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# BJP, Congress battle over USAID

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PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

t the backdrop of BJP and Congress engaged in a fierce battle of words over certain revelations about USAID funding for certain activities in the country, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said they are "deeply troubling" and have led to concerns about foreign interference in its internal affairs.

BJP sharpened its attack on the Congress on the USAID funding issue and called Rahul Gandhi a "traitor", accusing him of colluding with foreign forces in his bid to weaken India as it dismissed as "cover up" media reports that claimed USD 21 million was sanctioned in 2022 for Bangladesh, not India.

Congress on their part, following reports that an amount of USD 21 million approved by the USAID was meant for Bangladesh and not India, the party demanded an apology from the BJP alleging that the ruling party's narrative was aimed at diverting attention from its own use of foreign funds to destabilise past governments led by the grand old party. Congress also reiterated its demand from the government for a white paper on the USAID funding as well as funding by other such agencies in

Since the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) announced on February 16 that it had "cancelled", among a string of projects, the USAID funding of "USD 21 million for voter turnout in India", the ruling BJP has accused the Congress of using external influence in India's election process

In a speech in Miami on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump said: "Why do we need to spend USD 21 million for voter turnout in India? Wow, USD 21 million! I guess they were trying to get somebody else elected."

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar too voiced concern over the alleged USAID funding for raising voter turnout in India, saying people who allowed such an attack on the country's democratic values should be exposed. He also said



that it was the "national duty" of people to strike at such forces.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said relevant departments and authorities are looking into the information put out by the United States administration regarding certain US activities and funding. "We have seen information that has been put out by the US administration regarding certain US activities and funding. These are obviously very deeply troubling," Jaiswal

"This has led to concerns about foreign interference in India's internal affairs. Relevant departments and agencies are looking into this matter. It would be premature to make a public comment at this stage, so relevant authorities are looking into it and hopefully, we can come up with an update on that subsequently," Jaiswal said.

Addressing a Press conference at the BJP headquarters, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed the USAID funding came to India to meddle with internal politics and disrupt electoral process in India.

"More than USD 2000 million funding came to the government in India from 2004-13 during the erstwhile Congress led UPA rule. And, just USD 1.5 million came during Modi ji's term. It's because they know that Narendra Modi will not

sell India and India's interests to any foreign power," he said

A larger share of the USAID fund came into India during the UPA regime because the Congress can broker the country's sovereignty and its interests, Bhatia alleged.

While funding for the government (in India) stopped, there was an increase in funding for the NGOs during Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra to strengthen Rahul Gandhi ahead of the polls in an attempt to defeat Narendra Modi (in the Lok Sabha elections)," he claimed.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, Lies first mouthed in Washington, Lies then amplified by BJP's Jhoot Sena. Lies made to be debated on Godi media." "Lies now thoroughly exposed. Will the liars apologise?" he asked in a social media post.

Addressing a press conference Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera alleged that the entire "USD-21 million USAID funds narrative" perpetrated by the BJP, Modi government's ministers, its economic advisor, the party's IT department head, the RSS-BJP ecosystem and a section of the "BJPfriendly media" was done to divert attention from their "own sins" of using foreign funds to destabilise Congress governments of the past.

# New Delhi Assembly to begin with CAG reports

RAIPUR, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3

The newly constituted BJP led Delhi Assembly is set to begin its first session on Monday. The session will be held on February 24, 25, and 27, with 14 pending Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) reports on the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government's performance will be tabled. According to Rohini MLA Vijendra Gupta, 14 pending CAG reports will be tabled on February 25. This comes after newly sworn-in Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Thursday, that 14 pending reports from the CAG, allegedly withheld by the previous AAP government, will be tabled in the first session under the new BJP-led administration.

"In the first cabinet meeting, it was decided to hold a three-day Assembly session on 24th, 25th and 27th February. First of all, a pro-tem Speaker will be appointed by the LG.



Gupta during a meeting at Rashtrapati Bhavan

He (pro-tem Speaker) will chair the House and on all 70 members will take oath (as MLAs) in the Assembly. Senior leader Arvinder Singh Lovely would be the Pro-tem Speaker of the Pro-tem Speaker is a temporary Speaker who conducts House proceedings for a limited period and till the election of the full-time Speaker. After that Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be elected. The first agenda after this is CAG report. The report has already been received by the Speaker's office. So, the first agenda is to table the CAG report and hold discussion on it after the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker," Gupta

Gupta said the newly elected MLAs will take the oath on February 24-25 During AAP's rule in Delhi, the BJP had approached the court to direct the government to table the CAG reports. BJP accused the AAP government of stalling the report to hide its

### **SNOW SPARKLES**





### **ED** search gold heist in Mohali

**PTI** CHANDIGARH

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday searched the Mohali premises of a man who is an alleged suspect in Canada's biggest-

ever gold heist of more than USD 20 million, official sources said. The sources identified the

man as Simran Preet Panesar, who is in his thirties. The man could not be

contacted for his response on the allegations. The federal probe agency has

recently filed a criminal case Laundering Money (PMLA) to investigate the said loot from Canada's Pearson International Airport in April, 2023. The premises of Panesar in Punjab's Mohali is being searched and the ED investigators will question

him, the sources said. The ED had booked a case suo moto, without a request from Canada, as the PMLA allows for such an investigation into in an instance of cross-border ramification where an Indian

involved. The agency wants to probe if

According to media reports, an air cargo container with gold bars was stolen from a secure storage facility at the

national is suspected to be

the "proceeds of crime" of this alleged heist travelled to India and if there were any beneficiaries here.

said airport in 2023, possibly using fake documents.

# **Army protests LoC** firing with Pakistan

**MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU** 

Indian Army on Friday lodged a strong protest with Pakistan over recent incidents of cross-LoC firing at a Brigade Commander level Flag meeting that took place along the line of control near Chakan-Da-Bagh crossing point in Poonch.

The flag meeting took place in the backdrop of a sharp increase in the incidents of firing, cross-border desperate sniping, and attempts by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) to breach Indian defences since the beginning of this month.

A Brigadier rank officer from Poonch led a team of army officers during the flag meeting with their Pakistani counterparts.

The Indian Army Officers delivered a clear message to their counterparts that the Indian Army will not hesitate to take aggressive action in the face of any provocation.

The meeting, according to official sources, lasted a little over one hour during which Indian army officers also shared their serious concerns over rising incidents of firing and the use of Pakistani territory to target Indian army personnel on patrol

### Tamil Nadu, Centre spat over Hindi, NEP 2020 Prof R Vaidyanathan, educationist

KUMAR CHELLAPAN CHENNAI

The DMK's proclivity for seceding I from India has come out in the open with the declaration by Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin that the Dravidian party would destroy and eradicate Hindi once and for ever from the State. Weeks after Stalin and his son Udhayanidhi Stalin, the deputy chief minister made it known the DMK would ensure eradication of Sanatana Dharma, from the Dravidian heartland, the former quoted a Tamil poet in his social media as a reply to to union minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan rejecting Tamil Nadu's demand for central funds for implementing the state's education programs. The Centre's decision to hold back the

fund was the fall out of Tamil Nadu's adamant attitude against the New Education Policy which includes the three-language formula curriculum in schools. Tamil Nadu's opposition towards Hindi is infamous as the agitation launched by the Dravidian major has claimed hundreds of lives in the 1960s. Tamil Nadu is the only State in India which has not allowed Navodaya Vidyalayas, a dream project of late Prime Minister Raiiv Gandhi who wanted students in rural areas across the country should get subsidized public school education.

"Oh Hindi Language, in the midst of this joyful Dravidian land, it is you





who will be cast aside. Oh Hindi, that has caused so much suffering, your cunningness will not deceive us! When Tamil youth speak, they open their mouths to the sweet Tamil, lovingly given by their mother. If we re forced to feed you, then is it not also our duty to destroy you," Stalin writes quoting a late Tamil chauvinist

What made Stalin furious is Pradhan's letter to him on Friday in which the latter asked him not to view the NEP with myopic eyes. "The continued opposition to NEP 2020 for political reasons deprive students, teachers and educational institutions in Tamil Nadu of the immense opportunities and resources that this policy offers. The policy is designed to be flexible, allowing States to customise their implementation to suit their unique

needs,"Pradhan educational reminded Stalin. The Union Minister also emphasised various programmes associated with NEP 2020 which are capable of elevating the institutions to exemplar schools.

But the vicious attack launched by Stalin against Hindi and NEP 2020 has opened a pandora's box. Josephine Javasnathi, a former Tamil professor at Loyola College, the alma mater of Udhanidhi and his wife Kritika questioned the propriety of chief minister's opposition to Hindi and NEEP. "The chief minister and his deputy speak the language of secessionists. It is an open secret that Stalin is for seceding Tamil Nadu and form an independent Tamil nation which is detrimental to the State as well as the country," said Prof Javashanti.

"Caste as Social pathbreaking Capital", a book that took India by storm. K Annamalai, the State BIP chief did some plain speaking on Friday when he pointed out that schools owned by the DMK leaders teach three languages while children of common man who go to government run schools are taught only two languages. "The DMK leaders maintain three wives -wife, concubine and mistress. Even for watching movies, the Tamil people have to follow the diktat of Udhayanidhi who decides the movies to be made and released," said Annamalai while addressing a public

and former professor of IIM, Bangalore challenged the DMK to

show at least one sentence from NEP 2020 which speaks of imposing Hindi.

"Stalin cannot destroy Hindi. All

private schools including the one owned by his daughter (Sunshine School Clark Carry)

School, Chennai) teach Hindi. He

should not forget the fact that

Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha

headquarters in Chennai and it has

helped hundreds of Hindi Pracharaks

to get job in south India," said Prof

Vaidyanathan who authored the

meeting at Karur. But the DMK's politicians' hatred for Hindi is in stark contrast to the super stars of Tamil filmdom who never hesitate to bend backwards to stoke the movie makers of Bollywood to get a role in Hindi films.

### **Human support to endangered Olive Turtles** organisation, the ICG has been BHUBANESHWAR/KENDRAPARA

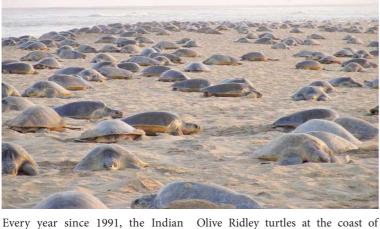
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

protection.

s many as 5,55,638 eggs have been Alaid by the endangered Olive Ridley turtle species at Rushikulya and Devi River mouth to Astaranga near Paradip in Odisha symbolising collective conservation efforts of State Government, Coast Guard and other stakeholder towards wildlife

Coast Guard on Thursday said it has launched the annual operation to ensure the safe mid-sea sojourn of breeding Olive Ridley sea turtles and mass nesting of these delicate marine species in Odisha. The Olive Ridley turtles turn up in millions for mass nesting along the Odisha coast every year between February and March.

Conservationists have established protected areas on beaches off Odisha coast where these turtles lay their eggs and thus these areas are regularly monitored to prevent human interference, whether through seaward poaching or disturbance from leisure activities, they said.



Coast Guard (ICG) has been providing continuous assistance under 'Operation Oliva' to central and state authorities and agencies to protect endangered species under the Wildlife Act, 1972.

Under Operation Olivia, the ongoing season of mass nesting of endangered season of ma

Odisha has yielded productive results as the nesting data mainly at Rushikulya have come up with 6,126 nests with 5,51,238 eggs, where in nesting at Devi River mouth to Astrang is sporadic in nature with 60

entrusted the charter with responsibility of preserving and protecting the maritime environment. In coordination with the state's fisheries and the forest departments. Coast Guard is conducting the operation, which commenced on November 1 and will continue up to May 31, 25. As part of the ongoing operation, ICG conducts periodic social awareness drives and a special community interaction programme for sensitising the coastal populace and fishing communities. During this period, fishing vessels

and boats operating close to the marine reserve areas and protected areas are being regularly monitored by ICG for the usage of the Turtle Excluder Device (TED). ICG ships and aircraft are deployed

and tasked towards protection of turtles and to ensure that an appropriate environment provided to the turtles for mass nesting and to enforce the legislation promulgated by the

### ...slim, smart... to unknown woman at night is obscenity: Mumbai Court

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

sessions court here has Aruled that sending messages like "you are slim, look very smart and fair, I like you" to an unknown woman at night amounts to obscenity.

The Additional Sessions Judge (Dindoshi) D G Dhoble made these observations while upholding the conviction of a man booked for sending obscene messages WhatsApp to a former corporator

The obscenity must be judged from the perspective of an "average person applying contemporary community standards", noted the order of February

The court noted that pictures convicted by a magistrate and messages were sent to court here in 2022 and

the complainant between 11 pm and 12.30 am with content like "you are slim", "you are looking very smart", "you are fair", "my age is 40 years", "are you married or not?" and "I like you". No married woman or her

husband who are "reputed and (former) corporators" tolerate would WhatsApp messages and obscene photos, particularly when the sender and the complainant do not know each other, the court said.

"Nothing has been brought on record by the accused that there was any relationship between them," it said. The judge held that the

messages and the act amounted to an insult to the modesty of a woman. Earlier, the accused was

court. Among other grounds, the accused claimed he was implicated falsely in the case over political rivalry. However, the court rejected

sentenced to imprisonment

for three months. He

subsequently challenged the

decision in the sessions

his contention, saying it was not supported by any evidence. "Furthermore, no woman would stake her dignity implicating an accused in a

false case," it held. The prosecution has proved that the accused sent obscene WhatsApp messages and images to the woman, the court said.

'Therefore, the accused is rightly convicted and sentenced by the trial court (magistrate)," the sessions judge noted.

# **Delhi Government terminates co-terminus** appointments in former CM, cabinet ministers

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

¬he newly-formed BJP government The newly-tollined by Bollin Delhi has terminated all co-terminus appointments in the offices of the former chief minister and cabinet ministers. The decision comes just a day after Rekha Gupta assumed office as the Chief Minister of Delhi. This decision marks the beginning of a new administrative structure under the current leadership, ensuring a fresh start for governance.

An official order stated, "All the officers, officials and staff from various departments, organisations, corporations, boards, hospitals, etc. 'deployed in diverted capacity' in the offices of CM and ministers shall be deemed to have been relieved from duties with immediate effect and shall report to their respective departments, boards, autonomous bodies, corporations, hospitals, etc. Delhi Secretariat with immediate effect.

It further added, "The offices of CM and Ministers will submit fresh proposals to GAD... However, regular staff of DANICS, DSS and newly sworn-in Chief Minister, Ministers till further orders.

Furthermore, the directive states that fresh proposals for staffing in the Chief Minister's and Ministers' offices will be submitted to the General Administration Department back to their original departments,



(GAD). However, regular staff belonging to DANICS, DSS, and the Stenographer cadre will continue to serve in their respective roles under Steno cadre will continue to work in the newly sworn-in Chief Minister their respective offices under the and cabinet ministers until further

> Further, the government officers and personal staffers appointed to departments different than theirs by the previous regime have been instructed to immediately report

according to an official order dated February 20. Formation newly elected government warrants fresh appointment of staff of all categories as appointments automatically get terminated on resignation of the then Hon'ble Chief Minister/ Ministers. Accordingly, deployment and appointment of officers has to take place afresh after taking of oath and assumption of Office by the new Hon'ble Chief

Minister/Cabinet Ministers," the order signed by Deputy Secretary (Services) Bhairav Dutt said.

Last week, in order to crackdown on the 'tentacles' of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) within the Delhi government, Delhi Chief Secretary asked Heads Dharmendra has Secretaries and Department to compile a list of appointments of chairpersons and members made by the previous AAP government.

The move may spark controversy as the AAP government had faced allegations of appointing party members and close aides of ministers to various non-official posts, allegedly bypassing established laws and government regulations.

In July 2023, the Delhi Services

Department had ordered that 437 private persons appointed as advisers, fellows and consultants via "back door entry" by the Aam Aadmi Party government are "void ab initio" from the beginning) and directed the departments concerned to stop their services.

The 437 appointments include 140 fellows and associate fellows appointed at the Delhi Assembly Research Centre (DARC) since 2019. The Services department had compiled the information received from 23 departments and agencies of the Delhi government that engaged private persons as "specialists".

# Rekha Gupta slams Atishi over promise allegations

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

¬aking strong exception to former AAP leader and former Chief Minister Atishi's accusation of "breaking promises," newly sworn-in Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday said the AAP ruled Delhi for 13 years and they have no right to question

In a sharp rebuttal to Atishi's remarks, Gupta said, "The Congress ruled for 15 years and the AAP ruled for 13. Instead of looking at what they did, how can they raise questions on one day of ours?... We had a cabinet meeting on day 1, immediately after taking the oath, and we cleared the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, which was blocked by the AAP. We gave a benefit of ₹10 Lakhs to the people of Delhi on the first day.

Gupta was sworn-in as Delhi Chief Minister and six other MLAs were inducted into her cabinet on Thursday. At its maiden meeting on Thursday, the newly-formed Delhi Cabinet approved

implementation of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in the capital, discussed Mahila Samriddhi Yoina, and also decided to table 14 pending CAG reports in the first session of the eighth



Delhi CM Rekha Gupta addresses her first press conference as the CM, after a cabinet meeting of the new government at the Delhi Secretariat, in New Delhi PTI

Assembly. The war of words escalated after Atishi accused the BJP of "deceiving Delhiites", alleging the party had failed to deliver on its promise of ₹2,500 cash assistance to women in the first cabinet meeting.
Gupta alleged that both the

Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party had deprived the people of Delhi of their rights and only raised slogans without taking any real action. "Congress ruled Delhi for 15 years and after that it was the AAP... Yet, they never addressed the issues of the people of Delhi. And now, just one day after we took office, they have started

questioning our government," Gupta said. Highlighting her party's swift decision making, she stated, "We are the ones who passed the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in our very first cabinet

meeting. We took oath and on the same day approved the scheme that AAP had stalled for years." She suggested that the two parties should focus on their own party

"Many of their members are ready to leave, and they are worried because we are committed to fulfilling all our

# Delhi court delays sentence for Sajjan Kumar in 1984 anti-Sikh riots case

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Friday reserved A for February 25 its order on the quantum of sentence against Congress leader Sajjan Kumar in a murder case relating to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Appearing before special judge Kaveri Baweja, the complainant, whose husband and son were killed by a mob allegedly instigated by Kumar, sought the maximum punishment of death penalty for

"The accused being the leader of the mobs instigated others to commit a genocide and crime against humanity and cold-blooded murders, and he deserves nothing less than capital punishment," submitted senior advocate H S representing complain ant.

Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh were killed on November 1, 1984.

Kumar was convicted by the Delhi High Court for five murders in Delhi Cantonment's Raj Nagar area in another case related to the riots aside for the murders in the present case, argued Phoolka while claiming that the seven murders were part of a genocide.

Kumar, said Phoolka, was leading a mob that killed the two men and person who led and instigated others to kill people in cold blood "deserves higher punishment".

He said that Kumar was awarded life imprisonment in the Raj Nagar case, but now he deserved a death sentence. The prosecution had also sought capital punishment for the former Congress MP.

The court asked the counsel appearing for Kumar to file his

written submissions within two resorted to large-scale looting, days.

"Put up for order on the quantum of sentence on the next date of hearing," said the judge. The court on February 12 convicted Kumar for the offence and on Friday it sought a report from Tihar central jail on his psychiatric and psychological evaluation in view of a Supreme Court order asking for such a report attracting cases capital punishment.

Kumar is currently lodged in Tihar jail. The minimum punishment for murder is life imprisonment whereas the maximum is death penalty.

Though Punjabi Bagh Police Station registered the case, a special investigation team took over the investigation much later.

The prosecution alleged a huge mob, armed with deadly weapons, convicted for murder.

of Sikhs to avenge the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The mob attacked the house of the complainant, wife of Jaswant, killing the men aside from looting articles and setting their house ablaze, the prosecution claimed.

According to a report of the Nanavati Commission, constituted to probe the violence and its aftermath, there were 587 FIRs filed in Delhi in relation to the riots that saw killings of 2,733 people. Of the total, about 240 FIRs were closed by police as "untraced" and 250 cases resulted in acquittal.

Only 28 cases of 587 FIRs resulted in convictions, in which about 400 persons were convicted. Of the total, 50, including Kumar, were

# BJP-led government unveils healthcare reforms, free bus services and development plans

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Aday after taking oath, Delhi's new Health and Transport Minister Pankaj that the free bus service for women will continue under the BJP-led government and directed officials to submit a detailed report on the functioning of Mohalla Clinics.

Singh, who has been allocated the health, transport, and information technology portfolios, took oath on Wednesday along with five other cabinet ministers in the newly formed Rekha Gupta government.

"Public transport will remain free as promised. We are committed to improving facilities further," Singh said. He assured that free public transport for women will not be discontinued and said that the government plans to improve introduce new benefits in public transport.

legislator and a prominent Purvanchali face in the new government, is a dental surgeon-turned-politician. Speaking about the Mohalla Clinics, Singh said, he has asked the Health Secretary to submit a report detailing their operations, including the total

number of functional clinics,

staffing, property ownership

Singh, a 48-year-old debutant

status, and the frequency of doctor visits.

where doctors do not visit but bills are still being generated. Ashish Sood, who has been bills are still being generated. He further claimed that, according to his assessment, 30 to 40 percent of Mohalla Clinics do not even open regularly.

Addressing the shortage of the clinics, he said inspections will be conducted, and necessary actions will be taken based on the results. He assured that visible changes will take place within 100 days.

Singh also sought a comprehensive report on pending healthcare projects, which is expected by February 27 , following which further steps will be taken.

On the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme, he "We had sent the Ayushman Bharat file to the Centre. Now that it has returned, we will make all efforts to implement it by next week.

As a doctor himself, Singh stressed the importance of understanding the challenges faced by medical professionals and pledged to address their concerns. He also highlighted the government's focus on essential services like water supply and management.

"Discussions are underway to ensure Delhi residents get clean drinking water and air. People should not face shortages during summer," he The minister said that he has said, adding that significant

and Technical Education, said the AAP deliberately did not implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Delhi and denied the people of the city its benefits.

The minister said the Ayushman Bharat scheme, a key initiative of the central government, was approved in the first Cabinet meeting on Thursday. "Now, people of Delhi will also have the opportunity to avail its benefits," he said.

He informed that the Delhi government will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the central government and

full-scale ensure its implementation, the minister Delhi's Social Welfare, SC & Welfare, Elections and Cooperative

Minister Ravinder Indraj Singh said that he would prioritise the development of rural areas as a minister. Singh who got the social welfare, SC & ST welfare, cooperative and elections departments in the Delhi government said he understands the challenges

"Having lived here, I know the issues firsthand. Development will be prioritised," he said.

# also inquired about clinics where doctors do not visit but where doctors do not visit but in the next winter season. JP Nadda praises implementation Government plans key healthcare given the Home, Power, Urban Development, Education, Higher Education, Training and Technical Education

Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Friday lauded the BJP-led Delhi government's decision to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme in its first cabinet meeting, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "guarantee means every guarantee will be fulfilled".

He also accused the previous AAP government of depriving the people of the national capital from availing the benefits of Ayushman Bharat Yojana for 10 years due to its narrow politics.

Taking to X, Nadda said, "Modi's guarantee means every guarantee will be fulfilled. I congratulate the Delhi government for the decision to implement the 'Ayushman Bharat Yojana' in the first Cabinet meeting." "The AAP government, due to its narrow and selfish politics, maliciously deprived the people of Delhi of this public welfare scheme for 10 years, due to which lakhs of citizens of Delhi were deprived of good treatment in difficult circumstances." He said the BJP had pledged to implement this scheme in

its 'Sankalp Patra'. "This decision of the first cabinet is proof that under the guidance of the Prime Minister @narendramodi ji, the BJP government of Delhi is committed to realising its goal of development work in accordance with public sentiments," Nadda said in the same post.

At its maiden meeting on Thursday,



Union Minister JP Nadda File photo

the newly-formed Delhi Cabinet approved the implementation of the health insurance scheme in the capital.

The previous government had stalled the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi implemented it across the country, and now we have approved it for Delhi," Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said after the Cabinet decision. Under the scheme approved by the Cabinet, a total of ₹10 Lakh health cover will be provided to each beneficiary, with the Centre and Delhi government contributing ₹5 Lakh each.

Meanwhile, after the approval, the training for the staff who will be generating the Ayushman cards has begun as the National Health Authority along with the Delhi government is working on creating the beneficiary data base. As many as 6.54 Lakh of the poorest families in Delhi will receive health coverage up

# reforms, 'Aarogya Mandirs' in focus

**STAFF REPORTER** NEW DELHI

construction hospitals.

With the formation of the BJP government in Delhi, an action plan has been prepared to introduce key reforms in the healthcare sector, which includes digitisation of health services, setting up of 'Aarogya Mandirs', filling up various vacancies of medical superintendents and completion of under-

They said that many state-run hospitals have been facing an acute shortage of medical superintendents (MS) and medical directors (MD), with some officials managing two hospitals simultaneously, which affects the functioning of health facilities.

Addressing this issue is a priority, he said, adding that the government is expected to take steps to prevent disruptions in medical services and ensure that people continue to receive essential healthcare facilities without any hindrance.

Along with that, the Health Information Management System (HIMS) and the enforcement of the Clinical Establishments Act will also be reviewed, a health official said.

For the past year, we have been highlighting gaps in the health sector. Now that all departments have been directed to prepare a blueprint for the first 100 days of work, some key proposals are under consideration," the official added. He said that HIMS has been a long-

standing demand of the Delhi government. This system is a fundamental

requirement for management, and its implementation will significantly improve healthcare services," he said.

HIMS, which is free of cost and helps curb corruption, is a government-to-government (G2G) web-based Monitoring Information System launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in October 2008.

It aims to provide key inputs for policy formulation and programme interventions but was not approved by the AAP government.

Meanwhile, Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, enacted by the central government, mandates the registration and regulation of all clinical establishments in the country to ensure minimum standards of

facilities and services. The newly formed Delhi Cabinet approved the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in the capital during the first session of the eighth Assembly.

Following the approval of the scheme, other key measures—such as restructuring Mohalla clinics for better efficiency—may be the next steps towards building a better healthcare system in Delhi. Mohalla clinics will not be shut down, as public welfare should not be compromised.

## Atishi questions BJP's failure to deliver promised financial assistance to women

STAFF REPORTER ■ **NEW DELHI** 

AP leader and former Atishi on Friday questioned why the Delhi government did not pass a scheme to provide an honorarium of Rs 2,500 to the city's women at its

first cabinet meeting. Atishi, a former Delhi chief minister, accused the newly formed BJP government of "failing to fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of providing assistance financial women under the Mahila

Samridhi Yojana. Addressing conference, Atishi said before the Delhi elections, Modi and BJP national president JP Nadda had assured that in the very first cabinet meeting, the scheme would be approved and every woman in Delhi would receive Rs 2,500 in her bank account by March 8. "After the BJP's ministers took their oath and held a

passed. If Modi's

guarantee was real, this

scheme should have been

cabinet meeting at 7 pm on Thursday, no such scheme



Former Delhi CM Atishi along with Delhi women addresses a press conference at AAP Headquarters in New Delhi

approved yesterday. But the February 8, party supremo first decision taken by newly appointed CM Rekha Gupta was to betray that promise,

the Kalkaji MLA alleged.
Displaying posters featuring
Modi and Gupta, she asked,
"When will this amount be credited to their accounts? Was this just another election gimmick?" Both the AAP and the BJP promised monthly financial assistance to women ahead of the elections and it has been a much-discussed issue during the campaign.

A day after AAP was ousted from power in Delhi on

Arvind Kejriwal met the party's 22 newly elected MLAs at his residence. Following the meeting, Atishi said the AAP will ensure that the BJP pays Rs 2,500 per month to women by March 8 as promised by it, provides 300 units of free electricity and continues other facilities for the people. At the press conference on Friday, when asked about the new government's decision to table 14 CAG reports in the next assembly session, Atishi dismissed it "routine work.

identified as Iqbal Qureshi and Arun Lal alias Ankit, the

official added. Qureshi, the mastermind of

criminal cases, including robbery, snatching and rape while his associate, Arun Lal alias Ankit, was previously involved in a double murder case, police said. "On October 22, 2024, a gang

of seven men raided a farmhouse in Mehrauli, posing as ED officers. They seized mobile phones and confined the complainant while questioning him about large bank withdrawals.

#### of the 'Prince Tewatia' gang and has a history of over 30 STAFF REPORTER ■ **NEW DELHI**

Police arrests two fraudsters

for impersonating ED officers

Delhi Police's Crime Branch has arrested two fraudsters who allegedly impersonated Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers and tried to carry out an extortion, an official said on Friday. The accused have been

the plan, is a known member



# HC grants bail to 148 accused in arson case

STAFF REPORTER **BILASPUR** 

The Chhattisgarh High Court on Friday granted bail to 148 persons, who were jailed, for alleged arson in Balodabazar district last year.

Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas granted conditional bail to each of them furnishing a personal bond of Rs 25,000 each.

The judge also directed them to appear time-to-time before the trial court, till the disposal of the case.

They were arrested in a case linked to violence in Balodabazar town during an agitation by the Satnami community last

In June, 2024, a mob set a government office building and more than 150 vehicles

#### **Congress MLA walks out of jail**

STAFF REPORTER

Chhattisgarh Congress MLA Devendra Yadav walked out of jail on Friday and was warmly greeted by his supporters, a day after the Supreme Court granted him bail in a case linked to violence in Balodabazar city during an agitation by the Satnami community last year. Several Congress

gathered outside the Raipur Central Jail to welcome Yadav, played

drums more than six-months. on fire in Balodabazar during a protest ransacking of the 'victory pillar', leading

firecrackers as he stepped

out of the prison.

They also shouted slogans in support of the MLA from Bhilai Nagar in Durg district and waved the party's flag.

Yadav was arrested by police on August 17 last year in connection with arson that took place on June 10 in Balodabazar

> He was in jail for The bench recorded the statement of state's deputy advocate general Ravi

# No coercive action | DRG jawan injured in blast

STAFF REPORTER

 $T^{\text{he Supreme Court on}}_{\text{Friday directed the}}$  Chhattisgarh government to not take any coercive action against the former Advocate General Satish Chandra Verma, who sought an anticipatory bail for his alleged role in the Nagrik Apurti Nigam scam case.

against former AG

The matter came up before a bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi and advocate Sumeer Sodhi represented Verma before the top court.

**Former Advocate General Satish** Chandra Verma, sought an anticipatory bail for his alleged role in the

case. Sharma. Sharma submitted before the bench that Verma

February 28.

will not be arrested till

**Nagrik Apurti** 

Nigam scam



**STAFF REPORTER** 

ADistrict Reserve Guard (DRG) jawan was injured on Friday in an IED blast allegedly planted by Maoists in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh.

The incident took place

around 1.45 pm in a forested patch between Toymeta and Kawanar villages when the security personnel were out patrolling for a road security operation from Chhote Dongar area, Narayanpur Additional Superintendent of Police Robinson Guriya

# Animal rights activists hold protest | Becoming good teacher is challenge: Prof Chakrawal

called by Satnamis against the alleged

**STAFF REPORTER** 

Animal rights activists organised a demon-stration on Friday at Telibandha Lake in Raipur and stressed on the need to sterilise animals to tackle the homeless-animal crisis.

Activists of People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Vegans of Chhattisgarh dressed as animals and educated people on the theme 'ABCs: animal birth control.'

They emphasised that neutering animals helps them lead longer and healthier lives, and it was the best way to tackle the homeless-animal crisis.

They urged people to spay their pets and support



community sterilisation efforts and always adopt

from shelters. They said that lakhs of cats and dogs suffer in the streets or at shelters due to

lack of good homes.

there are more than 6.8 crore dogs and cats in India living in the streets or at

#### Symposium on Making Future Teacher at GGU, Bilaspur

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ **BILASPUR** 

Vice-Chancellor, Guru Ghasidas Central University Bilaspur, Prof Alok Kumar Chakrawal on Friday said that in today's era of commercialization education, becoming a good teacher was an immense challenge.

He was addressing a symposium on "Shaping Teachers' Education Programs: Making the Future Teacher," organized jointly by the University's Department of Education and the Indian Association of Teachers Educators (IATE).

The three-day long symposium would culminate

NTPC's 'Electron Quiz 2025' on Feb 24



Prof Chakrawal, emphasised that the pursuit of profit has often overshadowed

human values and ethics, and

that a truly excellent teacher

must be endowed with sensitivity and a strong sense of moral principles. The Chief Guest, Prof.

Sanjeev Sonawane, Vice-Chancellor of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik, remarked that teachers are going to play a pivotal role in building India a developed nation by He stressed that teachers

should impart to students both value-based and skillbased learning. IATE President, Prof. M. Mian added that along with being knowledgeable, teachers must also possess a keen sense of responsibility and remain honest and ethically sound, avoiding negativity.

# **Congress claims lead in** panchayat election results

89 seats in district panchayats,

for panchayat election,

Saurabh Singh, also

claimed a landslide victory for his party in the

results of the two phases

of the panchayat

**BJP claims clear majority** 



Congress Spokesperson Sushil Anand Shukla claimed on Friday that the party-backed candidates had performed better than the BJP's in the second phase of panchayat elections as well.

He made the claims while addressing media persons at

the party office here. He claimed that Congress-

and 2,780 posts of Sarpanch. The polling was held for 138 district panchayat posts,

899 janpad member posts, and 3774 sarpanch posts in the second phase on February

548 janpad member seats,

"The mandate is against the one year of BJP rule. The ruralites have completely rejected BJP", he claimed.

In these three phases,

1.60 lakh panchs are to be

elected, and the BJP

candidates are winning in

more than two-third of

posts, he claimed.

**STAFF REPORTER** 

The National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) will hold a regional round of its 'Electron Quiz 2025' in Raipur on February 24 as part of the celebrations to

mark its 50th year. Interested engineering

and management students can register at the email: wr2electronquiz@ntpc.co.i n. The quiz aims to nurture the students' thinking and problem-

solving skills. The winning teams will get cash prizes of Rs 30,000, Rs 20,000, and Rs

10,000 as per rank. The top two teams

The quiz aims to nurture the students' thinking and problemsolving skills. The top two teams from each region will be elevated to three national semifinals.

from each region will be semifinals.

elevated to three national

### Rajnandgaon's 573 villages now leprosy-free



**STAFF REPORTER** RAJNANDGAON

Authorities in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon said on Friday that leprosy has been eradicated from 573 villages of the district.

They have achieved 85 percent of the leprosy eradication target.

They said this while briefing Dr. Pradipta Kumar Nayak, a special monitor of the National Human Rights Commission, about the work

being done under the National Eradication Leprosy Programme.

Nayak praised their progress and said that leprosy will be eradicated by removing its misconceptions from

"There is a need to bring special awareness about

leprosy," he said. He emphasised public participation to eradicate the disease. He also praised the Asha Nagar colony established for leprosy patients.

### Akbar backs PCC Chief



RAIPUR

 $F_{\text{senior Congress leader}}^{\text{ormer minister and}}$ Mohammad Akbar said on Friday that it was inappropriate to question the leadership of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) amid party's worst performance in urban bodies polls.

Akbar extended his support to under-fire PCC Chief Deepak Baij amid growing demand of his resignation by party workers including former MLA Kuldeep Juneja.

Juneja had reportedly

## **Former** Juneja had reportedly sought a change in party **leadership** in the state in a direct attack on Baij.

sought a change in party leadership in the state in a direct attack on Baij.

# Bank officers, employees threaten strike

Venue: Maharaja Agrasen International College, Raipur



**STAFF REPORTER** 

The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), association employees and officers in

the banking industry, on

Friday warned nationwide bank strike on

They staged their second protest in succession in front of Punjab National Bank Main Branch, Moti Bagh here in support of their fivepoint charter of demand. Earlier they had protested on February 14.

Their demands include adequate recruitment in banks, implementation of a five-day banking week, resolution of pending issues,

stopping the outsourcing of jobs, fulfillment of other UFBU demands.

The gathering was addressed by UFBU leaders including Y. Gopal Krishna, Shirish Nalgondwar, Suresh Bani, Baljit Singh and others.

#### कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, बिलासपुर मंडल, बिलासपुर ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट निविदा सूचना

Portal: http://eproc.cstate.gov.in

छत्तीसगढ़ शारान, लोक निर्माण विभाग, बिलासपुर मण्डल, बिलासपुर में| निम्नलिखित कार्य नवीन ई–पंजीयन में पंजीकृत ठेकेदार हेतू दिनांक 03.03.2025 तक निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है-

क्र.	नि.आ.सू. / दिनांक	कार्य का नाम	लागत (लाख मे)
1	364	बिलासा देवी कंवट एयरपोर्ट में DVOR Installation कार्य। द्वितीय आमंत्रण। संभाग क्र. 1. बिलासपुर।	150.86
2	365	बिलासा देवी केंवट एयरपोर्ट में Appron Extension कार्य। द्वितीय आमंत्रण। संभाग क्र. 1, बिलासपुर।	189.18

निविदा में भाग लेने की प्रक्रिया एवं निविदा के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी विभाग के उपरोक्त वेबसाईट में देखें जा सकते है।

G-242505519/4

अधीक्षण अभियंता लों.नि.वि. बिलासपुर मण्डल बिलासपुर

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# **PM** pitches for world-class leaders in every field

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday pitched for world-class leaders in every field who can find solutions to global complexities and needs while prioritising the interests of India

Addressing the School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL) conclave here, Modi said an institute like this can be a game-changer at a time when India needs energetic leaders in every field, be it bureaucracy, policy-making or business, who have a global approach but a mindset rooted in local per-

He called for leaders in different fields who have "global thinking and local upbringing", saying what is needed is a leadership that reflects India's vision in every field when the country is emerging as a "global powerhouse"

The country's speed and momentum need to be replicated in every field, Modi said, adding that institutes like the SOUL are not only a choice but

a necessity. "There is a need for energetic leaders in every sector who can find solutions to global complexities and needs while prioritising the nation's interests on the global stage," he said.

These leaders should have a global approach but retain a local mindset, and should be ready for strategic decisionmaking, crisis management and futuristic thinking, the prime minister said.

The future leadership, he said, will not be limited to power, an apparent reference to the political arena, adding that leadership roles will require capabilities in innovation and impact. Modi said such leaders, who understand international dynamics, are required for the country to compete in international markets and global

He emphasised the need for

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

ADelhi court on Friday reserved for February 25

its order on whether or not to

take cognisance of a

chargesheet filed in the land-

for-jobs case involving former

and others. Special judge

Vishal Gogne, who was sched

uled to decide it on Friday,

adjourned the matter on

February 25 after hearing CBI's

clarifications on certain points.

The CBI said three separate

final reports (chargesheets) in

the matter required only one

trial given the entirety of the

As the allegations in the three

chargesheets involved the same

foundational conspiracy and

named a number of common

accused and witnesses, the

second and third chargesheets

were in the nature of supple-

mentary chargesheets, the

agency said.
The submissions came in

response to a query posed by

the court on whether the case

would require separate trials. The judge recorded the sub-

mission and posted the matter

for February 25 for orders on

cognisance and further pro-

The CBI had informed the

judge that it had received req-

uisite sanctions from the

authorities concerned to pros-

ecute public servant RK

ceedings

allegations reflected in it.

in 2022 case against Lalu



edition of the SOUL Leadership conclave in New Delhi on Friday

preparing the leadership for emerging sectors, such as deeptech, space, biotech and renewable energy, besides conventional sectors like sports, agriculture, manufacturing and

"India must not only aspire for excellence in all sectors but also achieve it. India needs leaders who can develop new institu-tions of global excellence," the prime minister said. He noted that India's history is filled with glorious stories of such institutions and emphasised the need to revive that spirit.

Modi underscored the importance of building human resources and said the development of better citizens is necessary for nation-building when everyone is working for the making of a "Viksit Bharat". In this context, he cited the example of Gujarat, noting that questions were raised about its future as a separate state due to its lack of natural

However, the state is doing very well today due to its leaders, Modi said, adding that it has no diamond mine but nine out of 10 diamonds in the world pass through the hands of a Gujarati. He said a new and spacious campus of the SOUL would be ready, close to Gujarat's GIFT City, in the

if the sanction against Mahajan

was not processed by January

30, the "competent authority shall furnish" an explanation

by the next date of hearing. The CBI on November 26,

2024 filed before the court req-

uisite sanctions obtained from

authorities concerned to pros-

ecute 30 accused persons in the

case, while submitting that

sanctions regarding the pros-

ecution of Mahajan were still

The case relates to Group-D

appointments made in the

West Central Zone of Railways

based in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, during Prasad's

tenure as the railway minister

between 2004 and 2009 in

return for land parcels gifted or

transferred by the recruits in

the name of the RJD supremo's

family or associates, according

The agency registered the case

on May 18, 2022, against

Prasad and others, including

his wife, 2 daughters, uniden-

tified public officials and pri-

awaited.

to officials.

The SOUL is an upcoming leadership institution in Gujarat to enable "authentic leaders to advance public good", according to an official statement.

Modi said India should have leaders in different sectors who can spearhead innovation and channelise skills. He expressed confidence that the SOUL will develop critical thinking, risktaking and solution-driven mindsets and produce leaders who are prepared to work amidst disruptive changes. They should not just follow trends but set those, he added. As India grooms new leader-ship in sectors ranging from diplomacy to tech innovation, the influence and impact of the country will multiply across various sectors, the prime minister said, adding that the nation's entire vision and future depend on producing a generation of strong leadership.

When we move forward with a common goal and collective efforts, the results are extraordinary," he said.

Modi said the Indian society is being shaped by those born in the 21st century and a decade prior to it, asserting that they will be the "Amrit Peedhi" as the country embarks on the path of development.

## Shah to chair Western Zonal Council meeting in Pune

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Home Minister Amit Shah will chair on Saturday the 27th meeting of the Western Zonal Council in Pune, which will provide a platform for resolving disputes and issues between the Centre and States in the region.

The Western Zonal Council comprises the states of Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

The zonal councils hold discussions on a wide range of issues, including speedy investigation of cases of sexual offence/rape against women and children and implementation of Fast Track Special Courts for expeditious disposal of such cases.

Facilitation of banks/India Post Payment Bank branches within 5 km in each village, implementation of Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112), issues relating to infrastructure, mining, environment and forests, food security parameters and other subjects of common interest at the regional level are other issues discussed at the meetings.

The Maharashtra government is hosting the meeting which is being organised by the Inter State Council Secretariat under the Ministry of Home Affairs, in collaboration with the state government.

The meeting is expected be attended by the chief ministers of the member states and the administrator of the Union Territories, along with two senior ministers from each state, the statement said.



Amit Shah interacts with students of rural and tribal community who came from Santokba Dholakia Vidya Mandir located in Dang district of Gujarat in New Delhi PTI

Chief secretaries, advisors and other senior officers of the state governments and union territories and Union Home Secretary, secretary, Inter State Council and other senior officers of the Central government will also participate in

the meeting. Five zonal councils were established in 1957. The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of these five councils, while the chief ministers of the states included in the respective zonal council and

between the several States in the region. Many issues of national importance are also discussed in each meeting of the zonal councils. These include power operations, urban master plan, eliminating malnutrition among children through POSHAN

union territories are its

Zonal councils provide an

excellent platform for resolving

disputes and issues between the

Centre and the States and

Abhiyan, discussion on reducing the dropout rate of school children, participation of gov-ernment hospitals in Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, strengthening Primary Agricultural Credit Societies and other issues of common interest, the statement said.

# Verifying individuals are Indian nationals in Panama: MEA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{ ext{he external affairs on Friday}}_{ ext{said it has seen some}}$ reports about deportation flights to Panama and New Delhi is "verifying the details" as to whether the individuals concerned are Indian nationals

"Once that verification details are complete, then arrangements will be made for the return of these Indian nationals back home," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters here in response to a query during his weekly briefing.

On a query on any steps taken to curb illegal immigration, he said, "We are committed to fight it tooth and nail.'

Many reporters asked him if Panamian authorities had approached India on this issue. We have seen some reports about deportation flights to Panama and Costa Rica. Now it is our understanding that these have been undertaken as per a bridge arrangement between the US and the respective governments. Both Costa Rica and Panama have agreed



International Airport in Maiguetia in Venezuela

to serve as transit countries for deportees while the US bears all the costs of the operation," Jaiswal said.

These deportees have been kept in a hotel, he said.

"There could be some Indian nationals we understand... And our mission in Panama, which also accredited to Costa Rica, they are in touch with the local authorities," the MEA spokesperson said. In case of Panama, India is

"verifying the details whether the individuals concerned are

"Once that verification details are complete, then arrangements will be made for the return of these Indian nationals back home," he said.

In case of Costa Rica, "while we have heard that some people have been sent from the United States, we have heard this through media. Officially, we have yet to hear from the Costa

Jaiswal in response to another query said, "yes, we are in talks with the Panama govern-

'Our embassy there is in regular touch. They have had consular access. In fact, there was an issue that, you know, some of them were having some difficulty there. That may have been case with people from other nationalities, not with people who are, who supposedly are of Indian nationality," he said.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the US, a joint statement was issued conveying the commitment of both countries to com-

This matter has been discussed here in India at the highest level and this matter was discussed in Washington as well, Jaiswal

"If you read the joint statement, there is expansive language on illegal immigration conveying the commitment of both countries to combat it. Prime Minister, in his statement in Washington, also made it very clear that human trafficking needs to be fought by India, United States and all countries who have a stake in it because we need to fight it tooth and

#### Yasin Malik to virtually appear in Jammu court from Tihar on March 7: SC



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed jailed JKLF chief Yasin Malik to appear in a Jammu court from Tiĥar Jail through video-conferencing on March 7. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan noted that the Jammu sessions court was "wellequipped" with the video-conferencing system enabling the virtual examination.

The CBI sought the transfer of the trials in the 1989 case of the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of former union minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, and the 1990 Srinagar shootout case, from Jammu to New

During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, informed the court that as per the report filed by the registrar general of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, the video-conferencing system was working properly in the Jammu court.

accused were working in tandem to delay the trial while pointing out that Malik refused to engage a lawyer and others were opposing the

hearing two cases against Malik

and others. The top court on December 18,

in which four Indian Air

transfer of trial. The top court previously directed the registrar general of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to ensure proper videoconferencing facilities at the Jammu special court while

last year, gave six accused two weeks to respond to the CBI's plea to transfer the trial of the cases. The plea is over the two cases

Force personnel were killed on January 25, 1990 in Srinagar and the abduction which took place on December 8, 1989. Malik, chief of the proscribed JKLF, is facing trial in both cases. The top court was hearing a CBI plea against the September 20, 2022 order of a Jammu trial court directing Malik, serving a life term in Tihar jail, to be produced before it physically to cross-examine prosecution witnesses in the abduction case.

# Delhi court reserves order AI to be used for improving agriculture sector: Dhankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday said disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) should be used for improving asserted that the rural population represents both opportunities and responsibilities. Speaking at the inaugural ses-

sion of 21st General Session of African Asian Rural Development (AARDO) Conference, the vice president also stressed using technology to alleviate suffering.

Speaking at the event, Dhankar said the rural regions nurture 3.6 billion lives, including 894 million rural Indians, "representing both our opportunity and responsibility.

"A challenge to our intellect is in form of emergence of disruptive technology. Artificial intelligence, machine learning...No less than industrial revolution," he said.

They offer daunting challenges but also bring a basket of opportunities, only if we learn to unleash them," he said. Dhankhar said these technologies should be used for improving the farm sector and rural areas.

"If we can unleash these disruptive technologies for greater good of rural India and farm sector, and of the entire world, humanity will be a safer place,' the vice president said.



Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar addresses inaugural session of the 21st AARDO Conference in New Delhi

"India has taken some flagship initiatives and one initiative is digital India," he added. He stressed on using technol-

ogy to mitigate suffering, reducing corruption, and generating accountability.

Stating that India has the target to become a developed nation by 2047, Dhankhar said there was a time when India had to deposit its gold with banks in Switzerland to sustain fiscal credibility. "By then the foreign exchange

reserve was only 11 billion US dollar, if it can be compared to the present situation the volume has gone to seven hundred billion US dollar," he said. He said India is an example for

the rest of the world that what could be the impacts of good initiatives in the field of rural development and empower-

ment of people. Dhankhar also talked about the significance of the role of women in governance and said India has constitutionally structured participation of women at village and municipal levels. "Gender participation in governance is fundamental to bring about equality and to cut into inequities. India perhaps the only country in the world that has constitutionally structured participation of women in governance," he said.

He said that in village and municipal bodies, one third seats have been reserved for women. AARDO, one of the earliest examples of South-South and Triangular cooperation in the fields of agriculture and rural development in the African-Asian region, was established in 1962. It is an autonomous inter-governmental/multilateral organisation, comprising 32 countries of Africa and Asia as full members and three associate members. It has been given the status of an international organisation by the Government of India, at par with other UN organisa-

### India, Bangladesh to launch new 'hotline' tive communication after the

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

India and Bangladesh have decided to establish a new communication link between the deputy commanders of their respective border-guarderecting a fence along their shared border.

The decisions were finalised during the biannual director general-level talks between the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) that concluded here on Thursday, sources in the security establishment told PTI.

This was the first time that a high-level meeting between the two forces took place after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh on August 5 last vear.

The three-day talks, held from February 18 to February 20, went off in a "cordial manner", with the Indian side able to "convince" its neighbour about the importance of fencing on the remaining areas of the 4,096-km-long frontier that spans across five Indian states on the eastern flank, the sources said.

A total of 864.48 km of the front remains unfenced, including 174.51 km of "non-feasible" gap, according to official data.

The two sides have decided to open a new "hotline" for effec-

latest round of DG-level talks. This link will be between the additional director general (ADG) of the BSF eastern command based in Kolkata and his BGB counterpart posted at the force's heading forces and identified quarters in Dhaka, the

> It was felt "necessary and important" to enhance the engagement between the two sides and hence, this new platform for commanders' interaction has been agreed upon and included in the official records for the first time, they added. Currently, "hotlines" or links

> of communication exist between the two force chiefs and officers in the ranks of inspector general (regional commander for the BGB), deputy inspector general (sector commander for the BGB) and other field-level officers. These communication lines are used to convey real-time information and intelligence so that issues related to the front and instances of crossborder crimes can be checked promptly.

> The BSF delegation, headed by its Director General Daljit Singh Chawdhary, also asked the BGB to take "stringent and effective" steps to ensure that Bangladeshi miscreants and criminals are not able to "breach" their security layer and cross the border to attack BSF personnel and Indian

### On January 16, the judge said Keep away from attempts to create divisions on basis of language: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said there has never been any animosity among Indian languages and each has enriched the other, giving a fitting reply to attempts to discriminate on the basis of linguistics.

Addressing the inaugural function of the 98th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan here, Modi hailed Marathi as a complete language reflecting the elements of bravery and courage, beauty, sensitivity and equality. "There has never been any ani-

mosity among Indian languages. Languages have always influenced and enriched each other," Modi said.

He said often, when efforts were made to create divisions based on languages, India's shared linguistic heritage gave a fitting reply.

"It is our social responsibility to distance ourselves from these misconceptions and embrace and enrich all languages," the prime minister

His remarks came on a day when Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin reiterated his remarks that the implementation of the National

Education Policy (NEP) is an attempt to impose a three-language formula throughout the

country Modi said India is one of the oldest living civilisations in the world because it has constantly evolved and embraced new ideas and welcomed new changes

The fact that India has the world's largest linguistic diversity is a proof of this. This linguistic diversity is also the most fundamental basis of our unity," Modi said. NCP-SP chief Sharad Pawar,

Maharashtra Chief Minister

Devendra Fadnavis, littera-

teur Tara Bhawalkar, the pres-



ident of the 98th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sammelan, were present at the inaugural function, among others. The three-day Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan'is

being held in the national capital after a gap of 71 years and a year after Marathi was granted the classical language

Modi said the event is being held in Delhi in the 350th year of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the centenary celebrations of the RSS.

'We take pride in the fact that in the great land of Maharashtra, a remarkable Marathi-speaking individual

100 years ago. Today, we celebrate its centenary. The organisation has grown and flourished like a banyan tree," he said. "For the last 100 years, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has been running a Sanskar

Yagya to take India's great tra-

dition and culture to the new

planted the seeds of the

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

generation," Modi said. He said the RSS has inspired lakhs of people like himself to live for the country and it is because of the Sangh that he got the privilege of connecting with the Marathi language and Marathi traditions

Assam Assembly

uproar over MP attack

# Mahakumbh 2025 to end with a cosmic spectacle

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** 

As the Mahakumbh enters its final week before concluding on February 26, skywatchers and spiritual seekers alike are in for a rare celestial treat. All seven planets of the solar system-Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, will be visible in the night sky from India, creating a once-in-alifetime astronomical spectacle. The phenomenon, which began in January with the visibility of Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, will reach its climax in February as Mercury joins the formation. The alignment will peak on February 28, when all seven planets gather on one side of the Sun, forming a breathtaking planetary parade. Astronomers explain that while the term 'planetary alignment' lacks a strict scientific definition, it generally refers to multiple planets appearing along the ecliptic-the Sun's apparent path across the sky. "These celestial bodies will align along the ecliptic since their orbits lie nearly within the same plane," said Dr Rajeev Sharma, an astrophysicist.

Spiritual and astronomical significance

This rare planetary display is



Devotees offer paryers after taking a holy dip during the ongoing Mahakumbh Mela at Sangam in Prayagraj

Mahakumbh celebrations. Many devotees believe that such cosmic occurrences amplify spiritual energy and divine consciousness. The coming together of all seven planets is not just an astro-

adding spiritual depth to the nomical event; it is a moment of immense spiritual significance. The energies of the cosmos are believed to influence human consciousness, making this Kumbh Mela even more powerful," said S N Jha, lecturer in

Department of Astrology in Lucknow University. The best time to witness this alignment is during twilight-

jail premises, allowing inmates to bathe in the consecrated water.

A similar arrangement was made at the District Jail of

Prayagraj, which houses over 1,300 prisoners. Senior Superintendent Amita Dubey

confirmed that more than 1,000

just after sunset or before sunrisewhen the planets are positioned higher in the sky. Five planets-Astronomers predict that a similar planetary alignment will

Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn-can be seen with the naked eve, while Uranus and Neptune require binoculars or a telescope due to their dimness.

occur in mid-August 2025, when six planets will be visible in the morning sky. While Uranus and Neptune

remain challenging to spot with-out optical aid, ideal viewing con-ditions and equipment will help locate them.

The Mahakumbh Mela, held every 12 years in Prayagraj and every four years in Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik, is deeply connected to celestial movements. The festival's timing is determined by the orbit of Jupiter, which plays a crucial role in Vedic astrology and Hindu traditions. Millions of devotees gather to bathe in the holy rivers, believ-ing that this sacred ritual cleanses sins and leads to spiritual lib-

"With Jupiter governing the cycle of Kumbh Mela, the presence of a rare planetary alignment this year feels like a cosmic blessing," said Pandit Arun Mishra, a Kumbh scholar.

PNS GUWAHATI

adjournments.

scenes over the attack on Congress MP Rakibul Hussain in

Nagaon district, leading to two

The opposition Congress, which

created noisy scenes in the House demanding adjournment of pro-

Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia raised the demand for

adjournment motion as soon as the House assembled at 9.30 am.

He maintained that Chief

Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

did not condemn the assault on

Hussain in his reply on the mat-

ter in the assembly. Hussain, the Dhubri MP, his son Tanzil and his

personal security officers (PSOs) were attacked by unidentified

persons at Rupohihat in Nagaon

The Congress MP was on his way

to attend a meeting of party

workers at Gunomari village on

a two-wheeler when he was

attacked with cricket bats by a

group of people, who had their faces covered with black cloth,

and were shouting slogans against

The DGP later said that the MP

and Tanzil were unhurt, but the

two PSOs suffered minor injuries

and were undergoing treatment.

Speaker Daimary said the

adjournment motion cannot be

allowed, as discussion on the

finance bill was scheduled for the

day.Information and Public

Relations Minister Pijush

Hazarika, responding in absence

of the CM and the Parliamentary

Affairs Minister in the House to

district on Thursday.

the MP, police said.

"It reinforces the belief that celestial events influence human spirituality and destiny.

As devotees continue their pilgrimage to the sacred ghats, the eavens will offer a dazzling reminder of the universe's grand design-making Mahakumbh 2025 a truly extraordinary confluence of faith and science.

#### ment inaction, said the attackers have been identified and action The Assam Assembly on is being initiated. Unsatisfied with Friday witnessed uproarious the response, the Congress legislators stormed into the well of the House and created noisy scenes. The BJP legislators present in the assembly claimed that attacks on the party's leaders took place during the Congress regime, but no action was taken. ceedings to discuss the issue, relented after the government assured of a thorough probe into the attack. As the ruckus continued, the Speaker adjourned the House for 10 minutes. Soon after it reassembled, Congress legislators once again stormed into the well and demanded discussion on the

Daimary then adjourned proceedings for another five minutes. When the House met after the second adjournment, LoP Saikia demanded a statement from the state government that the culprits will be caught and such incidents

will not recur. "We want a message to go from here that democracy will be protected. We want to know whether all culprits have been identified. whether the DGP or other top officials have visited the site, and why no additional security deployment was made for the MP's meeting," Saikia said.

He also submitted records of chat messages purportedly pointing to security lapse on part of the officer in-charge of Rupohihat police station, and demanded disciplinary action against him.

Responding to this, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said, "The CM has mentioned about the attack during his reply to the motion of thanks on the governor's speech yesterday. Our government never supports such incidents and the CM, who is out of state today, will not allow its

# UP supplies prisons with Sangam water



**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** 

s the Mahakumbh 2025 Awitnessed a record-breaking turnout with 59 Crore devotees taking a holy dip at the Sangam, the Yogi Adityanath government extended the sacred experience to prisoners across Uttar Pradesh

In an unprecedented initiative, inmates from all 62 jails in the state were given the opportunity to partake in a symbolic holy dip within their respective jail

To facilitate this, large water tanks were constructed inside the jails, where sanctified water from the Triveni Sangam was transported and poured, enabling prisoners to immerse themselves in its spiritual significance. The initiative was aimed at

ensuring that inmates, despite

their confinement, could experience religious purification and virtue.At Central Naini Jail in Prayagraj, where over 1,700 inmates are currently lodged, more than 1,400 prisoners participated in the ritual

Senior Jail Superintendent Rang Bahadur Patel stated that the holy water was brought from the Triveni in urns, ritually worshipped, and then poured into a specially built pond within the

inmates took part in the sacred bath following religious cere-monies to sanctify the water brought from the Mahakumbh at Sangam. Many prisoners expressed their profound gratitude, stating they never imagined they would be able to take part in the revered ritual while serving their sentences. The Yogi government's

initiative ensured that even those behind bars did not miss this spiritual opportunity, which occurs once in 144 years. Given the security and logistical challenges of physically taking inmates to the Triveni, the gov ernment orchestrated the sacred

bath within jail premises. As prisoners immersed themselves in the blessed water, the jail reverberated with chants of 'Har Har Gange,' reflecting their deep emotional and spiritual

### Punjab police busts foreignbacked target killing module

**PNS** ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab police on Friday said they have busted a target killing module and apprehended two operatives of a foreignbased gangster from Patiala. Those arrested have been identified as Malkit Singh alias Max, a native of Rodala village in Ajnala, Amritsar, who is currently residing in Sempali village in Fatehgarh Sahib, and Sandeep Singh alias Deep, a resident of Sirhind in

Fatehgarh Sahib. 'Acting swiftly on intelligence inputs, Patiala Police busted a target killing module and apprehended two operatives of the foreign-based gangster Goldy Dhillon from Rajpura, Patiala. Both accused were tasked with carrying out target killings in Mohali and Rajpura on the directions of gangster Goldy Dhillon," Punjab's Director General of Police, Gaurav Yadav, posted on X. "Their arrest has also led to the solving of two previous cases related to target killings in Mohali and Rajpura," he

Police teams have also recovered five pistols, including three .32 caliber, one .30 caliber, and one .315 caliber country-made pistol, along with 15 cartridges and 1,300 intoxicant tablets from their possession. Additionally, their blackcoloured scooter has been impounded, the statement

Both arrested individuals have a history of criminal activities, with multiple cases registered against them under the Drugs Narcotic Psychotropic Substances Act, Arms Act, attempt to murder, extortion, dacoity, snatching, and other charges, the DGP said.

Further investigations are underway to establish backward and forward linkages in this case. More arrests and recoveries are

likely in the coming days, he

### Saikia's allegation of govern-Mamata clarifies her 'Mrityu Kumbh' remarks | Hathras stampede: Judicial inquiry clears Bhole Baba

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** LUCKNOW

The judicial commission I investigating the tragic stampede at a religious gathering in Hathras has given a clean chit to Bhole Baba, also known as Narayan Sakar, according to the sources. The commission submitted its report to the Uttar Pradesh government, which discussed it in a cabinet meeting ahead of the state budget presentation.

While the report confirms that the police investigation was conducted properly, it remains inconclusive on whether any conspiracy was involved. The government has approved a proposal to table the report in the legislature, but it has not yet publicly disclosed its key findings. The incident occurred on July 2 in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh,

during a religious congregation attended by tens of thousands of devotees.

According to eyewitnesses, as Bhole Baba concluded his sermon and began leaving, a sudden rush ensued.

Many followers tried to move closer to him, hoping for his blessings. In the overcrowded space, people began pushing and shoving, leading to panic. Authorities reported that the venue lacked adequate emergency exits, and many attendees were unable to escape in time. While some blame poor crowd management, others argue that the organisers did not anticipate the sheer number of devotees who would attend the event.

The judicial inquiry commission, set up to investigate the tragedy, has made several key recommendations to prevent

similar incidents in the future. The report suggests enforcing strict crowd management protocols, including a cap on the number of attendees at religious events and mandatory security drills before such gatherings. It recommends that all large public events be required to have designated emergency

exits, medical teams, and police presence. It also proposes stricter licensing rules for religious congregations and large public gatherings to ensure better account-

ability of event organisers. Grieving families of the victims have expressed frustration over the report's findings, saying justice remains elusive. Anita Devi, whose 65-year-old mother was among the deceased, said her mother was a devout follower of Bhole Baba and never missed his satsangs.

ment presents an opportunity for

course correction, but whether he

can succeed where his predeces-

sors have struggled remains to be

The party needs a stable and deci-

sive leadership that prioritises

organisational strength over factional battles. As the 2028 assem-

bly elections loom on the hori-

zon, the Madhya Pradesh

Congress must introspect and

realign its strategies if it hopes to

mount a serious challenge against

#### Muslims voluntarily remove 168-year-old Mosque in Meerut BISWAJEET BANERJEE

In a significant development, the management of a 168vear-old mosque in Meerut has begun dismantling the structure to make way for the city's Metro and Rapid Rail Corridor projects. The mosque, located outside Jagdish Mandap on Sharda Road, had been identified as an obstruction to the infrastructure expansion plans. For the first time, Friday prayers

were not held at the mosque, as its gate had already been removed and the electricity connection cut. The decision to voluntarily remove the mosque came after extensive discussions between the administration and the mosque management. On Thursday night, Additional District Magistrate (ADM) City Brijesh Kumar Singh, accompanied by officials from the National Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■

viding bank accounts for

cybercriminals, police said.

Priyanshu Diwan, Assistant

Commissioner of Police

(cybercrime), said that the

arrested accused has been

identified as Avinash Sharma

and Aditya Chaturvedi both

According to the police, a

man filed a complaint at the

Cyber Crime Police Station

resident of Delhi.

Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), met with the mosque's Imam and management committee. The officials explained the necessity of clearing the structure to facilitate rapid construction work, urging a resolution through mutual agreement. Following the discussions, the mosque management agreed to begin dismantling the structure on Friday. Haji Swale Heen, a representative of the mosque committee, stated, "We received a notice regarding the mosque. The Mutawalli (caretaker) is unwell, but we were informed that the mosque would need to be removed, either voluntarily or through administrative action. We decided to dismantle it ourselves.

He also emphasised that the mosque had historical significance, dating back to 1857, and urged the administration to provide an alternative site for reconstruction.

Gurugram police nabs bank staff for aiding cybercriminals

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Days after raking up controversy with her 'Mrityu Kumbh' (deadly Kumbh) remarks, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has done a volte face, saying her love for her own religion was beyond question, and that religion is a personal affair, while festival belongs to

Even as the BJP upped its decibel level demanding an apology from the Chief Minister for making an "uncouth remark' against a Santani festival Banerjee on Thursday said, "Who said I do not respect my religion? Remember, religion belongs to an individual, but festivals are for all." In an apparent bid to control the damage she had earlier reminded that she was a daughter of a Hindu Brahmin family and that she performed Pujas and Paath three times a day. "But that is my personal affair and why should I make it public. I have respect and regard for my religion and all religions and cultures equally," she said. Banerjee capped her Thursday comments with another one on Friday saying her Government was working tirelessly for the development of Bengali as a language.

"It is my Government that has supplied tomes of research papers to the Central government to help categorise Bengali as a classical language. Out tireless efforts have made it possible to prove that Bengali has a more than a thousand years of history. It is the fifth largest spoken language in the world and perhaps the second largest spoken one in Asia." She was speaking at an International Mother Language Day.

In what critics called a balancing act "for the mess she created on Tuesday by antagonising the Hindu electorate the Chief Minister made use of the Bengali sentiment to offset the damage. She said, "my love for my Bengali language, and its richness can never be taken away, it is for this we realise the sentiment behind

a mother language and so we have recognised all the languages from Gorkhali to Kurmali to Hindi to Alchiki.'

Banerjee drew criticism after she criticised the BIP Governments both in the Centre and Uttar Pradesh for making Mahakumbh a money spinning event by heavily publicising with out making adequate arrangements to handle the massive turnout. Banerjee had on Tuesday during her speech in the State Assembly termed the mega event at Prayagraj "Mrityu Kumbh" saying "I too have regards for the event, but I cannot support this mismanagement where you publicise an event and call in crores of people and then mismanage the entire affair leading to so many deaths, and hiding dead bodies. This has turned into Mrityu Kumbh. Using religion for politics is the worst thing you can do."

Her remarks immediately triggered a countrywide outburst.

# Harish Choudhary is new in-charge of MP Congress unit

GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

¬he Madhya Pradesh Congress finds itself at yet another critical juncture with the of Harish appointment Choudhary as the new in-charge of the state unit. Choudhary, who officially assumed office at the PCC headquarters on Thursday becomes the sixth leader to hold this position in just five years. This rapid turnover at the helm signals a deeper malaise within the state unit of the Congress party, highlighting the ongoing

instability and factionalism that have plagued its ranks. Among Choudhary's predecessors, Deepak Babaria stands out for having the longest tenure, spanning two years. During his time, Babaria was

instrumental in uniting the frag-

mented leadership and introduc-

ing significant structural reforms

such as the Mandal sectors with-

in reinvigorating the Congress in Madhya Pradesh, culminating in the party's victory in the 2018 assembly elections under the leadership of Kamal Nath. However, the subsequent years

> months, further exacerbating After Babaria, the Congress leaders who remained in charge of

Madhya Pradesh unit of Congress were- Mukul Wasnik, JP Agarwal, Randeep Singh Surjewala and Bhanwar Jitendra The recent departure of AICC

stance, was believed to have actively sought Singh's replacement.

larger issue of factionalism withorganisational framework.

to project a unified front with Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Umang Singhar, their underlying differences remain an open secret in political circles.

The discord within the leadership ranks is no longer just an internal matter but has become a talking point in Madhya Pradesh's

eating away at the Congress's prospects in the state, vowing to eliminate such divisions. However, his own conflicts with Singhar and other senior leaders contradict this call for unity, raising questions about the fea-

The fissures within the Congress were further underscored during Harish Choudhary's formal induction at the PCC headquar-

sibility of his mission.

Addressing the party workers on the occasion, Patwari's remark that leaders who attain positions within the party begin to behave as though they own it was a thinly veiled critique of the prevailing culture of entitlement and power struggles.

His statement underscores the deep-rooted leadership crisis within the party, where personal ambitions often supersede collective goals.

For the Congress to regain its lost ground in Madhya Pradesh, addressing these internal conflicts is imperative.

the ruling dispensation. Madhya Pradesh BJP spokesper son Narendra Saluja, who joined Congress a couple of years ago, The absence of senior Congress leaders Kamal Nath, Digvijay Singh, and Arun Yadav from the induction programme suggests they did not take Choudhary's appointment seriously, he added.

East in November 2024, that he was duped of ₹4.97 Crore in the name of investing in the stock market. During the probe, the police of the said police station arrested the suspects from different parts of Delhi for the

alleged involvement in the ing in the stock market, reduc-crime from Delhi on ing electricity bills, in the Wednesday. During interrogation, the team from the cyber cell Aof the Gurugram police has arrested two accused including a bank official of a private bank for allegedly pro-

accused disclosed that Aditya Chaturvedi was currently working as business development manager at gujranwala town-2 of Idsusand bank in Delhi since 2023. "The bank account used in the

fraud was opened by Aditya Chaturvedi and sell it to Avinash in ₹25,000 to commit fraud. Chaturvedi took ₹10,000 to open saving account and ₹50,000 for current account," Sandeep Kumar, a spokesperson of the Gurugram police said.

Senior police officers of the Gurugram claimed that the police are closely working with other agencies and organisations to counter these frauds. "The cyber fraudsters commit fraud by luring people with good profits, invest-

name of buying or selling cheap goods online, sextortion through video calls on WhatsApp, morphing, sending links through various means, posing as a customs

officer or police officer in the name of implicating false case, in the name of issuing a No-Objection Certificate, digitally arresting people by showing the fear of implicating them in a criminal case, etc, Priyanshu Diwan, ACP (cybercrime), said. 'We appealed to the public to

ing electricity bills, in the

steer clear of such dubious callers and advised caution in sharing personal details to strangers stalking them online," he added.

"So far the Gurugram police have arrested 27 bank officials from different banks till now who were allegedly involved in cyber fraud," Diwan added.

in the party. His efforts played a crucial role

have seen a rapid succession of in-charges, with most leaders lasting barely a year or even just a few the sense of disarray.

Singh.

general secretary Bhanwar Jitendra Singh reportedly stemmed from his strained relations with Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari. Patwari, known for his assertive This episode is indicative of the

in the state unit, where power struggles between senior leaders continue to weaken the party's While Patwari has made efforts

political landscape. Patwari himself recently likened intra-party groupism to a 'cancer'

Harish Choudhary's appoint-

the saffron party after quitting told The Pioneer that Choudhary faces tough challenges ahead.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# **Trump's peace offensive**

Though US President Trump is attempting to resolve the prolonged war in Ukraine, the effectiveness of his methods remains uncertain

s the war in Ukraine enters its third year, US President Donald Trump is trying to broker peace. However, his approach has sparked controversy, as it appears to Sideline Ukraine in key negotiations. With Russia still holding a significant portion of Ukrainian territory, the implications of this initiative could reshape the geopolitical landscape of Europe and beyond. The critical questions remain: What would a Trump-led peace deal entail? How would it affect Ukraine's sovereignty? And what choices do Ukraine and Europe have in response? If Ukraine is sidelined in these negotiations, it could be pressured into accepting a deal that legitimises Russia's territorial gains, effectively rewarding aggression. For Russia, such an outcome would be a strategic victory, allowing it to retain control over nearly a fifth of Ukraine's land, including areas it currently does not fully control. A peace deal without Ukraine's full participation and interests at its core would have profound consequences. The Ukrainian government has consistently main-



tained that any agreement must include the restoration of its 1991 borders and accountability for war crimes committed during the invasion. However, a Trump-negotiated settlement could pressure Kyiv into compromising its sovereignty in exchange for an end

For Europe, such a scenario would be equally troubling. If Russia emerges from the conflict with territorial gains, it could embolden further aggression against NATO's eastern flank. The Kremlin's broader objective has always been to reverse the strategic impact of the Soviet Union's collapse and limit the sovereignty of Eastern European nations. A weakened

Ukraine would shift the burden of deterrence squarely onto NATO's shoulders, requiring significant military investments and commitments to prevent further Russian expansion. The effectiveness of Trump's initiative is highly uncertain. While a ceasefire might reduce immediate bloodshed, it would not necessarily lead to lasting stability. If Ukraine is forced into a compromised peace, resistance movements could emerge, leading to prolonged low-intensity conflict. Additionally, the global implications of a weakened Ukraine extend beyond Europe. A victorious Russia could inspire China to take a more aggressive stance on Taiwan, believing that the West lacks the resolve to uphold international law. Trump's initiative to end the Ukraine war could mark a turning point in the conflict, but the manner in which it is pursued will determine its impact. If Ukraine is sidelined and forced into territorial concessions, the consequences could be dire—not just for Kyiv but for the entire European security framework. While a peace deal might bring temporary relief, a settlement that fails to address Ukraine's sovereignty could embolden Russia and reshape the global balance of power in ways that will be felt for decades to come. The choices made in the coming months will define the future of Ukraine, Europe, and world security.



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

A reminder of Delhi's seismic vulnerability



The 4.0 magnitude earthquake that shook Delhi-NCR recently underscores Delhi's alarming seismic risks, given its location on active fault lines

n the early morning of February 17, 2025, the residents of Delhi-NCR awakened by a sudden unexpected jolt awakening due to a tremor. A 4.0-magnitude earthquake struck the region, with its epicentre located near Dhaula Kuan, Delhi, sending shockwaves throughout the city along with neighbouring NCR. Although the quake was relatively minor, its impact felt stronger because it originated from a shallow depth and was intensified by widespread fear of bigger earthquakes. People hurriedly evacuated their homes, buildings swayed and social media was abuzz with concern.

This event served as yet another reminder that Delhi remains dangerously vulnerable to seismic shock vulnerability to seismic activity. Delhi hazardously sits on several active fault lines, including the Delhi-Haridwar Ridge and the Mahendragarh-Dehradun fault. The city falls in Seismic Zone IV and is recognised as being at high risk for earthquakes. Its closeness to the Himalayas, one of the most seismically active areas globally, further increases its risk. According to geoscientists, the Indian plate is continually pushing beneath the Eurasian plate at a rate of about 47 mm per year, generating significant underground stress. When this stress is released, it

results in earthquakes—ranging from minor to devastating. History has shown us the potential destruction of earthquakes. The 2001 Bhuj earthquake in Gujarat, which registered 7.7 on the Richter scale, resulted in over 20,000 fatalities and left entire towns in rubble. If a similar earthquake event were to strike Delhi-NCR, the aftermath could be even more disastrous. Simulations from global seismic studies, including the USGS PAGER system and the GEM Global Seismic Risk Map, indicate that a 7.7-magnitude earthquake in Delhi could result in between 150,000 to 250,000 deaths. The combination of a dense population, ageing infrastructure, and unpianned urbanisation makes the capital particularly vulnerable to widespread devastation. One major concern facing the city is the quality of construction.



settlements, are not designed to endure strong earthquakes. Although there are strict regulations set by the National Building Code and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), enforcement often remains weak. High-rise buildings and even some government facilities in the region frequently lack the necessary retrofitting to enhance their earthquake resistance. With over 30 million people living in Delhi-NCR, the scale of destruction from a significant earthquake could be unimaginable.So, what steps can be taken? Demolishing all unsafe build-

ings and reconstructing them with seismic-resistant technology is neither practical nor economically viable. However, sincere efforts can be made to raise awareness about the earthquake risk and ensure people are prepared for a potential major earthquake in

First and foremost, raising awareness and ensuring preparedness should be a top priority. Every household needs to have a well-defined earthquake survival plan. Schools and workplaces should ulariy conduct earthquake drills to prepare individuals for how to react during tremors. Simple actions, like securing heavy furniture, identifying



SEVERAL CITIES LIKE TOKYO AND SAN FRANCISCO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY **IMPLEMENTED ADVANCED** TECHNOLOGY TO

MAKE **BUILDINGS MORE** EARTHQUAKE-PROOF. **DELHI SHOULD** LOOK TO THESE GLOBAL

**EXAMPLES TO REDUCE** THE RISK OF WIDESPREAD **CASUALTIES** 

safe areas in homes, and having emergency kits ready, can greatly improve safety. The government also needs to take necessary actions in this

regard. A comprehensive structural audit of buildings, particularly those constructed before modern seismic standards were established, is urgently required. Buildings that fail to meet safety criteria should be reinforced and retrofitted. It is essential to enforce the use of earthquake-resistant construction methods in new projects. Retrofitting at-risk buildings may be expensive, but it is a crucial investment for protect-

ing lives. Additionally, public infrastructure needs to be reassessed. Bridges, flyovers, and metro stations need to be evaluated for their ability to withstand seismic activity. Several cities like Tokyo and San Francisco have successfully implemented advanced technology to make buildings more earth-quake-proof. Delhi should look to these global examples to reduce the risk of widespread casualties.

A city that is well-prepared for disasters always invests in the education and awareness of its residents. Creating an Earthquake Awareness Museum in Delhi, akin to the one in Bhuj, Gujarat, could make a significant impact on

people's awareness, not only from Delhi NCR but from all over the country.

This museum could highlight

Delhi's seismic history, delve

into the science behind earthquakes, and inform the public about safety protocols. Additionally, a dedicated "Earthquake Clinic" within the museum could provide free consultations with engineers on how to house earthquake resistance at a reasonable price. Moreover, implementing an efficient early warning system could significantly minimise the risk of casualties. For instance, Japan's earthquake early warning system alerts people just seconds before a quake, allowing people to take cover. Establishing a similar system in Delhi should be a national priority. Despite scientific advancements, earthquakes remain unpredictable. However, we can control the level of preparedness when a disaster strikes. The recent tremor in Delhi is more than just a fleeting event- it serves as a warning. Ignoring it could be dis-

(The writer is former execu-tive director of National Institute of Disaster Management, Govt. of India; views are personal)

astrous. The time to take

action is now before nature

delves a lesson that is too harsh

to endure.

# The road to change: A story of hope in Uttarakhand's remote Villages



As government initiatives push forward rural road development, the hope remains that these villages will soon find themselves linked to a future of greater possibilities

n the mountains, roads are more than just paths from Lone place to another they are lifelines. They connect people to schools, hospitals, and markets, making daily life easier and opportunities more accessible. For many remote villages in Uttarakhand, however, the wait for a proper road continues, shaping everyday realities in ways that outsiders rarely

In Surag and Bhagdhanu villages of Garud Block, Bageshwar District, the absence of a proper road is a challenge that residents navigate every day. The people here have adapted—carrying essentials on foot, finding their ways to reach schools and markets, and supporting each other through difficult

Yet, the dream of a well-built road remains. Kedar Singh, 70, has spent a lifetime in Surag. He describes how unpaved, uneven roads make even the simplest tasks difficult, especially during the monsoon. "When it rains, the paths become slippery, making it hard for both people and animals to move. We take our cattle to graze on the

mountains, but during the rains, they often slip on the muddy paths and fall down the slopes. It's heartbreaking to see, and it makes our work much harder." For many, the challenge is not just about movement but about access to essential services. Nandi Devi, 45, explains how women and elderly residents face particular difficulties: "When someone falls ill, finding transport is nearly impossible. Vehicles don't come here because of the poor road conditions. We have to rely on each other and make do with what we

A Journey to Education

For students, an incomplete road is more than an inconvenience—it shapes their future. Bhavana Rawal, a 10th-grade student, walks 5 km every day on an unpaved road to reach her school in Sailani, 9 km away. "Most of the time, we manage, but during the rains, we arrive at school covered in mud. On some days, we can't go at all," she says. Kavita, 18, has similar concerns. "During the monsoon and winter, getting to school is incredibly difficult. The steep paths become dangerous, and there is always the fear of slipping. Sometimes, we miss school for days, which affects our studies."

The Road Ahead

Efforts have been made over the years to bring road connectivity to Surag and Bhagdhanu. A survey for the road's construction was conducted, and discussions continued resolving land-related concerns. Local leaders, like village head Champa Devi,

have been advocating for progress, and there is optimism that change will come. In Uttarakhand, over 33,500 km of roads have already been built, with 171 km of new roads planned for 2024-25 under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Across the state, better road connectivity has opened doors to education, healthcare, and employment. There is hope that the Rs 70,000 crore allocated in the Union Budget for rural roads will also reach villages like Surag and Bhagdhanu, ensuring that they, too, become part of this expanding network. For now, the people of these

villages continue their journeys-on foot, through difficult terrain, with patience and resilience. But with consistent efforts from local communities, government agencies, and policymakers, the day is not far when these paths will finally be paved, bringing with them new possibilities for those who have waited the longest.

(The Author writes on development and a resident of Bageshwar district, Uttarakhand. Views are personal. Charkha features)

#### **PEACE TALK WITHOUT UKRAINE**

Madam — It is indeed a strange move that Ukraine is not involved in the peace talks being held to bring the Ukraine war to an end. America is holding talks with Russia, the country that pounds Ukraine. Any meaningful negotiation should be between the countries on the war and others may facilitate reaching a settlement to end the war. In the process, any other country may help but not keep the victim behind the screen. Ukraine has unnecessarily taken up war with Russia. The demand of Russia was that Ukraine should not take membership in NATO as it disturbs its security concerns. For NATO also Ukraine joining the group will add to its strategic security concerns. That is why it extended all possible help, like weapons and funds, except for its soldiers to Ukraine.

The sanction against buying Russian fuel also proved to be a failure, as all the EU members were buying the same Russian fuel through India. Ultimately Ukraine is at a loss but gives a sound lesson to others not to depend on others' strength to wage a war, but instead to sort the issues out through diplomatic strength. It is also time to remember the moral story that when two parties decide to fight each other, there are always other parties to reap rich harvests. The giants in the field of weapons production found Ukraine a flourishing market to pump in weapons. It is also time to rethink before deciding to enter the war field, over-assuming one's strength.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

#### **WHO RECEIVED \$21 MILLION FROM US?**

Madam— US President Donald Trump has once again questioned the United States' decision to allocate \$21 million for voter turnout efforts in India. Speaking at the FII PRIORITY Summit in Miami, he said, "\$21 million for voter turnout, why do we need to spend \$21 million for voter turnout in India?" Trump expressed his respect for India and its Prime Minister Narendra Modi but wondered why the US needs to spend millions on voter turnout

#### THE EDITOR

#### **Tharoor praises PM Modi's achievements**



Shashi Tharoor's praise for PM Modi's achievements during his recent visit to the US, followed by his article in a national daily praising Kerala's startup economy under the

India, with its strong economy and high tariffs on US goods, doesn't need such financial support.

'They got a lot of money. They're one of the highest taxing countries in the world in terms of us. We can hardly get in there because their tariffs are so high." Hence, the \$21 million allocation was part of a larger list of international aid programmes cancelled by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), headed by Elon Musk. There is no doubt a lot of money, white and Black, is used. Then who knows that foreign funding is also not another source? Hope the NDA government should come out clearly on who revived this 21-milliondollar (about 176 crore rupees) and how this money was distributed. As reported earlier, the money can't be received by the

Election Commission legally. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

#### **MULTILINGUALISM FOSTER UNITY**

Madam — A recent incident highlights the importance of embracing multilingualism in India's diverse political landscape. in a foreign country. He further argued that During the INDIA bloc meeting in Patna,

ruling LDF alliance, has not gone down well with his party leaders. In a stifling political atmosphere where political parties are baying for each other's blood, his praise does not help his party's attempts to target the NDA and the LDF governments on these

But Tharoor, a former diplomat and well-known for his intellect, is a rare class of politician who has the spine to speak their mind. He has proven time and again that he is a true statesman who deeply believes in democratic values. On his criticism, he has further clarified that we cannot always speak only in terms of party interests. Thus, his principled political behaviour is a lesson for all political leaders.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

DMK leader TR Baalu requested a translation of Bihar CM Nitish Kumar's Hindi speech into English, as DMK chief MK Stalin was unable to follow Hindi. The request was met with a sharp reaction from Kumar, who emphasised that leaders should understand Hindi, leading to an uncomfortable moment for the DMK delegation. The DMK's resistance to the three-language formula stems from its commitment to preserving Tamil.

While this is admirable, instances like these underline how knowing a third language, including Hindi, can be a practical asset. Whether for employment, travel, or national collaboration, multilingual ability fosters inclusivity and avoids such avoidable embarrassments. Balancing linguistic pride with pragmatic multilingualism is key. Leaders and citizens alike must view additional language skills as tools for growth rather than threats to cultural iden-

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

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## **FIRST COLUMN**

### **MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES IN LIFE**

Those who exhibit positive behaviour and make righteous choices excel and live a meaningful life



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Jes, there are five choices; by making them we can excel in life. These are to become good people. We know whom we call good. They are good in their behaviour, choices, etc. The next level is of those, who are not only good but they mostly follow dharma also, which pleases God. The next level is that of welfare workers, who dedicate their lives to the service of humanity without any selfish motive. Out of the followers of dharma, God appoints some as His (nimitta) instrument to carry out activities for God to uphold dharma. The topmost level of course is of bhaktas (devotees) of God. I will now give details regarding how one can become these five and what benefits one will derive by doing so.

To be good in spiritual parlance means to have the highest percentage of the mode of goodness. There are three modes, which are: goodness, passion and darkness. They are always competing with us. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 14.10) The mode of goodness is illuminating and free from diseases on account of purity. (14.6) The mode of passion suffers from the fault of attachment. (14.7) One is too attached to certain acts and their results. Unfortunately, the results are not in our hands. (2.47) One, therefore, suffers from anxiety, fear, depression,



The mode of darkness deludes, which gives rise to many faults like carelessness. (14.8) Lord Krishna has set out in great detail about activities in goodness in the Bhagavad-Geeta. If we imbibe them, the percentage of the mode of goodness will gradually increase in us. There are many benefits in doing so and the best is goodness being the stepping stone to devotional life - the highest, and good karmaphalas of course. The next level is of persons, who strictly follow dharma besides being good.

This sets them apart from the masses. One is aligned with the plan of God for us, who is for upholding dharma. God even incarnates to do so. (6.7) We know what dharma is; it is the highest moral and religious principle. Benefits are many including accumulating pious karmas. The third higher level is that of welfare workers. God promises no 'durgati' (bad end) for such persons. (6.40) This is a big achievement because old age and bad ends are very scary prospects for human beings. Lord Krishna has singled out King Janaka as the role model in the Bhagavad-Geeta (3.20) in this connection.

The next higher level is that of 'nimittas' (instruments) of God; He chooses them from those who are habitually followers of dharma and are inclined to serve God as Arjuna did. God does everything as a karta for them and they get credit for the acts done. (11.33) The topmost category is those of devotees of God. Their rise is from being good people to strict followers of dharma. Then, they do spiritual practices like praying, darshan of God's Deities, offering obeisance to God, chanting of God's names and mantras, dhyan of God, thanking God for favours done, etc.

They become very dear to God, who is everything. (7.19) The topmost benefit of being a devotee of God is liberation in a few lives. (6.45)I am going to describe the benefits in greater detail because these are the highest. God guides, and He, being omniscient, knows what will work every time. I have made a habit of praying for guidance anytime I have some doubts about something. I have been surprised by God's response. They are no longer intuitions because they work. The same happens in the case of help. God helps His devotees like one cannot even dream of.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views are personal)

# Beyond the boundary: The passion, intelligence and legacy of cricket



Cricket, the game of glorious uncertainties, is almost a religion in our country. It often gets more attention than other sports but then you have to play it to experience its magic



here are people who frown upon what they view as the obsessive interest that many Indians have in cricket and, to a lesser extent, soccer. One wonders how many of them are familiar with Rudyard Kipling's reference to the "flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the goal" in his poem, The Islander, first published in The Times, London, on January 4, 1902. One also wonders whether even those who are familiar are aware that any attempt to cite the quote in vindication of their position, can run into a squall.

He wrote the poem in anger, as he felt that the English cricket team that was on an ashes tour of Australia in 1901-02, was getting more attention from the public than the British soldiers who were dying in the Boer War in South Africa, which was then limping towards an end. People paid lip service to their valour and "Then ye returned to our trinkets; then ve contented your souls With the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs at the goals."
It is clear from the lines that follow that

Kipling's rebuke was addressed not primarily at Britishers who played cricket and soccer but his countrymen in general for not doing enough to cope with the challenges that were going to confront the British empire—of which he was an unabashed apologist. These read, "Given to strong delusion, wholly believing a lie, / Ye saw that the land lay fenceless, and ye let the months go by/Waiting some easy wonder, hoping some saving sign/Idle—openly idle—in the lee of the forespent Line. / Idle—except for your boasting—and what is your boasting worth/If ye grudge a year of service to the lordliest life on earth?'

The reference in the last line was to conscription for military service that many in Britain abhorred. Let us, however, not digress, especially when it not even caused by "perfume from a dress"—as TS Eliot puts it in The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Our original concerns were cricket and soc-

INTELLIGENCE WAS NEEDED TO TAILOR ONE'S BATTING AND/OR NATURE OF THE OUTFIELD, THE MIND HAD TO BE SET TO WORK TO

FIND OUT THE **VULNERABILITIES** OF THE PLAYERS OF THE OPPOSING SIDE, AND DEVISE THE STRATEGY TO WIN A MATCH

cer, to which we must now revert. I have never played much soccer. I played cricket for my College (Presidency) and clubs (Union Sporting and Dakshin Kolikata Sangsad), in Kolkata in the 1950s. Even at those levels—by no means lofty—I realised that playing required a lot of intelligence and application of mind, intense concentration, reflection, enormous will power and determination, courage, considerable physical fitness and huge reserves of stamina.

Intelligence was needed to tailor one's batting and/or bowling to meet the demands of the pitch and the nature of the outfield, The mind had to be set to work to find out the vul-BOWLING TO nerabilities of the players of the opposing side, and devise the strategy to win a match. Determination was needed to continue fighting DEMANDS OF THE even when the odds were heavily loaded against one, will power to PITCH AND THE calm the butterflies that began in fluttering in one's stomach as one walked out to bat and took guard, and courage not to run away from fast bowling on a wicket with uneven bounce where one could get hurt any moment.

The matches we played were mostly for a day. As an opening batsman, I could be at the wicket for a maximum period of three hours. As a first-change medium pacer, I bowled a maximum of eight overs in two spells. As the skipper of my college team, I fielded mostly at first slip or short square leg, which meant I did not have to do much running around. Yet I was pretty much drained out at the end of it all. Cricket matches are war by other means among well-established rivals, and particularly so when it

England and Australia for the ashes. It, however, also has other dimensions. If history, to quote TS Eliot again—this time from Gerontion— "has many cunning passages, contrived corridors," cricket has its tantalising moments and amusing Several of the latter relate to Dr WG

Grace, a legend of English cricket who had an MRCS and LRCP against his name. In one of these, he had gone to a village to play in a charity match, and a massive crowd had turned out to watch. A huge cheer rent the sky as he walked to the wicket and took guard. Then the unthinkable happened. A village lad who was bowling shattered his stumps with the devil of a delivery. The umpire signalled "out." A deadly hush fell on the ground. Grace did and said, "All of these people have come to see WG Grace bat and not your monkey tricks. So go back and start bowling."

There are stories relating to India as well. One of these is about Ganesh Bose who, along with his brother, Kartik Bose-both my maternal grand-uncles—constituted the bedrock of Bengal's batting from the late 1920s to late 1940s. A dashing batsman, he was once out to a rank bad shot in a critical match.

One of his maternal uncles, who was among the spectators, rushed to him as he returned to the pavilion, and unleashed a mouthful of colourful abuses. Ganesh Bose glared at him for a moment and then said between his teeth, "I would have buried you here had you not been my maternal uncle (mama na hole tomake eikhane punte pheltam in Bengali). There are many stories about Kartik

There was a good spinner who played college and club cricket and kept long hair, which fell on his eyes every time he bowled. Watching him at the Cricket Association of Bengal's nets at the Eden Gardens, which he conducted, Bose had asked him several times to cut his hair. As the spinner showed no sign of complying, he summoned one of Kolkata's many roadside barbers who sat in the Kolkata Maidan, and, as the nets concluded, had a crewcut administered to him.

I had to give up cricket shortly after 21. Those days, cricket offered neither money nor the kind of career I wanted. The crunch came when I saw some of those who played with me join the railways at subordinate levels, while my friends at college joined the Indian Railways Traffic Service and the Indian Railways Accounts Service, both central services of the Government of India,

It was a deeply painful step. My family's link with cricket goes back to the time of Saradaranjan Ray (1858-1925), principal Metropolitan College and elder brother to my maternal great-grandfather, Upendrakishore Ray (1863-1915). A brilliant player himself and dubbed WG Grace of Bengal, he is known as the father of Bengal cricket. His grand nephew, Shivaji Ray, played for Bengal in the Ranji Trophy tournament. A person who was deeply saddened by my decision was another of my maternal granduncles, Prabhatranjan Ray. Very fond of me and a great supporter of my cricket, he watched every match played.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed

# US exits Paris Agreement again: A setback for global climate action?

As the climate crisis escalates, the US exit threatens to disrupt climate diplomacy, financial commitments and emission reduction efforts worldwide

**¬**he newly elected president, Donald J. Trump has ordered the withdrawal of the United States from Paris Agreement on global warming for the second time, the first official exit being on November 4, 2020. The question is- Will the global momentum to cut emissions get stalled once again, as has happened in the past? Will other countries fill up the void or will we witness reduced contri-

Though the withdrawal announcement of the world's biggest economy aligns with America first in international environmental agreements, can it disrupt the international climate diplomacy, at a critical moment of countries committing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius, the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015 showcased the collec-tive accountability and shared responsibility of nations in addressing climate issues.

In his tenure, the former president, Joseph R Biden Jr has often communicated the vital role of the US in leading the world in curbing fossil fuel pollution. The support to developing countries for transitioning to renewable energy, building resilient infrastructure and adapting to climate change is essential to mitigate the



phenomenon and pace up

the global progress on emission reduction.

This is in sharp contrast to the recent, yet not surprising announcement. Mr. Trump has often referred to it as an unfair and one-sided agreement that permits the South, particularly China and India to free-ride the economic burden of the North. With

effective, the U.S. will soon find itself with the other three countries- Iran, Libya and Yemen- of not being a party to the Paris agreement. This further raises the question of whether must all the countries contribute equally in terms of efforts and resources. Though the principle of

"Common D i f f e r e n t i a t e d Responsibility" has been undermined at all successive CoPs, does it imply that the developed countries can default on their financial commitments and jeopardise the global climate com-

mitment? With the announcement of US retrenchment from the agreement in 2017 and the the climate crisis? With 200 adverse consequences of the less than a year for it to be beginning of the formal



withdrawal process, the individual countries are not International Energy Agency reported that global energy related CO2 emissions increased by 1.7 per cent in 2018, after a steady decline over the last three years. In recent times, as is already

in pace with the Paris pact goal. With the withdrawal of the US, will it imply that countries will have to make greater reductions in emis-

Will it be possible? However, known that the NDCs of the key lessons learned from countries.

this episode underscore the importance of political stability for long-term climate commitments. As an outcome, countries like China will take advantage of this situation by leveraging themselves as reliable and committed partners in global climate leadership. It will also halt the mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries due to the disrupted support from developed countries. Ceased contribution of the U.S. to the Green Climate Fund will hinder the availability of critical resources for developing countries. This tops up the already low pledges announced in COP29 at Baku this year compared to the demand by developing

All of this can disrupt critical alliances, deviate nations to scale down their climate commitments and impact the world's ability to fight cli-

mate change. The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement raises urgent concerns about global climate action. As nations strive to meet climate goals, America's absence could weaken commitments, disrupt funding, and shift leadership dynamics. The world must now adapt, ensuring collective progress continues despite political instability and shifting priorities in international climate diplo-(The writer is Assistant

Professor, FORE School of Management, New Delhi; views are personal)

# Netanyahu decries release of wrong body as ceasefire violation

## HAMAS PLEDGES TO INVESTIGATE

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed revenge Friday for what he described as a "cruel and malicious violation" of the ceasefire agreement after a body that Hamas released as part of the deal was found to not be that of an Israeli mother of two young boys, as the militants had promised.

The incident has thrown the future of the fragile ceasefire into question. Six more living hostages are scheduled to be released Saturday as part of the tenuous ceasefire that has paused over 15 months of war. În a statement on Friday, Hamas said it would "conduct a thorough review" of the information regarding the body, and suggested a possible mixup of remains might have occurred due to Israeli bombing of the area where the Israeli hostages were being held, where other Palestinians were also

Hamas turned over four bodies Thursday as part of the ceasefire. They were supposed to have been those of Shiri Bibas and her two young sons, Kfir and Ariel Bibas, and of Oded Lifshitz, who was 83 when he was abducted during the Hamas attack that started the

present.

war on October 7, 2023. Israeli authorities said that while the remains of the two boys and of Lifshitz were positively identified, the fourth body was found to not be that of Shiri Bibas, but that of an unidentified woman from

"We will work with determination to bring Shiri home together with all our hostages — both living and dead — and ensure that Hamas pays the full price for this cruel and malicious violation of the agreement," Netanyahu said.

'The sacred memory of Oded Lifshitz and Ariel and Kfir Bibas will be forever enshrined in the heart of the nation. May God avenge their blood. And so we will avenge.

Hamas said it had "no interest in retaining any bodies", adding that it had "demonstrated full compliance with the agreement in recent days and remain committed to all its terms".

'We reject Netanyahu's threats, which serve only to manipulate Israeli public opinion," Hamas said, calling on mediators to ensure the continued implementation of the ceasefire. The group also called for the return of the unidentified remains, which Israel has said are those

identity was a shocking twist in the saga surrounding the Bibas family, who have become global symbols of the plight of Israeli hostages held by Hamas. During the ceasefire, which began in January, Hamas has been releasing living hostages in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. Thursday's release

dead hostages. The Israeli army said Thursday that the fourth body released by Hamas was an "anonymous, unidentified body".

marked the first time the group

has returned the remains of

It said the Bibas family had been notified, including Yarden Bibas, Shiri's husband and father of the two boys, who had been taken captive separately from his wife and children and was released early this month as part of the ceasefire deal.

Hamas has claimed Lifshitz, Shiri Bibas and her sons were killed in Israeli airstrikes. But Israel said the testing had found the two boys and Lifshitz were killed by their captors.

US envoy Adam Boehler described the release of the wrong body as "horrific" and a "clear violation" of the ceasefire.
"If I were them, I'd release everybody or they are going to of a Palestinian woman.
The revelation of the body's face total annihilation," Boehler, who serves as the US envoy for

hostages, told CNN

It was unclear how the incident might affect the next scheduled swap of hostages for prisoners, set for Saturday. Hamas has said it will also release four more bodies next week, completing the first phase of the ceasefire. It is also unclear whether the truce will be extended beyond the end of the current phase, which expires in early March. In another potential blow to the

deal, a series of explosions struck three parked, empty buses in central Israel overnight. There were no injuries and no claim of responsibility. But the Israeli military said in response it was beefing up its forces in the West Bank, raising the likelihood of further escalation in the area. Israel has been carrying out a broad military offensive in the occupied territory since

the ceasefire took effect.

If the current phase of the ceasefire goes according to plan with the release of six hostages on Saturday and four more bodies next week, Hamas will be left with about 60 hostages, about half — all men – believed to still be alive. Hamas has said it won't release

the remaining captives without a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal. Netanyahu, with the full backing of the



People gather during a vigil in Tel Aviv, Israel, hours after Hamas militants turned over four bodies to Israel, three of which have been identified by Israel as hostages Ariel and Kfir Bibas, and Oded Lifshitz, while the fourth, they said, is that of an unknown person

Trump administration, says he's committed to destroying welcomed by Netanyahu but Hamas' military and governing capacities and returning all the hostages, goals widely seen as mutually exclusive.

about 2 million Palestinians free more hostages if it believes that the war will resume.

and rebuild it, which has been universally rejected by Palestinians and Arab countries, has thrown the ceasefire into further doubt.

Trump's proposal to remove Hamas could be reluctant to

more than 48,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and

Israel's military offensive killed

combatants. Israel says it has

killed more than 17,000 fight-

ers, without providing evi-

The offensive destroyed vast areas of Gaza, reducing entire neighbourhoods to rubble. At its height, the war displaced 90 per cent of Gaza's population. Many have returned to their homes to find nothing left and

no way of rebuilding.

# A kickback scheme, says Trump as he targets Biden for funding 'voter turnout'

PTI NEW YORK

US President Donald Trump has claimed that the USD 21 million funding to India for 'voter turnout' was a "kickback scheme, as he continued to attack the previous Biden administration over the now cancelled financial aid.

Trump made these remarks while speaking at the Republican Governors Republican Governors Association meeting in Washington DC on Thursday. "USD 21 million for voter turnout in India. Why are we caring about India's turnout? We have got enough problems. We want our own

turnout," said Trump.
"I would say in many cases, many of these cases, anytime you have no idea what we're talking about, that means there's a kickback because nobody has any idea what's

This is the third time within a week that Trump has questioned the funding. Earlier addressing the FII PRI-ORITY Summit in Miami on

Thursday, he had raised similar concerns over funding to India and suggested that they were trying to "get somebody else elected'



On Wednesday, he questioned the purpose of providing USD 21 million to India for "voter turnout" as he reiterated that the US "can hardly get in there" because of high Indian tariffs. His remarks came days after Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) led by Elon Musk dis-

USD 21 million to the Election Commission to boost voter turnout in India. On February 16, DOGE listed items on which the "US taxpay-

er dollars were going to be spent" and the list included "USD 21M for voter turnout in

DOGE noted that all of the items have been cancelled.

The list also included USD 29 million for "strengthening political landscape in Bangladesh", USD 20 million for "fiscal federalism" and USD 19 million for "biodiversity conservation" in Nepal as well as USD 47 million for "improving learning outcomes in Asia". Trump during the speech at the closed that USAID contributed Republican Governors tioned USD 29 million to strengthen the political landscape in Bangladesh.

> mean by the political landscape. What does that mean?"

he asked. 'USD 20 million for fiscal federalism and USD 19 million for

biodiversity in Nepal, USD 47

"Nobody knows what they

outcomes in Asia. What the hell do I care about? We got a lot. We got enough problems and all of this is terminated. We terminated this stuff and we're on the track. And by the way, there were so many others I could have I could read all night long, but so many were so terrible but so many were so terrible, and were actually disgusting. And I know you're eating your dinner, so I didn't want to do that but we're draining the swamp," Trump said. The DOGE has been put in

million for improving learning outcomes in Asia. What the hell

charge of overseeing workforce reduction across the government, and as part of that, Musk announced that he would shut down USAID, which is responsible for humanitarian efforts around the globe.

According to USAID officials on February 7, all USAID humanitarian work worldwide was stopped, reported.

The agency's website was shut before Musk's announcement. Later, a Trump-nominated judge announced a temporary restraining order that prevents the president and DOGE from placing 2,200 employees on administrative leave.

# Ukrainians rally around Zelenskyy

Days before the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukrainians are as sombre and tense as they were right before Moscow launched the war. Only now, they aren't just worried about their longtime

Ukraine's stunning new threat comes from its once staunchest ally, the United States, whose support appears to be fading as President Donald Trump echoes the narrative of Russian President Vladimir Putin while pledging to stop the fighting between the two countries.

After their initial shock at Trump's false claims this week that Ukraine is led by a "dictator" who started the war with Russia, the Ukrainian people are rallying around a defiant President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who publicly criticized Trump for promoting Russian "disinformation."

Yes, he's not a perfect president, but he's not a dictator," said Kateryna Karaush, a 25-year-old tech worker from Kyiv who like some Republicans in Congress is struggling to wrap her head around Trump's embrace of Russia, which represents a major about-face in US foreign policy. "It feels like the whole world is against us," Karaush said. Against long odds, Ukrainians –

with massive military support from the US - have prevented



Russia from overtaking their country, even if roughly one fifth of it is now under Russia control.

But after three years of war, both civilians and soldiers are exhausted. Hundreds of thousands have been killed or wounded, tens of thousands are missing, and millions have fled the country. The mood only became gloomier in recent days as Trump signaled his desire to rapidly bring the fighting to a close on terms that Zelenskyy and many in the West say are too favorable to Russia. After Trump called ly postponing an election last year and as reports emerged of US and Russian officials meeting in Saudi Arabia to discuss a possible ceasefire without input from Ukraine, even some of Zelenskyy's harshest domestic critics have begun defending

"We may have different opinions

about Zelenskyy, but only Ukrainian citizens have the right to judge his support," said Yaroslav Zhelezniak, a lawmaker from the opposition party Holos. "And to publicly criticize him too, because, in the end, he is our elected leader."

Trump's harsh words for Zelenskyy have drawn criticism from Democrats and even some Republicans in the US Congress, where defending Ukraine from Russia — with tens of billions of dollars in military aid — has had bipartisan support. But Vice President JD Vance admonished Zelenskyv for publicly warning Trump about falling for Russian disinformation. On Thursday, the deepening

tensions led to the cancelation of a news conference that had been planned to follow talks between Zelenskyy and Trump's Ukraine envoy over how to end the war. A poll released Wednesday by the Kyiv International Institute of

Sociology put public trust in Zelenskyy at 57%. The survey was conducted Feb 4 to Feb 9 among 1,000 people living across Ukraine in regions and territories controlled by the Ukrainian gov-

"We have a president whom we support. During war, we are united," said Larysa, a 52-year-old resident from the northeastern city of Kharkiv, who refused to give her last name due to security concerns. The political rift with the US

comes as Ukrainian forces, outnumbered and outgunned, increasingly struggle to hold back Russia's slow but steady advances. Speaking from the front lines,

some Ukrainian soldiers said they were not panicking yet, and not ready to give up the fight. "Even if we don't get enough weapons or if funding is cut, that doesn't change our duty to (fight)," said a Ukrainian officer who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with military rules. "No shells? We'll take up rifles. No rifles? We'll grab shov-

On Wednesday, Trump echoed one of Putin's frequent talking points, claiming Zelenskyy, whose term expired last year, must hold elections. But the idea has little traction within Ukraine — even among opposition politicians, who recognize Zelenskyy's right to postpone elections during wartime.

### Macron's message to Trump: 'You can't be weak in face of Putin

PTI PARIS

 $F^{\mathrm{rench}}$  President Emmanuel Macron said he intends to tell Donald Trump that it's in the joint interest of Americans and Europeans not to "be weak" in the face of Russia's Vladimir Putin amid US-led negotiations to end the almost three-year war in Ukraine.

Macron is to travel to Washington to meet with Trump on Monday, the White House said.

In a one-hour question and answer session on his social media Thursday, Macron said he'll tell Trump: "You can't be weak in the face of President Putin. It's not you, it's not your trademark, it's not in your interest. How can you then be credible in the face of China if you're weak in the face of Putin?'

Trump's recent statements that echo Putin's narrative and plans to have direct negotiations with Moscow have left European allies and Ukrainian officials worried. But Macron suggested Trump's strategy to create "uncertainty" in talks with Russia could actually make Western allies stronger in these talks

Putin "doesn't know what he (Trump) is going to do, he thinks (Trump) is capable of anything," Macron said. "This uncertainty is good for us and for Ukraine." Macron added he would seek to persuade Trump that US interests and Europeans' interests are the same, telling him: "If you let Russia take over Ukraine, it would be unstoppable." That means any peace deal must be negotiated with Ukrainians and Europeans around the table, Macron reaffirmed.

"We want peace, but we don't want a ceasefire that means Ukraine surrendering, because that's dangerous. And we know that would lead to Russia going further. We've already experienced it," he said.

Macron also appeared ready to answer Trump's call to boost defence spending. "Us, Europeans, we must increase our war effort," he said.

# Trump admin flouting order to temporarily lift freeze on foreign aid, judge says

**PTI** ■ WASHINGTON

The Trump administration has kept withholding foreign aid despite a court order and must at least temporarily restore the funding to programmes worldwide, a federal judge has said. Judge Amir H. Ali on Thursday declined a request by nonprofit groups doing business with the US Agency for International Development to find Trump administration officials in contempt of his order, however.

The Washington, D.C., district court judge said administration officials had used his February 13 order to temporarily lift the freeze on foreign aid to instead "come up with a new, post-hoc rationalisation for the en masse suspension" of funding.

Despite the judge's order to the con-

trary, USAID Deputy Secretary Pete Marocco, a Trump appointee, and other top officials had "continued their blanket suspension of funds", Ali

The ruling comes in a lawsuit by the nonprofit groups challenging the Trump administration's month-old cutoff of foreign assistance through USAID and the State Department, which shut down USD 60 billion in annual aid and development programmes overseas almost overnight. Even after Ali's order, USAID staffers and contractors say the State Department and USAID still have not restored payments even on hundreds of millions of dollars already owed by the government.

Marocco and other administration officials defended the nonpayment in writ-

ten arguments to the judge this week. They contended that they could lawfully stop or terminate payments under thousands of contracts without violating the judge's order.

The Trump administration says it is now doing a programme-by-programme review of all State Department and USAID foreign assistance programmes to see which ones meet the Trump administration's agenda.

Aid organisations, and current and former USAID staffers in interviews and court affidavits, say the funding freeze and deep Trump administration purges of USAID staffers have brought US foreign assistance globally to a halt, forced thousands of lavoffs and is driving government partners to financial

## Xi passes orders to transform China's military into world-class armed force

Thinese President Xi Jinping issued fresh orders on Friday revising rules to transform the country's military into world-class armed forces, focusing on combat readiness and war preparation amid growing rivalry with the US and tensions over Taiwan and neighbours. Xi, 71, who heads the military besides the pow erful ruling Communist Party of China (CPC)

and the Presidency, signed orders to publish

three regulations on the military's interior

order, code of conduct and military formation. state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The revisions to the regulations prioritise combat readiness as the foremost duty, with a fundamental orientation of preparing for and

engaging in warfare. Fully applying the strategy of running the armed forces by law, the revised rules aim to promote a more standardised order in war preparation,

training, operations and daily life, the report said. The revision to the military code of conduct refines the rules to award the excellent, punish violators and streamline relevant procedures, it said. The revised rules, which will take effect April 1, are designed to fully transform the country's military into world-class armed forces. The regulations on the military's interior order were revised to improve the management of mil-

itary personnel in matters such as soldiers' appearance and conduct, leave-taking and military training. The revised regulations on military formation were added with detailed codes of practice concerning military parades on the land, in the sea, at the dock and in the air. These rules were promulgated as China gears up for increased frictions with the US after the return of President Donald Trump, who vowed to follow a firm pol-

icy to contain Beijing's rise with tariffs as well

as strengthened American armed forces

# Canada designates 7 Latin American criminal groups as terrorist entities

Canada is designating seven Latin American criminal organisations as terrorist entities under the country's Criminal Code, giving Canadian law enforcement another tool in the fight against fentanyl trafficking, Public Safety Minister David McGuinty has said.

The list includes Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel, Jalisco New Generation Cartel and La Nueva Familia Michoacana, and was announced a day after the US government formally designated eight Latin American organized crime groups

as "foreign terrorist organisa-"The measures will help keep fen-

tanyl off Canadian streets and from entering the United States," McGuinty told a news conference. The announcement was Canada's latest response to US President Donald Trump 's claim that the flow of fentanyl and illegal immigration into the US were behind his threats of imposing a 25 per cent tariff on all Canadian goods with the exception of 10 per cent

on energy Trump has paused the implementation of those tariffs until at least

US border patrol statistics show that less than 1 per cent of all fentanyl seized is found at the northern border. But Canadian officials have expressed a willingness to do more to combat the deadly synthetic opioid

The other organisations designated as terrorist groups are Cartel del Golfo and Carteles Unidos, also from Mexico; Tren de Aragua, in Venezuela, and the Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, which started in California but became a dominant criminal force in El Salvador.

The designation effectively freezes a group's assets and property.

Banks and brokerages will freeze these entities' assets, which can then be the subject of seizure, restraint or forfeiture," said McGuinty.

It is also an offence to knowingly participate in, or contribute to, any activity of a listed terrorist

group.
The listing process begins with intelligence reports that indicate whether an organisation has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activi-

McGuinty said listing a group as a terrorist entity follows a rigorous process that "must meet a legal threshold".

If the public safety minister believes that threshold has been met, the minister may recommend to the federal cabinet that the organization be added to the

RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme said the RCMP has intelligence indicating that crime cartels operate in Canada.

"There's also strong intelligence that Canadians have actually

moved to Mexico and South America to facilitate the transport of certain commodities into Canada," Duheme said. Canada recently appointed Kevin

Brosseau, a former member of the RCMP and a former national security and intelligence adviser, as its fentanyl czar to help stop drugs entering the US. The Canadian government has

also announced it is spending 1.3 billion Canadian dollars (USD 910 million) on increased border security, including new helicopters, technology and per-

November. Patel's supporters

include a group of former agents

who have previously been

accused of misconduct and were

suspended, the New York Times

These former agents, who deny wrongdoing, have accepted financial help from Patel's non-

profit foundation in some cases

and say they have been in touch

with him since he was nominat-

# **UK** foreign secretary questions Russia's 'appetite' for peace

### ... challenges Lavrov at tense G20 meet

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy said he saw no appetite for peace from Russia in Ukraine after listening to a speech by Russia's top diplomat at a tense Group of 20 meeting in South Africa.

Lammy was speaking to reporters on Thursday after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addressed other senior diplomats in a closeddoor session at the G20 foreign ministers meeting Johannesburg.

"I have to say when I listened to what the Russians and what Lavrov have just said in the chamber this afternoon, I don't see an appetite to really get to that peace," Lammy said.

Lammy said Lavrov left his seat in the meeting room when it was Lammy's turn to speak. No details of Lavrov's speech were released.

The two-day G20 gathering on Thursday and Friday comes days after landmark bilateral

and Russia over ending the war in Ukraine. Those talks sidelined Washington's European allies and Ukraine, who weren't involved.

US President Donald Trump has further upended the West's position by criticising Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and falsely blaming Ukraine for the full-scale invasion by Russia. The war's third anniversarv is next week.

"At the moment, we've had talks effectively about talks," Lammy said. "We've not got anywhere near a negotiated settlement." In his own speech, which was released by the UK Foreign Office, Lammy criticised Russia for what he called "Tsarist imperialism".

"You know, mature countries learn from their colonial failures and their wars, and Europeans have had much to learn over the generations and the centuries," Lammy said, according to the transcript from the UK Foreign Office. "But I'm afraid to say that

Russia has learned nothing." "I was hoping to hear some sympathy for the innocent victims of the aggression. I was hoping to hear some readiness to seek a durable peace. What I heard was the logic of imperialism dressed up as a realpolitik, and I say to you all, we should not be surprised, but neither should we be fooled." Lammy referred to Lavrov's

man's tired fabrications' Tensions at the meeting were underlined when a photo opportunity for the foreign ministers to pose together for pictures was cancelled with no reason given.

speech as "the Russian gentle-

The United Kingdom, France, Germany and the European Union have all pledged continued support for Ukraine and were expected to reinforce that position at the G20 meeting. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who led those talks with Lavrov in Saudi Arabia this week, was a high-profile absentee from the meeting. Rubio boycotted amid US ten-

sions with host South Africa over some of its policies, which the Trump administration has labelled anti-American. The US was represented by Dana Brown, its acting ambassador to South Africa. The G20 is made up of 19 of

the world's major economies, the European Union and the African Union. Others attending the meeting in South Africa included EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, who repeated France's condemnation of Russia in an op-ed published by several media outlets.

The Russian Foreign Ministry did release details of a bilateral meeting Lavrov held with China's Wang. Afterwards, Lavrov said Russia's relations with China "have become and remain an increasingly significant factor in stabilising the international situation and preventing it from sliding into total confrontation," according to a

He was the 18th Cabinet official

Patel takes the helm of an FBI in

PUBLIC NOTICE

flux after the justice depart-

#### Kash Patel confirmed as Trump's FBI director should be dramatically curtailed the morning news conference. "Our Republican colleagues, Trump announced his plans to make Patel the FBI director in

New FBI director Kash Patel has vowed to "rebuild" trust in the bureau as he becomes the first Indian-American to lead the country's premier law enforcement agency after being confirmed by the US Senate.

The Republican-led Senate narrowly voted to confirm 44-yearold Patel on Thursday. The Senate voted 51 to 49 to confirm Patel. Two Republicans, Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski, voted against his confirmation. The nomination faced intense scrutiny from Democrats on Capitol Hill who have warned that Patel is poised to use the position to seek retribution against Donald Trump's perceived political enemies.

In his confirmation hearings, Patel also denied keeping a list of "deep state" enemies, while playing down controversial past remarks he had made such as referring to law enforcement officials who investigated Trump as "criminal gangsters".

After his confirmation, Patel posted on X," I am honoured to be confirmed as the ninth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Thank you to President Trump and Attorney General Bondi for your unwavering confidence and support." "The FBI has a storied legacy—from the "G-Men" to safeguarding our nation in the wake of 9/11. The American people deserve an FBI that is transparent, accountable, and committed to justice. The politicisation of our justice system has eroded public trust—but that ends today. My mission as Director is clear: let good cops be cops—and rebuild trust in the FBI," he said. He also warned that the agency would hunt down those who seek to harm Americans.

approved by lawmakers since Trump was inaugurated a month

We will vote no," Sen. Adam Schiff (D-California) said at

ment forced out some of its top

officials and demanded the

names of agents who investigat-

ed the 2021 riot by Trump sup-

Patel replaces Christopher Wray

whom Trump picked in 2017.

Wray resigned before inaugura-

tion day last month after the

incoming Republican president indicated he would fire him.

The role of FBI director is sup-

Republicans have defended

Trump's pick to lead the FBI, arguing that Patel will bring

needed transparency to the FBI

and dismissing controversial

After announcing Patel as his

FBI pick, Trump posted on social media calling him "an

advocate for truth, account

"Kash is a brilliant lawyer, inves-

tigator, and 'America First' fight-

er who has spent his career

exposing corruption, defending

justice, and protecting the

American people," Trump said.

Meanwhile, Democrats say Patel

is a far-right conspiracy theorist

with little experience in law

enforcement, and someone who

would put fealty to Trump above his oath to lead a depart-

ment that is meant to operate independently. "(Patel's) poor

judgment and lack of experience

make him wholly unqualified to

keep Americans safe as our

FBI Director. I voted no,

Senator Martin Heinrich said on

ability, and the constitution".

past statements as hyperbole.

posed to be a 10-year term.

porters at the US Capitol.

intimidated by this president and threats of primary challenges from the MAGA (Make America Great Again) world, may vote to confirm him. But... they will have to live with that vote." In his new position, Patel will lead a mammoth organisation with more than 30,000 employees, hundreds of offices nationwide and a sprawling mandate to investigate cases involving national security, terrorism and violent crimes.

Since long before his nomination, Patel has called for profound changes within the FBI. His 2023 book described the bureau as "a tool of surveillance and suppression of American citizens" and said its powers

ed, the report added. New York-born Patel has his roots in Gujarat. However, his parents are from East Africa - his mother is from Tanzania and his father is from Uganda. They came to the US from Canada in

reported.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, (U.P.) Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

#### **E-TENDER NOTICE**

E-Tender are invited from eligible firms/contractors for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & http://etender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc

SI. No	JOB NO	NAME OF WORK	Amount (Rs.)
1.	29/GM/SM (NTC)/ 2024-25	P/L Thermoplastic paint, spring post, flexible median marker on road sector-71 underpass to sector-105 underpass, Noida.	8222201.00
2.	32/GM/SM (NTC)/ 2024-25	Construction of Table Top Speed Breaker with Signage on various Roads in WC-1, 2 & 3 Noida.	7947407.42
W	nich can be	uploaded from 24.02.2025 to 03	3.03.2025 upto

5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 04.03.2025 at 11.00 AM.

35/GM/SM (NTC)/ 2024-25	Widening of Road Surrounding Roundabout at Model Town Golchakker Sector-62, Noida.	6252170.18
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Which can be uploaded from 24.02.2025 to 10.03.2025 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 11.03.2025 at 11.00 AM. General Manager (NTC)

NOIDA **CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA** 

#### Brazil's top court justice orders X to pay **USD 1.4** million fine for non-compliance certain accounts from the months over free speech, far-

PTI SAO PAULO

Brazil's Supreme Court Alexandre de Moraes ordered X to pay 8.1 million Brazilian reais (USD 1.4 million) in fines for failing to comply with judicial orders, according to a judicial ruling. The ruling, signed on Wednesday and made public by the court on Thursday, said the social media platform refused to provide registration data for a profile attributed to Allan dos Santos, an ally of former president Jair Bolsonaro accused of spreading falsehoods.

In July 2024, De Moraes ordered both X and Meta to block and ban the account and provide the data. X said it had blocked the account but could not deliver the requested information, arguing that its operators didn't collect it and that the user had "no technical connection point with Brazil".

De Moraes rejected the argument and, in early August, imposed a daily fine of 17,500) if the social media platform failed to provide the data. By October, the total fine for noncompliance had reached 8.1 million Brazilian reais. X appealed but later notified the court that it would pay the fine. In Wednesday's ruling, the justice ordered the company to pay the full amount immediately. It is unclear from the decision reviewed by The Associated Press whether X provided the requested registration data. The company didn't immediately reply to AP's request for comment. Last year, De Moraes ordered X's nationwide shutdown after the company said it was removing all remaining Brazil staff in the country, saying de Moraes

#### Securitymen kill 6 militants in **NW Pakistan**

PTI PESHAWAR

Security forces in Pakistan acting on intelligence raided a militant hideout in a former stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban in the country's northwest on Friday, triggering an intense shootout in which six militants were killed, the military said. The raid was carried out in Karak, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, the military said in a statement. An operation was underway to eliminate any other militants

found there. The military provided no further details about the killed militants, but such operations are often conducted against the Pakistani Taliban, which are also known as Tehrik-e-Taliban

Pakistan, or TTP. The TTP is an ally of the Taliban in Afghanistan and has stepped up its assaults in Pakistan since the Afghan Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021.

had threatened its legal representative in the country with arrest. The country's law requires foreign companies to have a local legal representative to receive notifications of court decisions and swiftly take any requisite action — particularly, in X's case, the takedown of accounts.

The social media was reinstated a month later, after com-

plying with orders to block PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

otice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. huvneshwar Gaur & Mrs. Monika Sharma who is e owner of Freehold Residential Property Bearing 0.254, land area measuring 41.80 square meters e. 50 square yards), Comprising in Khsara No. 410, Situated in the Revenue Estate of Village angiolala, Delhi State, Delhi and the Colony Known 8' Ashok Mohalla', Gali No. 4, Nangloi, Delhi-10041 through Sale Deed dated 18.05.2023, (Doc. 0.3385, SK-14 Delhi) which was executed by Mr. ari Prakash in their favour and intend to mortgage gianst the financial assistance from Adflya Birla ousing Finance Limited That, the Surviving ember Certificate from Authority in the name of Mrs. Vaijyanti w/o Mr. Rajendra Singh, 2) Mrs. coja Sharma w/o Mr. Yajinder Sharma & 3) Mrs. coja Sharma w/o Mr. Jai Prakash Sharma (all aughters), 4) Mr. Sanjay Gaur, 5) Mr. Pradeep umar Gaur (not present)(all sons) are all the gal heirs of Late Mr. Fck Chand & Late Mrs. dervati Devi is not available. To comply the quirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public bice that if any Person having any type of claim griftle/interest/creating mortgage over the said operty, may inform in writing, at the address entioned below, about his objections, within 7 ays from today, failing which it shall be presumed at the said property is refer form all type of

platform, name an official legal representative and pay fines imposed for not comply ing with earlier court orders. Elon Musk, the social media owner, and De Moraes, a foe of former president Jair Bolsonaro, sparred for

This is to inform the general public that Saroj and Kavita are the owners of Plot of land area measuring 140 Sq. Yds., Khewat Khata no. - 529/504, Khatoni no. - 2557 Khasra no. - 158 &159, Fatehpur Billoch Faridabad 12/1004 through 2 Sale Deeds i.e., Sale Deed dated 24,06.2013 as doc. No. 2868 executed by Mr. Girraj Parsad, Mr. Mahabir Parsad, Mr. Amit Kumar & K. Anil Kumar for self and as general attorney of Mr. Ashok Kumar, Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Mr. Manoj Kumar & Kamla Devi in favour of Mrs. Saroj in respect of area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., and Sale Deed dated 27.05.2021 as doc. No. 874 executed by Mr. Ashok Kumar, Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Mr. Manoj through GPA Mr. Anil Kumar in favour of Kavita in respect of area measuring 40 Sq. Yds., Mhewat Khata no. -

measuring 40 Sq. Yds., Khewat Khata no. 529/504, Khatoni no. -2557 Khasra no. -158(9-8.159(0-8)). Saroj and Kavita are in the process of mortgagii the said property with SMFG India Credit Co. Lt (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd.). A (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd.). An objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do swithin the stipulated 07-days period by contacting the property of the control of the contro

#### **Guru Nanak Dev** University, Amritsar **Short Term E-Tender Notice For**

right accounts and misinfor-

mation. Musk called the judge

an enemy of free speech and

a criminal. But De Moraes

decisions have been repeated-

including his nationwide

ly upheld by his peers

Internet Bandwith Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of 1 GBPS (1:1) Internet Bandwidth be submitted online latest by 08-03-2025 upto 4:00 p.m. Detailed information can be obtained from website www.eproc.punjab.gov.in. Any corrigendum/ Addendum related to these e-tender will be uploaded, if required, on Punjab

NA/12/28242/2023/41904

**SUNIL HEALTHCARE LIMITED** SUNLOC Regd. Office: 38E/252-A, Vijay Tower, Shahpurjat, New Delhi-110049

CIN-L24302DL1973PLC189662/Email ID: -info@sunilhealthcare.com/Web:- www.sunilhealthcare.com
Tel;-+91-11-49435555/00, Fax; +91-11-43850087

NOTICE OF POSTAL BALLOT

Members of the Company are hereby informed that pursuant to Section 110 and other applicable provisions, if any, of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rules made thereunder, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 and Secretarial Standards on General Meeting issued by the Institute of Company Secretaries of India including any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force read with applicable Circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA") and by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI Circulars) and other applicable laws, rules and regulations, if any, the Company is seeking approva of its Members for the Special Businesses by passing Special resolution(s) as set out in the Notice of the Postal Ballot dated February 13, 2025 ("Notice") and accordingly has completed dispatch of said Notice through electronic mode on February 21, 2025 to the members of the Company, whose name appears in the Register of Members/List of Beneficial Owners as received from NSDL and CDSL as on Friday, February 14, 2025 and who has registered their email with our RTA/Company, for the approval of members by way of Special Resolution(s) through Postal Ballot only through remote e-voting. A person, who is not a Member as on Friday, February 14, 2025 should treat postal ballot notice for information purpose

The Company is providing remote e-Voting facility to all its members to cast their votes electronically. For this purpose, the Company has engaged the services of M/s. MUFG Intime India Private Limited (Formerly Link Intime India Private Limited) ("MUFGINTIME") as the agency to provide e-Voting facility. The Postal Ballot Notice is also available at website of the Company at <a href="https://www.sunilhealthcare.com/postal-ballot">https://www.sunilhealthcare.com/postal-ballot</a> and on the rebsite of "MUFGINTIME", the Company's Agency for conducting Remote E-Voting at https://instavote.linkintime.co.in. and on the websites of BSB Limited (www.bseindia.com).

The Members holding shares in dematerialized mode are requested to update their KYC details including email address with the relevant Deposito Participants. Members holding share in Physical mode are requested to update/register their KYC details including email address by submitting duly filled and signed form ISR-1, by providing Folio No., Name of shareholder, scanned copy of the share certificate (front and back), PAN (self-attested) scanned copy), AADHAR (self-attested scanned copy) at cs@sunilhealthcare.com/ info@sunilhealthcare.com or to M/s Alankit Assignmen Limited at "4E/2, Alankit House, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi 110055", Contact no. 91-11-4254 1234 email id: <a href="mailto:rta@alankit.com">rta@alankit.com</a>

The remote e-voting period shall commence on Sunday, February 23, 2025 from 09:00 A.M. (IST) onwards and shall end on Monday March 24, 2025 at 5:00 P.M. (IST) (both days inclusive). During this period, Members of the Company holding equity shares either in physical or dematerialized form as on the Cut-off date, i.e. Friday, February 14, 2025 (including those Members who may not have received this Notice due to non-registration of their e-mail address with the Company or the Depositories / Depository Participants or RTA), may cas their vote electronically, in respect of the resolutions as set out in this Notice only through remote e-voting. The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by "MUFGINTIME" thereafter. Once the vote on resolution(s) is cast by a Member, no changes shall be allowed subsequently. The Board of Directors of the Company has appointed Mr. Tara Chand Sharma, Proprietor of Jain Sharma & Associates, Company Secretaries

(ICSI Membership No.: F-5749, C.P No. 4078), Company Secretary in Practice as Scrutinizer for conducting the Postal Ballot through remot

e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner.

The results of the Postal Ballot will be announced by the Chairman or any other person authorized by the Chairman in writing for this purpose on or before Thursday, March 27, 2025 at the Registered Office of Company. The said result along with Scrutinizer's report would also be displayed at the Registered and Corporate Office of the Company. Additionally, the Results will also be uploaded on the Company's website of the Company www.sunilhealthcare.com as well as on website of "MUFGINTIME" at https://instavote.linkintime.co.in.

In case shareholders/ members holding securities in demat mode have any technical issues related to login through Depository i.e. NSDL

CDSL, they may contact the respective helpdesk given below:				
Login type	Helpdesk details			
Individual Shareholders holding securities in demat mode with NSDL	Members facing any technical issue in login can contact NSDL helpdesk by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or call at : 022 - 4886 7000			
Individual Shareholders holding securities in demat mode with CDSL	Members facing any technical issue in login can contact CDSL helpdesk by sending a request a helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or contact at toll free no. 1800 22 55 33			

Helpdesk for Shareholders holding securities in physical mode / Non-Individual Shareholders holding securities in demat mode: Shareholders holding securities in physical mode / Non-Individual Shareholders holding securities in demat mode facing any technical issue in login they may refer the Frequently Asked Questions ('FAQs') and InstaVote e-Voting manual available at https://instavote.linkintime.co.in, under Help section or may contact INSTAVOTE helpdesk by sending a request at enotices@in.mpms.mufg.com or contact on:

for detail instruction of Remote e-voting, the members are requested to go through the notice of the Postal Ballot under the heading "REMOTE E-VOTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHAREHOLDERS" (as mentioned after note no. 14).

For SUNIL HEALTHCARE LIMITED

SATYENDU PATTNAIK

**COMPANY SECRETARY & COMPLIANCE OFFICER** FCS-7736 Place - New Delhi Dated- February 21, 2025

Email: cs@sunilhealthcare.com

Contact No. 011-49435541

38E/252A, Vijay Tower, Shahpurjat, New Delhi-110049 CIN No: L24302DL1973PLC189662 Phone No: +91-11-49435555/00 Fax no 011-43850087 Email ID: info@sunilhealthcare.com

# My client **Sh. Sunil Kumar Singh** owner of vacant Plot having land area adm. 40 sq. yds. (33.44 sq. mt.), out of Khasra no. 40, situated in village sadullapur Pargana and Teh. Dadri, Dist. Gautambudh Nagar Vide Registered

and Teh. Darf, States of Things excellent Trages and Teh. Darf, Dist. Gautambudh Nagar Yide Registered sale deed as Doc no. 18851 dated 18.12.2017 executed by Priyanka. Singh at SR-ADARI U.P. the Original Registered sale deed as Doc no.10083 dated 20.07.2017 executed by Sona in favour of Smt Priyanka Singh has been lots and in this regard NOR IR no. 2025 0000130228 has been filed. The above-mentioned property is going to be mortgage with Muthoot Fincorp Limited Any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, tien any objection whatsoever in regard o above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered and within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, volam, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, ciaim, fien or objection shall be deemed to waived. **Adv. Vishal Mehan,** E-713, Karkardoo Delhi-110092; Mobile Number- 9811215181. **NOTICE INVITING TENDER** 

eproc.punjab.gov.in Director of Research The Secretary, on behalf of the Presiden Dhan Pothowar CGHS Ltd invites percentage from CPWD enlisted contractors of appropriate Class or above in Buildings & Roads category for the following work:

ME OF WORK: Additions / Alterations of the Mohinder Apartments (B1+S+10) due to increased FAR as per MPD-2021 at Plot No. 17, Sector-12, Dwarka, New Delhi NIT No.: 01/DHAN POTHOWAR / 2024-25 ESTIMATED COSTPUT TO TENDER

Rs. 13,13,28,496/- (Civil Rs. 12,73,65,981/ Electrical Rs. 39 62 515/-**EARNEST MONEY** 

Rs.23,13,285/- (to be refunded after receiving

the Performance Guarantee).

PERIOD OF COMPLETION 27 Months

Last date & time of submission of Bid, EMD, copy of receipt for deposition of original EMD and other documents as specified in Notice Inviting Tender 08.03.2025 up to 03.00 P.M.

Last date and time of depositing original EMD

in Society Office 07.03.2025 up to 03.00 P.M.

obtained from the office of The Dhar 12. Dwarka, New Delhi - 110078. Furthe modification of change of dates, if any, shall

be published separately. Secretary. The Dhan Pothowar CGHS Ltd

FORM NO. URC-2 Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Act

[Pursuant to section 374(b) of the Compani Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the Companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014] Notice is hereby given that in pursuance ub-section (2) of section 366 of the Compa 1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance or sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act. 2013. an application is proposed to be made after fifteen days hereof but before the expiry of thirty days hereinafter to the Registrar at Centra Registration Centre (CRC), Indian Institute Comporate Affairs (IGA), Plot No. 6, 7, 8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, District Gurgaon (Haryana), Pin Code-122050 that a partnership firm "Ms. PARI INFRASTRUCTURE" may be registered under Part of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares. 2. The Principal objects of the company are

To carry on the business of builders, developer contractors, subcontractors, civil engineer to carry on the business of builders, developers contractors, subcontractors, civil engineers surveyors, designers, consultants, and to undertak construction, development, and maintenance residential, commercial, industrial, and othe infrastructure projects. To purchase, acquiri develop, lease, exchange, or otherwise deal in lam buildings. Townships. commercial, complexes develop, lease, exchange, or otherwise deal in land, buildings, townships, commercial complexes, industrial estates, highways, roads, bridges, arports, and other infrastructure facilities. To acquire, hold, buy, sell, lease, sublease, mortgage, exchange, or otherwise deal with land, buildings, and properties of all types, whether freehold or leasehold, and to act as property managers, consultants, and advisors in urvest in acquire, or collaborate in real estate projects through joint ventures, partnerships, or special purpose vehicles (SPVs) for development, sale, or lease of properties. To plan, develop, and construct affordable housing projects, smart cities, integrated townships, eco-friendly buildings, and urban infrastructure projects. To obtain necessary permissions, licenses, and approvals from government authorities, local bodies, and regulatory agencies for development and construction projects. agencies for development and consurbation proposed 3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office atE024, Oxford Square Supertech Eco, Village-3, Near EkMurtChauraha Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UTTAR PRADESH-pontan.

4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting 4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting it withis application may communicate their objection i writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centric (RCR). (IICA), Piot No. 6.7, 8. Sector 5, MT Manesa District Gurgaon (Haryana), Pin Code-122050, with twenty one days from the date of publication of thin notice. Dated this 10th February 2025 Name of Applicant:

 Vinit Kumar 2. Amit Kumar 3. RAJESH KUMAP PATHAK 4. AMRITA DEVIS 5.SUMIT SHARM, 6.POOJA 7. SHALINI MISHRA

#### RAISINA BENGALI SCHOOL (Sr. Secondary) Mandir Marg, New Delhi -110001

(Linguistic Minority Institution Aided by DTE. OF EDUCATION: G.N.C.T.D.)

Advt. No. RBS/MM/RECTT./D.R./2025/01

Invites applications for the following vacant positions from eligible candidates 1. P.G.T.: 1 post each for BIOLOGY, ECONOMICS, PHYSICS, MUSIC (VOCAL)/ L-8 (7CPC) T.G.T., T.G.T. (LANG.) & T.G.T./ Misc.: NATURAL SCIENCE - 2 posts & 1 post each for BENGALI, SANSKRIT (Reserved

for PwBD), COMPUTER SCIENCE, PHYSICAL EDN. TR. (MALE), MUSIC TR., DRAWING TR (Reserved for PwBD), SPECIAL EDUCATION TR./L-7 (7CPC)

3. ASSISTANT TEACHER: 9 posts/L-6 (7CPC) 5. JUNIORASSISTANT/LDC: 1 post/L-2 (7CPC) 6.

LIBRARIAN (T.G.T. Grade): 1 post/ L-7 (7CPC)

Educational & Other Qualifications required/ Age Limit:

A. P.G.T. (BIOLOGY/ ECONOMICS/ PHYSICS): a) Master Degree in concerned subject from a recognized University/Institution with at least 50 percent marks in aggregate or equivalent grade in the following subjects:- PGT (Biology) - Zoology/ Botany/ Life science/Bio Sciences/ Bio Technology/ Genetics/Micro-Biology/Molecular Biology/Plant Physiology provided they have studied Botany and Zoology at Graduation level. PGT (Economics) - Economics/Applied Economics/Business Economics. PGT (Physics) - Physics/Electronics/Applied

Physics/Nuclear Physics. b) Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) from a recognized University; Or B.A.B.Ed./B.Sc.B.Ed.; Or three year integrated B.Ed.-M.Ed. from any NCTE recognized institution. B. P.G.T. (Music- VocaL): As per Recruitment Rule for the post of P.G.T. (Music) notified by the Dte. Of Education, Govt. of

C. T.G.T. (NATURAL SCIENCE AND COMPUTER SCIENCE): a) Natural Science: A Bachelors Degree in the concerned subject with at least 50 percent marks from a recognized University/ Institute (the concerned subject should have beer studied for at least 2 years) Or Masters Degree in the concerned subject from a recognized University/Institute with at least 50 percent marks in either bachelors degree or masters degree Or 4-year integrated programme /course /degree of B.ELED/B.Sc.B.Ed/B.A.B.Ed from any NCTE recognized Institution (the concerned subject should have been studied for at least 3 years), b) B.Ed or three year integrated B.Ed-M.Ed. From a recognized University/Institute (No Separate B.Ed/B.Ed-M.Ed. is required in the case of 4 years integrated course of B.El.Ed/B.Sc.B.Ed/ B.A.B.Ed). c) Pass in the Central Teachers Eligibility Test (CTET) Conducted by CBSE. Notes: should have studied at least one of the following science Subjects: Physics/Chemistry/Biology/Botany/Zoology/ Anthropology/life Science/Electronics /Bio-Technology/Bio Chemistry/Bio-Medical Science/ Molecular Cell Biology/Micro Biology/Applied Science and Geology.

b) Computer Science: As per relevant Recruitment Rule of Govt. of NCT of Delhi. D. T.G.T. (SANSKRIT & BENGALI): a) Bachelors Degree with at least 50% marks from a recognized University/ Institute (the concerned Language should have been studied for at least 2 years) or Masters Degree in concerned language with at least 50% marks in either Masters degree or bachelors degree or 4-year integrated programme/course/ degree of B.EI.Ed./B.A.B.Ed. from any NCTE recognized Institution (the concerned language should have been studied for at least three years). b) B.Ed. or three year integrated B.Ed.-M.Ed. from a recognized University/Institute (No separate B.Ed./B.Ed.-M.Ed. is required in the case of 4-year integrated course of B.El.Ed./B.A.B.Ed.). 3 Pass in the Central Teachers Eligibility Test (CTET) conducted by CBSE.

E. MUSIC TEACHER: B.A. Diploma with Music as one of the subject from a recognized University or Higher Secondary with prescribed qualifications as per R.R.

DRAWING TEACHER: a) Five Years Diploma in Drawing/ Painting/ Sculpture/ Graphic Art from University/ Institute recognized by Govt. of India or Masters Degree in Drawing/ Painting/ Fine Art from a recognized University or Bachelors Degree in Drawing/ Painting/ Fine Art from a recognized University plus Two Years Full time Diploma in Painting/ Fine Art

from a Recognized University/Institute G. SPL. EDN. TEACHER: a) Graduation Degree from a recognized University/ Institute. b) B.Ed (Special Education); OR |B.Ed (General) with one year Diploma in Special Education; OR |B.Ed (General) with two years Diploma in Special Education; OR B.Ed (General) with Post Graduate Professional Diploma in Special Education (PGPD); OR B.Ed Special Education and Post graduate professional Certificate in |Special Education (PGPC); OR PG Diploma in Special Education (Mental Retardation): OR PG Diploma in Special Education (Multiple Disability: Physical and |Neurological). OR |PG Diploma in Special Education (Locomotor impairment and Cerebral Palsy): OR Secondary Level Teacher Training | Course in Visual Impairment; OR |Senior Diploma in Teaching the Deaf: OR BA B.Ed in Visual Impairment. c) Qualified in Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) (Elementary | Stage) conducted by CBSE.d) Registration with Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). Education (CBSE). Note:1 BA B.Ed. in Visual Impairment being integrated course of graduation and B.Ed. Special Education, separate graduation is not | required in the case of candidate possessing BAB.Ed. in Visual Impairment. Note:2 Teacher with qualification in single disability area will be encouraged to specialize in other disability areas by

undergoing modular courses to take care of wide range of diversities in a General School. H. PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER (MALE): Male candidates, Graduate with Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed.) or

ASSISTANT TEACHER: a) Hr. or Sr. Secondary/ Intermediate b) should have studied Maths. & Science upto Matric/ 10th Std. c) JBT/STC (Relaxable by Selection Committee, in cases of candidates with higher teachers training qualification)

J. LIBRARIAN: a) Bachelor's Degree/ Equivalent b) Bachelor's Degree or equivalent Diploma in Library Science c) 2 years experience in Library/ Computerization of Library or 1 year Certificate Course in Computer Application from a recognized

K. JUNIOR ASSISTANT/LDC: As per relevant Recruitment Rule of Govt. of NCT of Delhi.

L. PEON & MALI: As per relevant Recruitment Rule/s of Govt. of NCT of Delhi. Age & Age relaxation: As per Recruitment Rules and relaxation for SC/ST/OBC/ P.H./ GOVT. Employees and others

as per Delhi School Education Act & Rules, 1973. Qualifications for all posts are relaxable at the discretion of the Competent Authority in case of candidates otherwise well-qualified. Detailed Recruitment Rules are available in school's website

www.raisinabengalischool.org

Preference will be given to Bengali candidates. Being Linguistic Minority Institution, NO caste based reservation is applicable for any of the posts. Reservations for Physically Handicapped categories will be provided as per applicable rules

2. Candidates already employed in Govt./ Govt. Undertakings/ recognized schools must apply through Proper Channel only. Submit applications on plain paper (A4 SIZE) with self-attested copies of Bio-data and all testimonials addressed to the Manager, Raisina Bengali School, Mandir Marg, New Delhi - 110001 BY REGISTERED POST/ SPEED POST. ENVELOP MUST BE SUPERSCRIBED ON TOP "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF ..... (Name of Post) ... Separate applications to be submitted for each post if any applicant is desirous of applying for more than one post. LAST DATE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS BY REGISTERED POST/ SPEED POST: 15.03.2025.

Applications shall be received by Registered Post/Speed Post ONLY. Applications submitted by any other mode and/ or incomplete/ defective applications shall be summarily rejected without any further communication. N.B.: All selections/ recruitments of the present Advertisement are subject to the final outcome of the Writ Petition (Civil) No. 4969/2024 pending before Hon'ble Delhi High Court.

# Rate cut appropriate monetary policy response: RBI Governor

 $R^{\rm eserve~Bank~of~India}_{\rm (RBI)~Governor~Sanjay}$ Malhotra opined that rate reduction was an appropriate monetary policy response at juncture citing inflation movement of towards the central bank's 4 per cent target, said the Monetary Policy Committee

(MPC) meeting minutes

released on Friday. Malhotra, along with five other members of the MPC had voted for a 25 basis points reduction in the shortterm lending rate (repo) to 6.25 per cent. The RBI at its meeting held from February 5 to February 7 effected the rate cut after a gap of five

"Given the macroeconomic outlook when inflation is expected to align with the target, and recognising that monetary policy is forwardlooking, I view a lower policy rate to be more appropriate at current juncture, Malhotra said, according to the minutes.

Chairing his first MPC meeting, he had also pointed out that rising uncertainties on global financial markets

coupled with continuing risk of adverse weather events pose risks to the inflation and growth outlook.

While the central bank had reduced the rate, it continued with the neutral stance of monetary policy.

'This will provide the flexibility to respond to the evolving macroeconomic environment. By taking this logical course, monetary policy will be able to fulfil its mandate and play its part in the sustainable development of the Indian economy," Malhotra said.

Headline inflation, after moving above the upper tolerance band in October, has moderated and was at a five-month low of 4.3 per cent in January. MPC member and RBI

Governor Rajeshwar Rao said that at the current juncture, with a alignment of headline inflation towards the 4 per cent target, there is greater space to address concerns regarding growth by way of reduction in the

policy repo rate.
"This monetary policy measure in conjunction with

measures announced in the Budget should give a fillip to aggregate demand

conditions. Furthermore, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to fiscal consolidation, which should help to anchor medium-term inflation expectations," Rao

RBI Executive Director and panel member Rajiv Ranjan said in line with the sequencing path that the RBI followed, a policy rate cut in February 2025 is the most rational and appropriate next step as we now have greater confidence disinflation path.

"In line with this prognosis, we also prepared the market infusing dity for sufficient liquidity better transmission. The baseline projections suggest headline inflation to average at 4.2 per cent during 2025-26," he said, according to the minutes. The external members of the

Nagesh Kumar, Saugata Bhattacharya, and Ram Singh - too had voted for a reduction in the repo Nagesh Kumar had flagged

concern about a threat of

dumping of excess capacities in China with their deep pockets and their access to the Western markets coming

under a cloud. He also noted that some manufacturing sectors have begun to feel the pinch including steel (possibly explaining the growth) while negative growth) labourintensive consumer sectors such as garments and leather goods have been facing ar onslaught.

The latest Economic Survey shows FDI inflows have been subdued, with foreign investors both FDI and FPIs repatriating, leaving little investments in net terms. "Therefore, the case for

supporting growth cannot be overemphasised," External member Saugata

Bhattacharya said that in view of the downward inflation trajectory, rate cut is the "appropriate policy response at this point of the economic cycle'

Bhattacharya also voted to continue with the neutral monetary policy stance. Ram Singh said the Union Budget 2025 has given a push said on Friday. Addressing the Invest Kerala Global Summit (IKGS) here, the commerce and industry minister said he has come here to express the central government's solidarity and

His comments also came against the backdrop of differences between the BJPled Centre and the Kerala government, which is headed by the Left Democratic Front (LDF), on various issues.

full support to the event.

The proposed bilateral trade pact between India and the US will be the "mother of all

deals" that will provide huge

opportunities for Indians and

Americans to work together, Union Minister Piyush Goyal

The minister mentioned about Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE and said it was the world's fastest ever negotiated free trade agreement.

"We hope to start the process soon for CEPA with Bahrain," he said in the presence of ministers from Bahrain and

According to Goyal, India is already in dialogues with the European Union, the UK and

# agreed FTA: Piyush Goyal

Union Minister Piyush Goyal addresses a gathering during Invest Kerala Global Summit 2025, in Kochi, Kerala

Oman for the trade deals.

CEPA with UAE fastest

'We will soon start discussing the administration of the US a strong, powerful economic engagement and a bilateral trade deal which will be the mother of all deals providing huge opportunities for Indians and Americans to work together and complement each other's strengths in this very turbulent world," the minister said.

Highlighting the growth opportunities in Kerala and the country, Goyal told investors not to miss the bus and with respect to the state, not to miss the boat.

"Those who miss the boat may be left at the shore while others will sail with tailwinds of growth. growth, progress and prosperity that India offers," the minister said.

INVEST

Around 3,000 participants are expected at the two-day summit. Goyal said it is always a pleasure to visit God's Own Country and in every visit, you will feel like never going back. "I will go back, so you don't have to worry. The lotus has not yet bloomed in Kerala but very soon. That was on a lighter note, do not take it that this is a political platform," Goyal, also a senior BJP leader,

# Forex reserves drop to USD 635.721 Billion

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

Snapping the three-week rising streak, India's forex reserves dropped by \$2.54 Billion to \$635.721 Billion in the week ended February 14, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting

week, the reserves had increased by \$7.654 Billion to \$638.261 Billion.

The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of \$704.885 Billion in September 2024. The forex kitty however declined thereafter due to forex market interventions by RBI to reduce volatility in the

For the week ended February 14, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$4.515 Billion to \$539.591 Billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves, however, increased by \$1.942 Billion to \$74.15 Billion during the week, the RBI said.

# Sensex declines nearly 425 points

**PTI** MUMBAI

alling for the fourth straight Halling for the fourth straight day, benchmark Sensex declined by nearly 425 points on Friday due to selling in auto, pharma and banking shares and relentless foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex dropped 424.90 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 75,311.06. During the day, it tanked 623.55 points or 0.82

per cent to 75,112.41. The NSE Nifty declined 117.25 points or 0.51 per cent to 22,795.90.

In four trading days, the BSE barometer tumbled 685.8 points or 0.90 per cent while the Nifty declined 163.6 points or 0.71 per cent.

the Sensex pack, Mahindra and Mahindra tanked over 6 per cent.

Adani Ports, Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Zomato, ICICI Bank, State Bank of were also among the laggards. Tata Steel, Larsen and Toubro, HCL Tech, Asian Paints, HDFC Bank and NTPC were among the gainers.

"A combination of negative factors such as relentless FII selling, falling rupee, expensive valuations and the US threat of reciprocating tariff levies continue to drive investors away from Indian equities.

"In fact, local benchmarks under-performed both Asian and European indices, which logged significant gains. Barring metals, the slump in domestic markets was led by weakness in banking, IT, telecom, auto, realty and oil and gas shares," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Foreign Institutional Investors

(FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹3,311.55 Crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. The BŠE midcap gauge declined 1.18 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.43 per

Among BSE sectoral indices, auto dropped 2.60 per cent, consumer discretionary (1.49 per cent), oil and gas (1.42 per cent), realty (1.33 per cent), telecommunication (1.19 per cent) and consumer durables (0.87 per cent).

Metal emerged as the only gainer and jumped 1.23 per

As many as 2,246 stocks declined, while 1,701 advanced and 113 remained unchanged on the BSE.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark declined 628.15 points or 0.82 per cent and the Nifty went lower by 133.35 points or 0.58 per cent.

The domestic market continued to exhibit broadinfluenced by investor concerns over the hawkish tone of the FOMC minutes, which signalled prolonged higher interest rates that could constrain liquidity in emerging markets, Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial

Services, said. "Although the market has undergone a healthy correction, the uncertainties surrounding the gradual recovery of corporate earnings and ongoing tariff-related risks continue to cast doubt on valuation levels, particularly in the broader market. India is currently lagging behind its Asian peers, as FII outflows remain high, with the "sell India, buy China" strategy continuing to yield returns for the time being," he added.

empowerment of women across all age groups pan India.

The Adani Foundation has

been dedicated to empowering

since

implementing a series of

designed to meet the unique

needs of women at all life

stages. From infancy and early

childhood to adolescence,

sustained outcomes through

program designs that unlock

1996.

interventions

women for nearly

decades

targeted

### Government classifies barytes, felspar, mica, quartz as major minerals

**PTI** ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Friday said that it has changed the classification of barytes, felspar, mica and quartz into the category of major minerals.

This move would pave the way for an increased exploration and scientific minin $\bar{g}$  of such resources that are primary source of many critical minerals. Earlier, these were classified as

minor minerals. "The Ministry of Mines vide

gazette notification dated 20th February, 2025 has shifted minerals Barytes, Felspar, Mica and Ouartz from the list

of minor minerals to the category of major minerals," an official statement said. The development came on the

heels of the government's National Critical Mineral Mission which seeks exploration and mining of critical minerals within the country including recovery of these minerals from various overburden

Quartz, felspar and mica are found in pegmatite rocks, which are an important source of many critical minerals such as beryl, lithium, niobium tantalum, molybdenum, tin, titanium and tungsten among

#### PM to release 19th instalment of PM-KISAN PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Monday

release the 19th instalment of PM-KISAN scheme, transferring around ₹22,000 Crore directly to bank accounts of 9.8 crore farmers, as part of the government's effort to enhance income of the farming community.

Under this scheme, each beneficiary gets an annual benefit of ₹6,000, in three equal installments of ₹2,000 every four months.

Addressing a press conference here, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday said, "Prime Minister will release the 19th instalment of PM-KISAN on February 24 at a function in Bhagalpur, Bihar. The amount will be directly

credited to bank accounts of eligible farmers." He said a total amount of

₹22,000 Crore will be disbursed to 9.8 Crore farmers. Chouhan said the number of

beneficiaries has increased from 9.6 Crore in the 18th instalment. The minister said that the

government has disbursed total ₹3.46 Lakh Crore so far under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) and the number will rise to Rs 3.68 Lakh Crore after the release of 19th instalment next week.

The PM-KISAN, launched in February 2019, is the world's largest DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) scheme and has helped farmers meet their expenses towards purchase of seeds and fertilisers

Asked about the talks with protesting farmers in Punjab, Chouhan said the government has been holding talks with the farming community and will continue to do so.

He said the government is

committed to increasing production, reduce input cost, enhance farmers' income from their produce and encourage natural farming. Chouhan said the Congress party talks a lot about farmers welfare but it never gave any direct financial assistance to

farmers when they were in

Elaborating on the event at Bhagalpur, Chouhan said around 2.5 Crore farmers are expected to participate physically and virtually. He said Bihar Governor, Chief Minister and the central

ministers belonging to the

Gokul Mission, besides a couple of rail projects in the The minister said the release of 19th instalment from Bhagalpur should not be linked to upcoming assembly election in Bihar. He added

that the Prime Minister has

been releasing the instalments

state will also attend the

event. Chouhan informed

that the Prime Minister will

also inaugurate a dairy

processing unit being established at Barauni and a

centre of excellence under

unit being

from different states. Chouhan said that he will be meeting Makhana farmers at Darbhanga on February 23 to understand the problems faced by them. He said the Makhana Board proposed in this year's Budget will be soon

## Rupee falls seven paise against US dollar | Moen enter premium

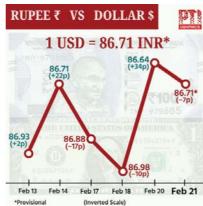
The rupee pared initial gains and (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by sustained foreign fund outflows and a recovery in the American currency index.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee declined on Friday on weak domestic markets and a recovery in the US dollar index. However, weak crude oil prices cushioned the downside.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a positive note at 86.50 against the greenback. During the session it pared the gains and fell to an intra-day low of 86.77 before ending the session at 86.71 (provisional) against the dollar, logging a loss of 7 paise from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee appreciated 34 paise to close at 86.64 against the US

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.22 per cent higher at 106.61.



Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.42 per cent to \$76.16 per barrel in futures trade.

We expect the rupee to trade with negative bias on the back of weak domestic markets and selling pressure by FIIs. A bounce back in the US dollar pressurised the rupee further.

However, any fresh intervention by the RBI and weak tone in crude oil prices

may support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

nary further noted INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 86.50 to 87.

In the domestic equity market, the 30share BSE Sensex declined 424.90 points, or 0.56 per cent, to settle at 75,311.06, while the Nifty fell 117.25 points, or 0.51 per cent, to 22,795.90

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹3,311.55 Crore on net basis on Thursday,

according to exchange data. Meanwhile, Moody's Analytics on Thursday said India's growth will slow to 6.4 per cent in 2025, from 6.6 per cent in 2024, as new US tariffs and softening global demand weigh on exports. In its report titled 'Asia-Pacific Outlook'. Chaos Abadd' Moody's Outlook: Chaos Ahead', Moody's Analytics said growth across the Asia-Pacific economy will slow in 2025 as trade tensions, policy shifts, and uneven recoveries knock the region's

# sanitaryware market in India

 $M^{\mathrm{oen,\ a\ global\ leader\ in}}_{\mathrm{kitchen\ and\ bathroom}}$ solutions, has partnered with Bathline Acquaviva Group to expand into India's fastgrowing sanitary ware market. This strategic alliance blends Moen's expertise in innovation and sustainability with Acquaviva's presence in the Indian premium segment.

İndia's sanitary ware industry, currently valued at ₹539.5 Billion (\$6.5 Billion), is projected to grow at a CAGR of 7.74 per cent over the next five years. Moen's entry aligns with rising consumer demand, driven by increasing incomes and a booming real estate sector.

'This collaboration allows us

leadership with Acquaviva's deep market understanding. Together, we aim to deliver premium, sustainable solutions," said Vinay Gupta, Chairman of Bathline

Acquaviva Group. To mark its entry, Moen has launched its first Experience Centre in New Delhi's upscale MG Road area, offering customers an immersive look at its cutting-edge products, from faucets to shower panels.

"India is poised to be Moen's next growth engine," said George Wu, President of WINN Asia at Fortune Brands Innovations.

With this partnership and flagship store, Moen is set to redefine India's premium bathroom solutions market.

# Adani Foundation unveils 'Butterfly Effect' framework for women empowerment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

head of the upcoming AInternational Women's Day next month, the Adani Foundation hosted the first national-level roundtable consultation on February 19, 2025, in New Delhi.

The event brought together key stakeholders to discuss strategies and chalk out pathways to accelerate women's empowerment across India.

saw the unveiling of the Foundation's 'Butterfly Effect' framework - a transformative approach tailored to address the evolving needs of women throughout their lives.

stakeholders and strategic insights on pathways to enhance the outreach and impact of women-centric interventions. It also aimed at newer collaborations to scale up the socio-economic

young adulthood, middle age, and old age, the Foundation strives to ensure continuous support for women, ensuring The national-level event also that women receive the necessary guidance and opportunities to enhance their socio-economic well-being. Its commitment to women's empowerment is holistic and across dimensions. The focus This roundtable served as an causing intergenerational improvement of important platform to engage outcomes, benefiting women in all stages of life from infancy to old age. Instead of charitable distributions, it focuses on education, nutrition and health security, skill building, and



self-reliance, agency and autonomy. With a sharp focus on enabling economic activity, the Foundation is catalysing transformation for women through health, education, sustainable livelihoods, and infrastructure initiatives that empower them to make meaningful choices themselves and their families. 'Butterfly The Effect framework embodies this holistic approach by positioning women at the center of all interventions. The framework has been designed to support women across different stages, promoting their growth, selfreliance, and overall wellbeing. During the event, the Adani

Foundation also released its Supporting Her Exponential (S.H.E.) Empowerment Report, a carefully curated document that highlights the Foundation's ongoing efforts to empower women through every stage of their lives. The report offers a detailed look Foundation's approach, with a focus on the holistic nature of its interventions and how they are working to empower women throughout the country. On the occasion, Dr. Ábhishek

Lakhtakia, Chief Executive Officer of the Adani Foundation, reaffirmed the Foundation's resolve to empowering women, saying, interventions are designed to ensure equitable access to opportunities, promoting growth, well-being, and empowerment at each phase of a woman's journey. This inaugural roundtable discussion will surely be a steppingstone to further the of cause women empowerment and help expedite outcomes." He emphasised the importance of stakeholders coming together and generating the

each life stage. Through this transformative approach, the Foundation impacting 9.1 million lives.

ideal scale for interventions at

continues to enable 'Inclusive', 'Sustainable' Transformative' change in the lives of women it touches. So far, the Foundation has positively transformed the lives of over 2 million girls and women through its dedicated efforts.

Since 1996, the Adani

Foundation, social welfare and development arm of the Adani Group, has remained agile and deeply committed to making strategic social investments for sustainable outcomes across India. It is empowering and enriching the lives of children, women, youth, and marginalised communities in the core areas of education, health and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods, climate action, and community development. The strategies of the Foundation are integrated in national priorities and global Sustainable Development Goals. The Adani Foundation is currently operating in 6,769 villages across 19 states, positively

#### **INBRIEF**

NEED FOR CURRICULUM RELEVANCE IN TODAY'S JOB MARKET: PROF KARAMJEET SINGH

AMRITSAR: Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Prof Karamjeet Singh, underscored the pivotal role of higher education in enhancing employment opportunities during an interactive session with renowned economist Professor Arun Kumar, a former professor of economics at

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Addressing the gathering Prof Singh emphasised the necessity for students to engage with emerging technologies to better prepare for the evolving job market. He articulated that the university is proactively modifying

**MORE SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT REQUIRED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS** 

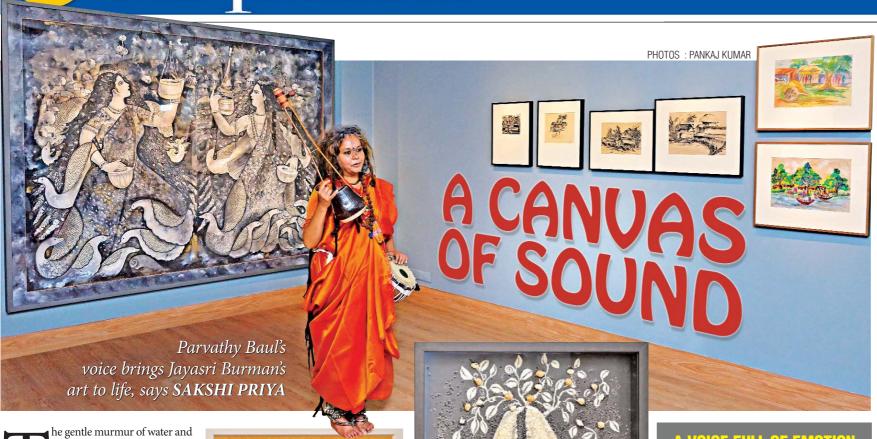
its curriculum to align with contemporary needs, aimed at

AMRITSAR: Prof (Dr) Karamjeet Singh, Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University emphasized the importance of international collaborations in tackling climate-related issues while inaugurating the five days' workshop on "Climate Change, Atmospheric

maximising student benefits.



Pollution, and Environmental Degradation",in collaboration with the Department of Geoinformatics -Z\_GIS, University of Salzburg, Austria, at Department of Education. A large number of environmentalists were present on this occasion.

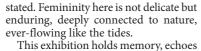


the silent glow of distant stars create an atmosphere of quiet enchantment. Jayasri Burman's latest exhibition, The Whisper of Water, The Song of Stars, at Art Alive Gallery, invites viewers into a world where nature and mythology come alive. This new body of work moves beyond the purely figurative into dreamlike landscapes filled with delicate textures and flowing forms.

Her canvases hold a sense of stillness yet breathe with life. Works like *Cosmic* Churn and Ocean's Whisper echo the rhythms of nature, drawing viewers into a space where land and water meet. The use of shells and cowries does not feel ornamental but deeply symbolic, representing the fluidity of time and the weight of tradition. These natural elements settle into the layers of paint, grounding the works in something tac-

tile, something ancient.

The softness in her palette stands out. Shades of deep blues, earthy browns and muted golds create a sense of harmony, as though each piece is bathed in the quiet glow of twilight. Weeping Grace carries an emotional depth that is felt rather than



of childhood impressions and a silent dialogue between past and present. Jayasri Burman does not simply paint, she listens, to water, to the stars, to the spaces in between. The result is a body of work that invites reflection through quiet, persistent beauty. Until 28 February 2025, step into Art Alive Gallery and experience this world for yourself.



Burman's art has always been deeply rooted in tradition, but in this exhibition, she invites us to see mythology not as something distant and fixed but as a living, evolving entity. The figures in her paintings seem to emerge from the elements themselves, women rise from swirling waters, constellations seem to echo human longing and the landscapes are not just backdrops but active participants in a grander story. Each piece reflects a deeply human desire for connection: to nature, to the past, to





#### THE POETRY OF ART AND SOUND

ection. Both artists draw ion yet reshape it into layers of colour and texture, much like centuries through melody. Their art is

listener to step into a world where artistry is not only seen or heard but fell STANDING BEFORE THE ARTWORK, THERE **DISTANT MEMORIES, TEXTURES** WHISPERING FORGOTTEN STORIES. THE LINES, THE DEPTH, THE LIGHT, IT ALL SPEAKS, NOT IN WORDS, BUT IN FEELING **AND REFLECTION** 

**Frames** of Silent **Poetry** 

The exhibition, curated by Parul Bhagat, showcased detailed, expressive artworks by over 40 talented artists, writes TEAM VIVA



he gallery was transformed into a world of stories painted on canvas. Each artwork invited viewers to step closer, to lose themselves in its details, colours, and emotions. Some pieces felt like distant memories captured in delicate strokes, while others burst with energy, demanding attention.

Magic with every stroke, Curated by Parul Bhagat, the National Group Art Exhibition brought together over 40 artists, each presenting their unique artistic vision. The walls carried a stunning mix of traditional and contemporary styles, with paintings that played with light and shadow, rich textures and bold contrasts. Every stroke spoke of the artist's passion, whether through intricate detailing or expressive, free-flowing movements.

From striking portraits to surreal landscapes, the exhibition showcased the limitless power of artistic expression. Some works carried a sense of nostalgia, drawing viewers into their depth, while others challenged perception with abstract forms and daring compositions. The colours, though varied, seemed

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

to tell a collective story, one of creativity, emotion and the boundless possibilities of art. Each Artwork reflected a personal journey, a different way of seeing the world. Some drew from tradition, giving it a fresh perspective, while others defied convention, pushing the boundaries of contemporary art.

The exhibition continues till today at Gandhi Darshan Art Gallery, Delhi, offering visitors a final chance to experience this remarkable collection of artworks.



THE FESTIVAL **BROUGHT** 

**TOGETHER ARTISTS FROM DIFFERENT** GENRE,

**SHOWCASING** 

**TRADITION AND MODERN** 

**CREATIVITY** 



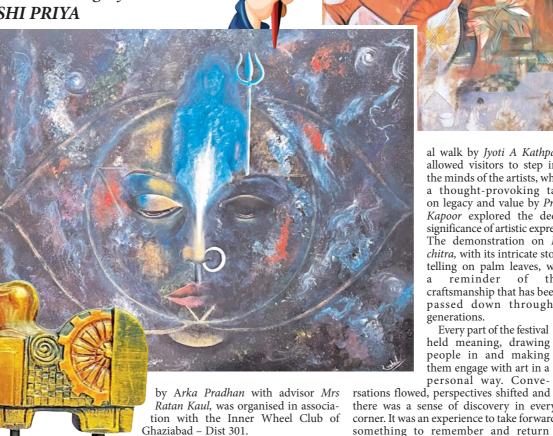


Colours, Voices and Stories Breathing Life into Awadh Art Festival, says SAKSHI PRIYA

rt has a way of bringing people together, sparking conversations and creating moments that stay with us. The 7th Awadh Art Festival did just that, offering a space where creativity thrived and stories came to life through every brushstroke and sculpture. With 94 artists presenting their work, the festival became a meeting ground for diverse voices, each piece carrying its own essence, emotions and experiences.

The festival, guided by a thoughtful curation, brought together tradition and contemporary influences.While it has long been a platform for senior artists, this year introduced a fresh perspective by showcasing artists making a mark in the primary art market. This shift brought a dynamic energy, allowing visitors to see the evolving nature of Indian art and its ever-expanding horizons

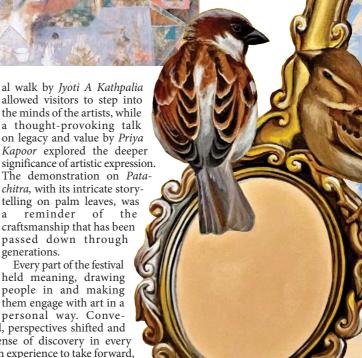
The inauguration was led by Lithuania's Ambassador to India, Excellency Diana Mickeviciene, alongside Jyoti Kathpalia, Dr Seema Bhalla, Dr Sushma K Bahl, Lipika Sud and Biman Das. The festival, founded



there was a sense of discovery in every corner. It was an experience to take forward, Beyond the artworks, the festival created moments of connection. A guided curatori-

something to remember and return to in thought, long after the last artwork was packed away.

on legacy and value by Priya Kapoor explored the deeper significance of artistic expression. The demonstration on Patachitra, with its intricate storytelling on palm leaves, was a reminder of the craftsmanship that has been passed down through Every part of the festival held meaning, drawing people in and making them engage with art in a personal way. Conve-



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# Gill gives India confidence against Pakistan

**PTI** ■ BENGALURU

🔼 hubman Gill has an Sinvincibility cloak hung around his shoulder in ODIs these days. Conditions and oppositions do not feature in his

After taking a dominant avatar against England recently at home, Gill faced a different challenge against Banglades in India's Champions Trophy (CT) opener in Dubai on Thursday

The pitch was sluggish and the bowlers consistently probed for

But Gill beat both to notch up his eighth ODI hundred that led India to a six-wicket victory. The 125-ball century was the slowest he has made so far, but was perhaps the most important in his career.

That uncharacteristically sedate outing carried a deeper meaning as it validated Gill's growing stature as India's all-weather batter in white-ball formats.

His form is a good omen when legends like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who have been performing that role for several years, are in the twilight zone of their careers. And with important matches against Pakistan and New Zealand linedup, India would need him to

There were a couple of signature shots last night — a cracking short-arm pull off pacer Tanzim Hasan and a spearing, lofted cover drive off the same bowler for a four.

continue in the same vein.

Those hits in the ninth over were breathtaking, showcasing Gill's otherworldly timing, but even more mesmerising was his transformation to a batter full of self-restraint after that.

When Rohit Sharma (41) got out in the 10th over, Gill was batting on 26 off 23 balls, and a lift-off looked imminent.

But it wasn't there. His next boundary came in the 33rd over when pacer Taskin Ahmed returned to attack.



Till then, Gill was milking the spinners and pacer Mustafizur Rahman, a lethal slower ball, for singles and twos, ensuring that the quick start given by Rohit would not go in vain.

In that phase, the 25-year-old scored just 30 runs off 52 balls, showing admirable situational

awareness. It was of little surprise when Gill termed it as a

"Satisfying" effort.
"Definitely one of my most satisfying innings that I have played. The message was sent from outside that I have to try to bat till the end and that's what I tried to do." (sill would say later. tried to do," Gill would say later to the host broadcaster.

Rohit was also chuffed to see the Punjab cricketer adhering to the team order.

"He's been batting brilliantly of late and what he showed us (against Bangladesh), it shouldn't surprise anyone. What was good to see was he was there till the end," said Rohit.

Along with carrying his bat through, Gill also tweaked his tactics as per the game's evolving needs.

A feature of Gill's batting was him coming down the track even against pacers, something he does not usually do.

Generally, he stays at the crease to drive, flick or pull the quicker bowlers, a minimalistic approach

that reduces the risk quotient. Gill explained that change in his

approach.
"Cutting the ball wasn't easy because the balls which were outside the off-stump weren't coming onto the bat that nicely. "So, I thought of using my feet to

even the fast bowlers and tried to go over the circle," he added. The strategic fluidity apart, Gil's willingness to look beyond easy-on-the-eye but fleeting knocks will stand India in good stead in

this tournament. If the early signs are anything to go by, then the pitches in Dubai

could remain slow-burners. While Pakistan have only one

spinner in Abrar Ahmed, New Zealand will be a more formidable rival as they have two excellent white-ball spinners in Mitchell Santner and Michael Bracewell. They were exceptional in stifling

Pakistan in the middle overs in Karachi on a flatbed and the Kiwis can pose a bigger threat on the slack Dubai deck



# Kohli is putting lot more pressure on himself: Kumble

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $F_{\text{coach Anil Kumble feels}}^{\text{ormer India captain and}}$ Virat Kohli is putting a "lot more pressure on himself" in his effort to get out of the lean patch, and advised the batting icon to remain mentally relaxed.

Since the 2023 ODI World Cup, Kohli has hit just one fifty while scoring 137 runs in six

ODI innings.
"I think he's trying a bit too hard. You can see that in the way he is going about his innings. He just needs to not worry about it," Kumble said on 'ESPNcricinfo'

"Rohit comes in there, has the freedom because there is plenty great form. Similarly for Virat, he just needs to come in and not worry about anything else," he added

"All players go through tough moments in their career, but I get a feeling watching him bat, I think he is putting a lot more pressure on himself," Kumble added.

Kumble reckoned a relaxed approach would help Kohli in getting out of the rut.
"When you have that kind of

pressure and you have that kind of expectation, you suddenly start putting undue importance to all of that and then try hard to do well.

"When you do that, you're not really relaxed. The best innings that I am sure he's played, he's not even thinking about all of

In India's Champions Trophy

behind him, seasoned India

pacer Mohammed Shami says

attention to detail and lovalty

fastest Indian and the second

quickest overall to reach 200

hit a little, that's okay, but I

will be better for my team. I

always think about this,"

Shami said at the post-match

The 34-year-old quick battled

a career-threatening 14-

here on

economy rate.

ODI wickets

press conference.

Thursday night.

opener against Bangladesh, Kohli struggled to score, and was eventually dismissed on 22 by leg-spinner Rishad Hossain, making it the Indian's sixth consecutive dismissal against

To start off against spin, on surfaces like that, you need a lot of confidence. He's certainly trying too hard to manoeuvre that. He's a good player of spin when he's in form, when he wants to just knock singles off and keep rotating the strike.
"Now he's trying too hard to

score runs rather than just manoeuvre, and that's been his game plan. He just needs to relax a little bit and not worry too much about the outcome of what happens on the field | PTI ■ DOHA and have the freedom to play naturally, what he does really

Kohli doesn't have big-hitting game anymore : Manjrekar Former India batter Sanjay Manjrekar said Kohli's lean run in Australia has left him in a "tight corner," affecting his confidence.

"He still wants to show that he's up there for a fight, and I am starting to see maybe there's a little bit of bravado as well, and why not? You can't be revealing what's inside you.

He suggested that Kohli might no longer possess the bighitting ability to dominate bowlers at will.

"Virat doesn't have the big game anymore. We've seen on occasion him playing the big shot, but he can't hit at will like a Shubman Gill does.

series against England and is

now leading India's attack

# Kerala enter Ranji Trophy final

**PTI** ■ AHMEDABAD

resilient Kerala on Friday Assealed their maiden Ranji Trophy final by taking a dramatic two-run first-innings lead over Gujarat, 68 years after making their debut in Indian cricket's premier

domestic competition.
Going into the final day at 429/7, the home side, who won the Ranji title in 2016-17, needed just 29 runs to take a first imping lead. first innings lead.

However, left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate delivered under pressure, taking all three wickets to bowl Gujarat out for 455 in 174.4 overs to leave them two runs short of the mark.

Making only their second semifinal appearance, the visitors had been left frustrated by a dogged 72-run eighth-wicket stand between Jaymeet Patel (74 overnight) and Siddharth Desai (24 overnight). They started the day needing three wickets with just 28 runs to defend.

Kerala, who last made the semifinals in 2018-19 after making their Ranji debut back in 1957, will face Vidarbha in the summit clash after the latter defeat heavyweights



Mumbai by 80 runs in the other semifinal.

Sarwate's breakthroughs came amid high drama, including a dropped catch, a tight stumping decision, and a successful DRS review that overturned a caught-out call to an LBW dismissal.

First it was Kerala skipper Sachin Baby, who dropped the well-set Jaymeet with Gujarat 23 runs shy of a lead. But Jaymeet could not make it

count and perished for 79 (177 balls; 2x4) in the same over when he dragged his foot outside the crease while the ball passed his outside edge for Mohammed Azharuddeen to complete an excellent stumping.

After multiple replays, umpire finally ruled him out as his

foot was found to be on the line when the bail was knocked off as Kerala camp went up in celebration.

But there was more to the contest as Gujarat left-arm quick Arzan Nagwaswalla, batting at No 10, counter-attacked and smashed Akshay Chandran for a cover boundary to take them within 14 runs of the lead.

Breakthrough for Kerala came with Gujarat 11 runs behind when Sarwate broke the dogged resistance of Siddharth Desai, who got out for 30 that came off 164 balls

with just one boundary.
Desai reviewed a caught-out decision, and while Ultra Edge showed no spike, ball-tracking confirmed it would have hit in 46 overs in their second leg stump, overturning the call innings in the drawn affair. confirmed it would have hit

Nagwaswalla and last man Priyajitsinh Jadeja brought

Priyajitsinh Jadeja brought Gujarat within eight runs when Kerala missed a half-chance, with the ball slipping from Salman Nizar's grasp. Jalaj Saxena nearly claimed his fifth wicket as Nagwaswalla's inside edge brushed past leg stump, leaving Gujarat just two runs short two runs short.

Then came the decisive moment.

Sarwate tossed one up, Nagwaswalla swung hard, and the ball ricocheted off Nizar's helmet at short leg before lobbing to Baby at slip. The Amay Khurasiya-coached

side erupted in celebration, securing a historic Ranji final berth as a dejected Nagwaswalla walked back in disbelief. For Kerala, Sarwate, who had started the day with 1/101,

ended with figures of 45.4-7-111-4. Jalaj, who toiled hard for 71 overs, returned with 4/149

including 14 maidens. With their maiden Ranji final

berth secured, Kerala batted with ease in the second innings, scoring 114 for four

# India interested in hosting 2030 CWG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is "interested" in hosting the 2030 Games Commonwealth (CWG) and also conduct all those disciplines that were axed from the 2026 edition to ensure that the country's medal tally is not affected when the event is held in Glasgow, a source in the sports ministry revealed on Friday.

The last date to submit an 'Expression of Interest' to host the 2030 CWG is March 31 and the ministry source said the process will get underway

"We are interested in hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games and a formal interaction has taken place with the Commonwealth Games Federation on this. We have also proposed that all the removed from the 2026 CWG be held in India," the source said.

India last hosted the CWG in 2010. The ministry's push to have the axed events of the 2026 edition in India is a way to ensure that the CWG remains a high medal-yielding competition for the country.

Last year, in a huge blow to India's medal prospects, key sports such as hockey, badminton, wrestling, cricket and shooting were dropped from the programme by host Glasgow, announced a pruned roster of

10 disciplines to keep the event budget-friendly.

"We are merely looking to ensure that our medal tally does not suffer. An informal

put across, we will see how the host city responds to it," the source said.

India had given a similar proposal for the archery and shooting competitions of the 2022 CWG in Birmingham and the CGF, along with the host city, had even approved it by agreeing to add the medals won to the finally tally. However, the idea could not be executed due to the COVID-19

pandemic. Table tennis, squash and triathlon were also axed by Glasgow in a bid to limit the cost and streamline logistics given that only four venues will host the entire showpiece there. The total number of events at the Games is nine less than the 2022 Birmingham

The 23rd edition of Games is scheduled to take place from Glasgow's return as host after 12 years.

edition.

Athletics and Para Athletics (Track & Field), Swimming and Para Swimming, Artistic Gymnastics, Track Cycling and Para Track Cycling, Netball, Weightlifting and Para Powerlifting, Boxing, Judo, Bowls and Para Bowls, and 3x3 Basketball and 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball will form the sports programme in the 2026 CWG. Olympic bid on track

India is also eyeing the hosting rights of the 2036 Olympic Games for which a letter of intent was sent to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) last year.

'We are now waiting for the IOC elections to wind up next month for things to move ahead. The final decision on this is not coming before

#### Jiri Lehecka beats Carlos Alcarazin in Qatar Open quarterfinals Rublev saved one match point

Pop-seeded Carlos Alcaraz I lost for just the second time this year on Thursday 25th-ranked Jiri Lehecka beat him 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 in the quarterfinals of the Qatar Open.

Alcaraz's only other defeat in 2025 was to Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open quarterfinals. The 21-year-old paniard, ranked No. 3, won the Rotterdam Open earlier this month.

"I've talked with my team, with my coach, and honestly I don't know what I could have done better," Alcaraz said in a press conference. "Honestly, I don't know. It was kind of a difficult feelings, I guess. I have to give credit to him as well, because when he was down, especially in the third set, he didn't give up.



finish off the Czech, who won the next three games to advance to the semifinals.

The 23-year-old Lehecka will next play eighth-seeded Jack Draper, who knocked out Matteo Berrettini 4-6, 6-4, 6-

"The match was up and down since the beginning," Lehecka said after beating Alcaraz. "So for me to win a match like that against a player like this is a super big achievement. I believed in myself. I knew that I had the level to produce that kind of tennis.

"I didn't back down," he continued. "I wanted to push him to his limits. The wav I trusted my game was the key

Earlier, fifth-seeded Andrey

subdue second-seeded Alex de Minaur 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (8). Rubley reached his fourth semifinals in Doha, where he won the title in 2020. He'll next face Canada's Félix

Auger-Aliassime, who beat Daniil Medvedev when the Russian retired after losing the first set 6-3. "Unfortunately, I had food

poisoning. Very disappointed

to end my run here in Doha

like this as I feel like I was

playing well," Medvedev said in a statement. Auger-Aliassime said on court he thought Medvedev

was "playing normal" until he retired. "And then I broke, I held my serve. And he just told (the

was sick.

umpire) that he didn't want to shake our hands because he proposal (to have axed disciplines in India) has been

proverbial show-stopper of Social media doesn't matter Another aspect of modern cricket that Shami dismissed as insignificant is the social media scrutiny that the players face.

'I always say that the social media of today is such that vou create some unwanted things. You always run things in the media that shouldn't

should think too much," he said. Shami dedicated his performance to his late father Tousif Ali, a farmer who had tried his hand at fast bowling in his youth. 'That is for my father because

he is my role model. He was always there for me," he said. He also thanked the Indian team management for backing him.



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REGISTRAR

#### Attention to detail, loyalty towards craft make Shami lethal month layoff due to an ankle injury during the 2023 ODI World Cup. He returned to PTI DUBAI difficult and painful Ainjury layoff international action last month in the limited-overs firmly

towards his craft make him here in the absence of an lethal in ICC events where he injured Jasprit Bumrah. cares about just try to complete my breakthroughs and not his skill with utmost loyalty. Like I have completed my 14 Shami grabbed an brilliant months - How loval are you five-wicket haul in India's to that skill? How hungry are you to achieve your goal...How you will get that Champions Trophy opener against Bangladesh to play a rhythm again. You should be pivotal role in the team's sixwicket triumph. In the hungry," Shami said when process, he also became the asked about his love affair

with ICC events While wrecking Bangladesh here, Shami became India's leading wicket-taker in 50-"In ICC events, if my ball gets over ICC events. His tally now stands at 60, overtaking should get a wicket, then that former India pace spearhead

Zaheer Khan The retired left-arm seamer had taken 59 wickets in 32 innings while Shami crossed the mark in just his 19th result. I pay attention to the innings. He has 55 wickets in present. And I always try to other end.

ODI World Cups across three editions, with 24 coming in

> at home. Shami said he has always focussed on minor details like rhythm, and level of discomfort while bowling to understand where he stood in terms of his form.

the 2023 tournament hosted

"Is your rhythm good? Do you have any discomfort? I pay attention to those things.

I do not pay attention to the

meet the situation that is in demand. Am I good at that or not?" he said giving a peek into his mind Shami, who claimed his sixth

ODI fifer here, also has the most five-wicket hauls for India in the format. He recalled the frustration he felt while watching India's woes in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy last month when Bumrah shouldered the enormous burden of leading the attack without him at the

close match, at that time you miss your bowlers who you used to bowl along with, or your unit. I wish I was there," he said. "I could have contributed something Could have helped," he added.

"It was very difficult...When

Shami has been candid enough to admit that the

injury left him devastated to the extent that he feared he wouldn't be able to play again. But the pacer said once he made a domestic comeback towards the end of 2024, his confidence rose up again.
"...I got to play domestic matches to gain confidence

and to see my rhythm. To see what changes have come in the last 14 months or after the surgery...I got international matches to play and I played 8-9-10 domestic matches. That gave me a lot of confidence," he said

All set for Pakistan clash Sunday would be the

you see that your team is very ICC events when India take close to the edge, or it's a very on Pakistan, hoping to add another exciting chapter to the rivalry that is almost always the marquee match of an ICC event. Shami said nothing changes for his team in terms of mindset. "After winning, there is no point in having a mindset.

You should stay in the same frame when you win a match and when you perform well. I don't think you need to think too much about the ICC tournament or any international match," he said, down-playing the giddy excitement that media drums up before India-Pakistan

matches. You should believe in your skills and back yourself. I always work on these two things that I believe in myself and back myself. So, it's not a matter of mindset to change. If you don't change in difficult times, then you don't change in such times," he

run. So, I don't think we

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in the Employment News. For details, please see the University website www.du.ac.in, and click "Work with DU" under the Head "Advertisement - Departments". Any addcndum/corrigendum shall be posted on the website only.

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