*, celebrated for their airy bases, and thin-crust options that strike the perfect balance between lightness and crunch. Beyond pizzas, the menu also boasts fresh salads, expertly grilled specialties, and desserts that capture the spirit of a true Italian feast. The pasta dishes are well-prepared, with perfectly cooked al dente pasta coated in rich, flavourful sauces. Each dish is satisfying and well-balanced. The salads are fresh



and crisp, with high-quality ingredients that add a refreshing contrast to the indulgent main courses. To end the meal on a sweet note, the *tiramisu* is a must-try. Light, creamy, and infused with just the right amount of coffee flavour, it's the perfect way to wrap up a delightful Italian feast.

The service at *Pizza Pazzi* is equally impressive, with attentive and friendly staff ensuring a smooth dining experience. Whether you're visiting for a quick bite or a leisurely meal, this spot delivers great food and warm hospitality in a cozy setting. Orders are served promptly, ensuring that diners can enjoy their meals without unnecessary delays. The ambience of the restaurant is inviting, making it a suitable spot for both casual outings and special occasions.

**FACT SHEET**

**ADDRESS:** Select Citywalk Mall, Saket, New Delhi, Delhi 110017  
**COST FOR TWO:** ₹2,000 + taxes  
**OPERATIONAL TIME:** 12pm to 11:00pm







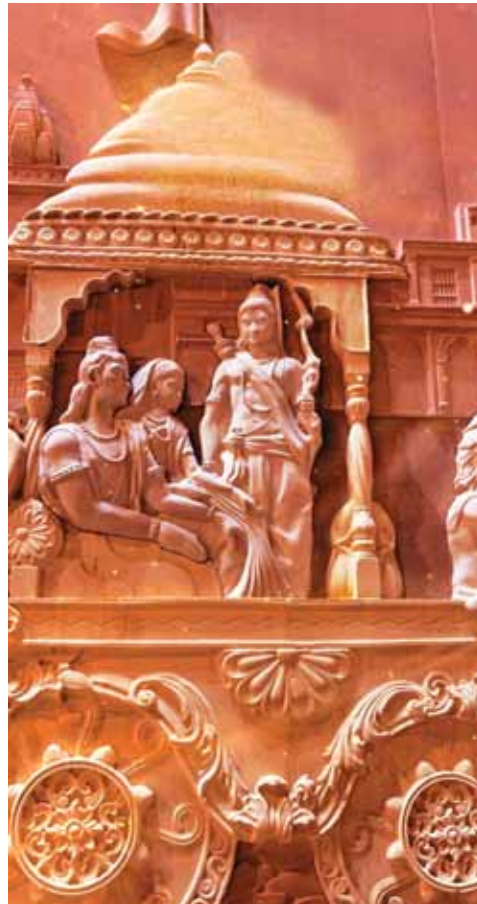
**A**yodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram, offered Hemant Shukla a divine experience with its serene Saryu River, vibrant ghats, and the grandeur of Ram Mandir amidst spiritual awakening. As soon as the semester break began, I packed my bags, filled with excitement and patience, for a 23-hour train journey from the Temple City of India, Bhubaneswar, to the birthplace of Lord Shri Ram, Ayodhya. Since there is no direct train to Ayodhya, I boarded the Puri-Gwalior Express from Bhubaneswar to Prayagraj (Sangam City), arrived at midnight, and then took another train early in the morning, reaching Ayodhya around 9 a.m. As I entered the Ayodhya Dham Station amidst a trail of morning mist, I could feel an aura of spirituality. The station itself resembled a temple,

## THE DIVINE GLOW OF AYODHYA

Ayodhya's spiritual essence, sacred sites and vibrant ghats offer a deeply immersive and divine experience



beautifully adorned with carved paintings, banners, and lights, with a temple-like structure on top. Modern facilities ensured effective crowd management, blending tradition with convenience. After stepping out, I made my way to the nearby Neeraj Tea Stall, a beloved spot among locals. A hot cup of tea for ₹10 and a plate of pakoras for ₹20, accompanied by a free-of-cost cheerful chat with the locals. They advised me to beware of the



mischievous monkeys, notorious for snatching food items. Accommodation options ranged from economical dormitories and Dharamshalas for under ₹500 to mid-range hotels for ₹2,000 and even luxurious stays. After freshening up, I hopped onto a city electric bus to Naya Ghat. A short walk led me to the serene banks of the Saryu River. The sacred river welcomed many devotees. Despite the winter chill and fog, I mustered the courage and plunged into



the sacred waters, feeling an inexplicable connection with the divine. Next, I visited the Nageshwar Nath Temple, established by Kush, Lord Ram's son, to honour Lord Shiva with sacred Saryu water. Ram ki Paidi is a series of ghats on the bank of the River Saryu. The riverfront presents an outstanding landscape, especially on floodlit nights. Every year on Diwali, Ayodhya's Deepotsav is celebrated on these ghats with lakhs of diyas and laser shows. The vibrant

energy surrounding the ghats during the festivities is truly blissful. From there, I walked to the road and took a ₹10 e-rickshaw to Choti Devkali Mandir, where Goddess Parvati is worshipped as Sita Mata's family deity. Near the main road, I treated myself to some delicious dahi jalebi at Maurya Mishthan Bhandar for ₹50—a delightful experience for both my taste buds and spirit.

Before visiting the grand Ram Mandir, I headed towards the Hanuman Garhi Temple. This temple, dedicated to Lord Hanuman, had a long queue of devotees, but the wait was worth it. With 1 kg of prasad—besan ladoos made in desi ghee—for ₹480, I was ready for my next destination. After that, I visited the Ram Mandir, which is within walking distance. I was amazed by the sight of the temple. Although it is still under construction, the energy and emotions I felt there are beyond words. It was a deeply spiritual experience. The temple has proper arrangements and facilities for pilgrims, including a dedicated facilitation centre to assist visitors. One can also pre-book a slot for the Ram Mandir Aarti Darshan online. By 4 p.m., I had completed all these activities and had lunch at Chandra Restaurant, which cost ₹500. Afterwards, I took some rest, preparing for another surreal experience yet to come.

### AYODHYA'S HEARTBEAT

**A**s the clock struck 7 p.m., Ayodhya dazzled in vibrant lights. The symbolic streetlights, soulful bhajans blending with city sounds, and the lively yet peaceful atmosphere felt surreal. Walking through the illuminated streets, I reached Kanak Bhawan, believed to have been gifted by Kaikeyi to Sita after her marriage to Lord Ram. The temple's architecture, reminiscent of Rajasthani palaces, left me in awe. The idols of Lord Ram and Sita exuded divine charm. As I sat in the temple's courtyard, time seemed to stand still. Attending the Shayan Aarti at 9 p.m. was a transcendent experience, with devotees singing bhajans in reverence. After the aarti, I had dinner at Kanak Rasoi for ₹150 before heading back to my stay. The next morning, I caught my train back to Bhubaneswar, but a part of my soul remains in Ayodhya, especially in the divine embrace of Kanak Bhawan. This journey to the sacred land was not just a travel experience but a spiritual awakening that will forever resonate in my heart.

— Hemant Shukla

## EXPLORE GOA LIKE NEVER BEFORE!

**N**estled in the heart of Curtorim, a tranquil village in South Goa surrounded by lush landscapes, Mansão Curtorim is a 236-year-old Indo-Portuguese heritage villa that seamlessly blends the region's cultural and architectural facets with modern comforts.

I was fortunate to experience this meticulously restored heritage property which offers a serene retreat, inviting guests to immerse themselves in Goa's hidden gems, its timeless charm, and the tranquil pace of life in a peaceful village setting.

For me, sitting in the garden early morning with my precious cup of tea created an unforgettable revelry. The garden overlooks the lake which is lovely with several egrets playing perfect hosts to migratory birds. As I sip my tea, looking at pretty ducks gliding over the water of the lake, a gentle whisper of a cuckoo lures me to her charm, I can't stop looking at the sky in pretty hues of dawn while Coucal manages to steal the spotlight in the nearby gorgeous Champa tree with its deep resonant notes. Here the air hums with vibes that are beautifully soothing and invigorating.

**THE STUNNING VILLA - HERITAGE MEETS MODERN COMFORT:** With its Indo-Portuguese architecture, Mansão Curtorim blends colonial-era charm with modern luxury. Every corner of the heritage villa set on a 1.5-acre estate, speaks of finer details embracing elements of elegance and comfort. Truly, it's a haven for the discerning traveler. The villa is a testament to Goa's rich colonial history, with its striking red-hued façade, colonial-era furniture, and intricate details like rosewood beds and ornate mirrors. When you enter the villa, you are transported to a bygone era, where traditional Portuguese design



Mansão Curtorim invites guests to experience the lesser-known, tranquil side of Goa, where time slows down amidst lush paddy fields and historic landscapes, says SHARMILA CHAND

meets modern-day amenities. Spacious living areas, breezy balconies, and carefully preserved vintage elements like patterned cement tiles and vintage ceilings highlight the villa's colonial heritage, making it a place where history is honored without compromising on comfort. Mansão Curtorim features six elegantly appointed bedrooms, each offering a perfect balance of comfort and charm, blending the charm of traditional Portuguese architecture with modern comforts.

**CULTURAL HERITAGE:** Beyond its aesthetic beauty, Mansão Curtorim offers



a rich cultural experience rooted in the local community and culinary traditions. Tucked away in Curtorim, a serene village adorned with sprawling paddy fields, coconut groves, and historic water bodies, the villa provides the perfect setting for those seeking both relaxation and a deeper connection with Goa's heritage. The nearby Church of St. Alex, dating back to 1597, and the peaceful



flow of the Zuari River enhance the area's charm, making it a haven for birdwatchers, history enthusiasts, and those simply looking for tranquility. **CURATED IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES:** Guests at Mansão Curtorim can explore the area through curated experiences that showcase the essence of traditional Goan life. Guided village walks, scenic

cycling trails, and visits to heritage sites like Chandor and Rachol offer a glimpse into Goa's rich cultural fabric. The villa's serene surroundings are also ideal for creative pursuits, making it the perfect retreat for artists, writers, or anyone looking to unwind in an intimate and restorative environment. Whether you're looking to paint, write, or simply relax in nature's embrace, Mansão Curtorim aligns perfectly with CGH Earth Saha's philosophy of providing meaningful, intimate, immersive experiences.

**CULINARY DELIGHTS:** A key highlight of Mansão Curtorim is its culinary offerings, which provide a delightful

journey through Goa's rich and diverse food culture. The villa's chef has carefully crafted a menu that combines traditional Goan delicacies with popular Western favorites, catering to both vegetarians and meat lovers. The enticing aroma of Chorizo Pilaf, the delicate flavors of Cauliflower Caldine, and the rich, spicy notes of Pork Sorpotel and Bharlelim Aimi exemplify the depth of Goan cuisine. Guests can embark on a flavourful journey with iconic dishes like Bebinca, Sol Kadi, Xacuti, and Vindaloo, all rooted in Indo-Portuguese culinary traditions and enhanced by the region's distinctive spices and fresh ingredients. For me every meal was a memorable event in a relaxed outdoor setting overlooking the lush courtyard. Right from cooking every dish to highlight the vibrant flavors of South Goa to impeccable presentation, the team takes Gastronomy to another level.

**GOAN FENI AND TAPAS FOOD TRAIL:** For those seeking a true Goan culinary adventure, the Goan Feni and Tapas Food Trail is an exciting opportunity to savour Goa's iconic spirit, paired with delectable tapas. This immersive food trail adds an extra layer of authenticity to the experience, giving guests the chance to taste the best of Goan cuisine in a truly unique setting.

**TO CONCLUDE:** Whether you are seeking a quiet retreat to reconnect with loved ones, indulge in creative pursuits, or explore Goa's cultural and natural wonders, Mansão Curtorim offers the perfect escapade. With its blend of history, beauty, and modern comfort, it is more than just a place to stay—it is an invitation to experience Goa in its truest, most immersive form.

— She is an author and independent writer



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

The week begins on a high note with your efforts being recognized and celebrated, boosting your spirits immensely. You'll find yourself successfully wrapping up a significant endeavor, earning well-deserved accolades for your hard work. This period marks a time of joy and heightened achievement, exceeding your own expectations. Additionally, you might find yourself preparing for a journey, so it's wise to be ready for travel. However, amidst this success, stay grounded as getting overly carried away could lead to less cautious decisions. Some moments this week will call for decisive action, especially in personal relationships, where clear choices will be necessary. Emotionally, the week might present some challenges, including potential disappointments in personal connections, possibly leading to separations or the culmination of ongoing disputes in legal settings.

**Lucky number** 9 | **Lucky colour** Lemon Yellow  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Awaken and break free from the chains of limiting beliefs and unhealthy habits that may be subtly influencing your life. Currently, the atmosphere around you is rife with misunderstanding and deception, making it easy to be misled. This period is fraught with caution; impulsive actions could lead to unwelcome consequences. Engaging in uncertain ventures or succumbing to deceptive tactics could prove detrimental. Embrace sincerity and authenticity, as these qualities will enrich your life in the long term. You are destined for greatness and deserve to uphold your dignity and status. Stay alert, as new opportunities and projects are on the horizon, which will require your unique abilities and dedication. As the week concludes, prepare to relish moments of joy, celebration, and significant life events.

**Lucky number** 1 | **Lucky colour** Rose  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

It's essential to find harmony between various aspects of your life such as family, career, and personal finances, especially as you face new challenges. Sometimes, unexpected hurdles may appear, making it difficult to achieve your goals and potentially leading to stress or awkward social situations. It's important to maintain a balance in your physical, mental, and spiritual health and reconcile conflicting interests and desires. Avoiding responsibilities or commitments can lead to more complications. Engaging in acts of kindness and participating in community or spiritual activities can provide a sense of fulfillment and resilience. Be mindful of the honesty of your actions and consider if some difficulties might be of your own making. Working on eliminating negative behaviors can pave the way for smoother interactions and personal growth.

**Lucky number** 15 | **Lucky colour** Orange  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

Your home life will bring you joy and stability, fostering a nurturing environment where discussions about upcoming events or plans may take center stage. Should a family member have travel plans, they might find themselves needing to adjust their itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances, perhaps even returning home earlier than anticipated. This period will highlight the value of cherished family traditions and the wisdom passed down through generations. Professionally, you seek a role that provides fulfillment, stability, and a sense of connection with others. Leveraging your intellectual abilities will be key in advancing your objectives. Your thoughtful, perceptive nature will be instrumental in facilitating significant changes in your life. You'll find yourself in a financially stable position, enjoying the fruits of your efforts and the leisure to savor life's comforts.

**Lucky number** 3 | **Lucky colour** Sky Blue  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

The upcoming period brings a significant boost in your ability to complete tasks with confidence, self-discipline, and patience. You're likely to experience a noticeable improvement in your financial situation, leading to increased comfort and greater self-awareness about what truly matters in life. Expect peace and happiness in your home environment, perhaps marked by new additions or changes like purchasing furniture or spending tranquil moments in the garden. A successful outcome in your endeavors will bring you joy, and you'll find comfort in the support and protection offered by longstanding relationships and family traditions. Your activities this week may revolve around shopping, dining, gardening, and financial transactions, highlighting a theme of prosperity and security. A significant celebration, possibly a wedding, may also be on the horizon.

**Lucky number** 6 | **Lucky colour** Olive  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You may feel constrained by your current circumstances and encounter resistance from those around you, hindering your progress toward your objectives. You might be seeking an escape from a burdensome situation or contemplating a change in your career path. The issues you face primarily stem from external sources rather than yourself, as others may not be fulfilling their responsibilities, contributing to challenges you encounter. If you feel trapped or exposed, it's crucial to address these challenges without delay. Start by liberating your thoughts from any fixed ideas to achieve a broader perspective. Once you gain more clarity and openness in your thinking, dedicate time to reflect deeply on your true aspirations. Additionally, a supportive individual could provide valuable guidance and encouragement, helping you navigate through these times.

**Lucky number** 4 | **Lucky colour** Lavender  
**Lucky day** Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week brings a surge of energy and creativity, pushing you to initiate and drive new projects forward. Your desire for recognition and a deeper understanding of your capabilities is prominent. This period challenges you to embrace tasks that test your abilities, fostering a sense of self-realization. An air of creative unrest signals a significant shift, opening doors to transformative opportunities. Your innate curiosity propels you to showcase your unique talents and perspectives with vigor. A business-related journey might be on the horizon, hinting at promising professional ventures, possibly including a new job or a significant shift in your career path. Additionally, a change in living situations could arise, adding to the week's dynamic changes. However, some might experience restless nights, disturbed by anxiety or unsettling dreams.

**Lucky number** 11 | **Lucky colour** Cherry Red  
**Lucky day** Monday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, aim to maintain a composed demeanor and avoid conflicts, as tensions could escalate into disputes or more serious altercations. Embrace the true essence of competition by understanding its demands, respecting others' viewpoints while confidently asserting your own. Let go of past burdens and avoid worrying about the unpredictable future; focus on achieving inner peace and self-reliance. Concentrate fully on present tasks to prevent being swamped by too much information. Employ sharp insight and a rational approach to navigate through complexities effectively. Be cautious, as you may encounter rigid, emotionless thinking that could challenge your perspectives. Strive for balanced interactions and thoughtful responses to maintain harmony in your environment.

**Lucky number** 10 | **Lucky colour** Beige  
**Lucky day** Monday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week is shaping up to be quite promising, especially in terms of career advancements and personal connections. Unexpected opportunities for professional growth, such as a promotion or a significant increase in income, may appear. Prepare for potential business travel, which is likely to yield beneficial results for your future. You might find yourself considering a change in your workplace or even your home if you're renting. Emotionally, the week brings a wave of romance and passion, enhancing your relationships. You may encounter some indecision concerning a particular relationship or scenario. Trust your instincts during these moments. As the week concludes, a sense of emotional stability will emerge, allowing you to manage your feelings more effectively. Look forward to expanding your perspectives as new opportunities arise, possibly linked to personal milestones or innovative ideas that inspire greater achievements.

**Lucky number** 18 | **Lucky colour** Mint  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

Your hard work, dedication, and resilience are paving the way for your aspirations to come to fruition. Expect an uptick in your accomplishments, potentially through advancements in your career, educational achievements, or profitable ventures using your skills. Your balanced approach to dealing with supporters and challengers alike will prove beneficial. Be aware, your success may draw envy this week. Consider making strategic investments, such as in real estate or other substantial assets, which could also contribute to your personal growth. You have all the tools needed to thrive in your endeavors. Towards the week's end, take some time for introspection. Although solitude can be challenging, it's essential for rejuvenating your energy and will ultimately enhance your inner fortitude and confidence.

**Lucky number** 8 | **Lucky colour** White  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

You find yourself at a crossroads, sensing the need to transition from your current state to a more fulfilling path to enhance your effectiveness. Your drive and vitality are peaking, propelling you towards achieving ambitious goals. A male figure in your life may extend support, potentially enriching your personal connections with depth and creativity. However, your current pace may lead to impulsive actions. If triggered, your responses could be explosive, potentially harming your progress or relationships. Concerns about financial or business stability may arise, leading you to question past decisions. Nonetheless, maintaining a hopeful outlook and awaiting outcomes is advisable. Reconnect with the simple joys reminiscent of your youth by engaging with the younger generation, reviving the spirited child within.

**Lucky number** 20 | **Lucky colour** Navy Blue  
**Lucky day** Friday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week involves a thorough review and reflection on recent efforts, providing a chance to learn from past missteps. Despite considerable effort, you may feel you haven't fully reaped the benefits of your work. Some doubts could cloud your thinking during this time. However, a sudden and promising opportunity could arise mid-week—perhaps a business prospect or a new role—bringing satisfaction and potential financial gains. It's a promising period for financial activities, like investments or launching ventures. Several options will emerge; careful selection is crucial to align with your goals. Watch your spending closely to avoid financial strain. Toward the week's end, travel might be appealing. Consider planning a getaway or a special outing with a loved one to rejuvenate and connect.

**Lucky number** 30 | **Lucky colour** Coral  
**Lucky day** Thursday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

Expectation and Reality: The Sacred Waters of Devotion

My hands tremble as I pack my bags for Mahakumbh, each item I place inside carrying the weight of generations of spiritual seekers before me. The anticipation burns in my chest like sacred incense, filling me with both excitement and trepidation. Years of listening to my grandmother's stories about this divine gathering have created a tapestry of expectations in my mind – visions of enlightened sadhus with eyes that pierce through the illusions of everyday life, of holy waters that shimmer with ancient blessings, and of an atmosphere so pure it could lift one's soul closer to the divine. In the weeks leading up to my journey, sleep becomes elusive. I lie awake; my mind painting pictures of what awaits me. I imagine myself sitting cross-legged at the feet of wise Sadhus, their words flowing like honey into my eager consciousness, transforming my understanding of existence itself. In these pre-dawn reveries, I see the mighty Ganges, her waters carrying centuries of devotion, prayers, and tears, ready to embrace me in her sacred flow. My heart races at the thought of joining millions of seekers, all united in their quest for spiritual elevation. But oh, how reality strikes with the force of a temple bell's resonance! The Kumbh that greets me is a beautiful paradox – a swirling hurricane of humanity where the lines between the sacred and the mundane blur into something entirely unexpected. My carefully constructed mental image shatters



like a clay pot on stone steps, only to be reformed into something far more complex and, surprisingly, more meaningful. Here I stand, my feet planted in the same sacred soil as celebrity stars and famous personalities. I have only seen on television. The sight of them stripped of their glamour, dressed in simple white cotton, their faces bare of makeup, stirs something profound within me. There is an raw beauty in watching a famous personalities wait patiently for their turn to take a dip, their usual entourage replaced by the company of ordinary devotees. In these moments, I realise that fame and fortune are but floating leaves on the eternal river of spirituality. The Sadhus, those mystical figures who populated my dreams, present themselves in all their contradictory glory. Some sit in deep meditation, their dreadlocks touching

the ground, their eyes closed to the material world, exactly as I had imagined. Others, to my initial shock and subsequent amusement, chat on smartphones while blessing devotees, their ancient wisdom finding new channels of expression in the digital age. My heart struggles to reconcile these contrasts, but gradually, I begin to understand that spirituality doesn't require a rejection of the present but it demands finding the sacred within it. The crowds – oh, the crowds! They overwhelm my senses like a tidal wave. Bodies press against bodies, moving like a living, breathing organism with its own consciousness. The air is thick with the scent of incense, sweat, and flowers. Sometimes, the press of people triggers a primal panic in my chest, but then, mysteriously, moments of profound peace emerge from the chaos.

When the evening aarti begins, and thousands of diyas set the river aglow, time seems to stand still. In these precious moments, all differences dissolve into the gathering darkness, and I feel connected to every soul around me in a way that transcends physical discomfort. The presence of VIP zones and special arrangements initially fills me with a bitter disappointment that tastes like ash in my mouth. How can true spirituality coexist with such worldly distinctions? But then I witness a prominent politician sitting barefoot in the mud, listening intently to a sadhu's discourse, his security detail maintaining a respectful distance. I see a famous cricket player queuing up with common devotees, his celebrity status surrendered to his role as a seeker. These sights soften my judgment, teaching me that the path to spiritual understanding takes many forms. As days pass, my expectations continue their dance with reality. The Kumbh reveals itself not as a perfect spiritual haven untouched by modernity, but as a living, breathing manifestation of India's soul – complex, contradictory, and utterly magnificent in its ability to embrace both tradition and change. My heart swells with unexpected joy when I see young influencers promoting ancient Sanskrit shlokas on their social media, or when a group of international tourists joins a traditional bhajan session with genuine devotion in their eyes. The transformation I experience is not the

one I anticipated. Instead of finding escape from the modern world, I discover something far more valuable – the ability to sense the divine pulsing within the heart of our contemporary reality. Each dip in the holy waters teaches me that spirituality isn't about escaping life's complexities but about finding meaning within them. As I prepare to leave, my heart full and my soul stirred, I understand that the true miracle of Mahakumbh 2025 lies not in its adherence to ancient ideals, but in its power to remain relevant while honouring tradition. I carry home not just holy water in a copper pot, but also the profound realization that in our quest for spiritual connection, we are all equal – celebrities, saints, and common seekers alike. The Kumbh has taught me that divinity does not require isolation from the modern world; it thrives in our ability to maintain faith and seek meaning within the beautiful chaos of contemporary life, regardless of who we are or where we come from. My journey may not have matched my expectations, but it has given me something far more precious – a deeper understanding of both spirituality and humanity, intertwined like the sacred threads that bind our ancient traditions to our evolving present. —The author's views are personal. The author is a civil servant at the Ministry of Defence and a spiritual speaker

Now you can write to us at [agendapioneer@dailypioneer.com](mailto:agendapioneer@dailypioneer.com)

THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Dr. Tanu Jain

The Sadhus, those mystical figures who populated my dreams, present themselves in all their contradictory glory