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INSIDE

MONEY 10
INDIA'S ECONOMY
PROJECTED TO GROW 6.6
PER CENT IN 2025: UN

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INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES DROP

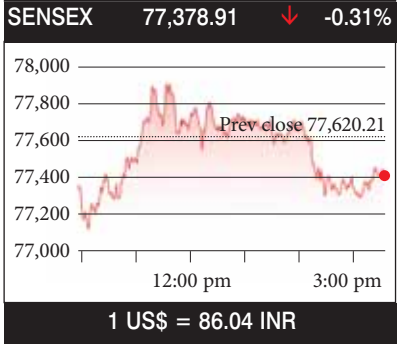
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 5.693 billion to USD 634.585 billion in the week ended January 3, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall kitty had declined by USD 4.112 billion to USD 640.279 billion. The reserves have been on a declining trend for the last few weeks, and the drop has been attributed to revaluation along with forex market interventions by RBI to help reduce volatility in the rupee. The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September.

For the week ended January 3, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 6.441 billion to USD 545.48 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

MARKETS



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. This comes in the backdrop of

increasing pressure on the rupee. The rupee declined 14 paise and touched the crucial 86.00-mark (provisional) for the first time against the US dollar on Friday as it failed to resist pressure from a stronger American currency and huge outflow of foreign funds.

Surging crude oil prices overseas and negative sentiment in domestic equity markets also weighed down the Indian currency, forex traders said.

Also, dollar strengthened on increased demand amid the anticipation of restrictive trade measures by the new US administration after Donald Trump takes over as president on January 20.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.88, hit the intra-day peak of 85.85 before settling at the lowest-ever level of 86.00 (provisional) against the greenback, 14 paise lower from its previous close.

SC orders status quo on Sambhal Mosque

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ordering status quo, the Supreme Court on Friday asked the Uttar Pradesh authorities, the Archaeological Survey of India and others not to take steps over a "private well" near the Mughal-era Jama Masjid mosque in Sambhal.

Considering a plea of the management committee of Shahi Jama Masjid, Sambhal, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar issued notices to the Centre, the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Sambhal District Magistrate and other private individuals from the Hindu side led by Hari Shankar Jain.

"Issue notice returnable on February 21. In the meanwhile, a status report to be filed by the respondents in two weeks. The respondents shall not give effect to any notice in relation to the well," the bench ordered.

The mosque committee, in a fresh plea, said the Sambhal district administration, was conducting a purported drive to revive old temples and wells in the city with reports indicating at least 32 old unused temples were revived and 19 wells were identified for public use and prayers.

"In the list of wells being sought to be revived by the district administration is also a water well situated in the precincts of the mosque itself," it said. The plea therefore sought a direction to the Sambhal district magistrate to ensure a status quo over the private well located near the mosque entrance besides any future action without the Supreme



Court's permission.

While a covered half of the well was said to be inside the mosque, the other half protruded outside on a curved platform. Water from the well, situated at the junction of three narrow lanes leading to the main entrance of the mosque, was being used by the mosque, the plea said.

It was argued that the survey led to violence and loss of lives, prompting the urgent intervention of the top court.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, representing the mosque management committee, referred to the well's historical significance and said, "We have been drawing water from the well since time immemorial." Ahmadi raised concerns over a notice referring to the site as "Hari Mandir" and plans for starting religious activities there. "No such activities will be permitted. Please file a status report," the CJ said.

The bench said the status quo concerning the well must be maintained, and no such notices would be given effect to. Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, representing the Hindu party, said the well was outside the mosque's purview and used for worship

historically. Ahmadi said the well was partly within and partly outside the mosque premises, citing Google map imagery to buttress his claim. The mosque committee had challenged a November 19, 2024 order by the Sambhal senior division civil Judge allowing the appointment of an advocate commissioner to survey the mosque. The mosque committee said the plea for survey was allowed without hearing it on the same day it was filed.

The top court, on November 29 last year, ordered a Sambhal trial court to halt proceedings in the case over the mosque and its survey at Chandausi while directing the UP Government to maintain peace and harmony in the violence-hit town. The bench had directed "peace and harmony must be maintained" and took note of the statement of additional solicitor general K M Nataraj, appearing for the state administration. It directed the proposed report of the advocate commissioner following the mosque survey to be kept in a sealed cover, till the appellate court including the Allahabad High Court heard the appeal of the mosque committee.



2024: hottest year, global temp above pre-industrial levels

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The year 2024 was the hottest year on record, and the first with a global average temperature 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, European climate agency Copernicus said on Friday.

Every month from January to June 2024 was the warmest ever recorded for those months. From July to December, except for August, each month was the second warmest on record, behind 2023, it said.

According to scientists at the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2024 was the hottest year since global temperature tracking began in 1850. The average global temperature was 15.1 degrees Celsius -- 0.72 degrees above the 1991-2020 average and 0.12 degrees higher than that in 2023, the previous record-holder.

WEATHER

AQI 397
MAX 17.6°C
MIN 6°C

Modi talks Godhra, US visa refusal in debutant podcast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his first-ever podcast, opened up about significant moments from his political journey, including his experiences during the 2002 Godhra riots and the United States' decision to deny him a visa in 2005.

The podcast, hosted by Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath, was released on Friday.

Recalling the events surrounding the 2002 Godhra riots, Modi shared, "On February 24, 2002, I became an MLA for the first time, and on February

BALLOONS TO BEHOLD



Enthusiasts at the 10th Tamil Nadu International Balloon Festival, in Mamallapuram

Delhi to begin renovation of T2, to shift operations to T1

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi airport's Terminal 2 (T2) will remain closed for about six months for refurbishment works in the next financial year. Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has unveiled an ambitious plan to refurbish Terminal 2 or T2 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport which was built by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) four decades ago.

During the renovation, T2 will temporarily close for four to six months, with operations being shifted to the newly expanded Terminal 1 to minimise disruption. Sources said the refurbishment work is set to commence in the 2025-26 financial year, with completion targeted by the second quarter. The upgrades are expected to be completed by the second quarter of Financial Year 2026.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked the operator of IGI airport to undertake a comprehensive overhaul of Terminal 2 (T2). The



financial year starts from April 1, 2025.

According to DIAL, the closure will not significantly impact airport operations as Terminal 1 (T1) will accommodate the additional load of passengers. T2, which was constructed 40 years ago by the AAI, will undergo extensive renovations to improve the passenger experience and increase capacity for future growth. T1 and T2 currently serve domestic flights while Terminal 3 (T3) handles international flights.

The decades-old terminal will undergo significant upgrades aimed at elevating the passenger experience and increasing the airport's capacity to meet future growth demands," said DIAL in a Press statement.

Delhi student held for bomb threats at 23 schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With fear looming over the national Capital since May last year due to a spate of bomb threats, the Delhi Police on Friday revealed that they have detained a Class 12 student for allegedly sending bomb threats to more than 23 schools in the city over the past few weeks as he did not want to write his exams.

More than 15 educational institutions including Lady Shri Ram College across the national Capital received bomb threats, which later turned out to be hoaxes.

Since May last year, more than 100 schools have been receiving bomb threats through mails.

Police sources said the south district police apprehended the Class 12 student, a minor, Thursday evening in connection with the threats.

According to police sources, the content of the mail received on Wednesday mentioned that since exams are going on in the schools, this will be the best time to strike and create maximum damage.

AAP promises funds for RWAs to hire guards

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The political discourse in Delhi is currently being dominated by conversations around "freebies" ahead of the Assembly polls overshadowing other major issues including pollution, law and order, crimes against women and infrastructure.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal announced his 10th freebies on Friday, pledging to provide Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) with funds to hire private security guards if the party is voted back into power, as he took digs at the BJP for turning the city into a "crime capital".

This was his 10th guarantee of the ongoing freebies being offered by his government.

Announcing funds for security guards in RWAs, Kejriwal said if the AAP forms the government, all RWAs will be provided with appropriate funds from the Delhi government to appoint security guards in their areas.

"A systematic approach will be developed to ensure fairness and proper implementation," he added.

Reacting to the new poll promise by AAP, the BJP slammed Kejriwal and accused him of making



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference

"false" promises on the RWAs again. Kejriwal's BJP rival from the New Delhi constituency, Parvesh Verma, in a post on X, asked the AAP supremo if he remembered his previous promises to the RWAs in 2018 and 2022.

Ahead of the MCD polls in 2022, Kejriwal promised to grant "financial and political powers" to the RWAs with their own "mini councilors".

Earlier, before the 2015 Assembly elections, he promised local area development funds after giving legal status to the RWAs by passing a bill in the

assembly.

Kejriwal said the private security guard proposal would enhance public security which has been a priority for the ruling party that had earlier installed CCTV cameras and colony gates.

"The security guard proposal is based on feedback received from people. It is timely as people are feeling insecure due to a spurt in crime in the city," he said, accusing the BJP's Central government of not doing enough to check crime in the city.

"The BJP may not be worried about the residents of Delhi but for us citizens are like family, and we want to give them a sense of security," he said.

AAP chief said now the Delhi government will fund RWAs for hiring private security guards and the number of security guards in each colony will be based on the number of families in the RWA.

Meanwhile United Residents Joint Action (URJA) president Atul Goyal said, "We appreciate the announcement but some promises were made earlier as well, which makes it difficult to fully trust this one."



Water cannons being used to disperse agitators during a protest by BJP members against AAP for allegedly making "fake" claims regarding registration of voters from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in Delhi's electoral rolls ahead of Assembly polls in the Capital.

Ayodhya readies for first Pran Pratishtha anniversary

KAMLESH SRIVASTAVA ■ AYODHYA

Preparations are in full swing in Ayodhya to celebrate the first anniversary of Ram Lalla's Pran Pratishtha at the grand Ram Mandir. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust, in collaboration with the district administration, is organising a three-day celebration from January 11 to 13, 2025.

The festivities will begin with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performing the sacred Abhishek of Ram Lalla on January 11.

Ram Lalla will be adorned in a specially crafted Pitambari outfit woven with gold and silver threads, symbolizing divine splendor. This outfit, crafted in Delhi, will arrive in Ayodhya on January 10 and will be used during the Abhishek. Devotees will have the opportunity to witness the sacred darshan.



The highlight of the celebrations will be Ram Lalla's Maha Aarti at 12:20 PM on January 11. Cultural performances, devotional rituals, and Ram Katha discourses will follow. Champat Rai, General Secretary of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust, stated that the event is a special opportunity for those who missed last year's consecration ceremony to participate. "We have made extensive arrangements to welcome saints, dignitaries,

WHY THE ANNIVERSARY IS ON JANUARY 11

While the original Pran Pratishtha ceremony took place on January 22, 2024, this year's anniversary is being observed on January 11, 2025. The shift aligns with Hindu Vedic traditions, which follow the lunar calendar. According to the traditional calendar, Paush Shukla Dwadashi—the same auspicious day as the original consecration—falls on January 11 this year.

This year's celebration is significant, as it coincides with ten auspicious yogas. It is believed that worshipping Lord Rama on this day fulfills devotees' deepest desires. The day offers a rare spiritual opportunity, as devotees can perform puja and seek blessings from Lord Ram Lalla.

Explore Supreme Court of India with guided tours every Saturday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opening its doors for public awareness, the Supreme Court has allowed guided tours for general public on designated days. The drive aimed at augmenting engagement and awareness, allows people to put to rest their curiosities on the court's mystique, and stroll through its majestic corridors every working Saturday — except the second and the fourth and declared holidays.

"Opening of the secured apex court premises will provide a great opportunity to the public to gain inside access to the interiors of the building and admire the majestic structure in its full glory," said an official. A circular issued on January 9 by Registrar Mahesh T Patankar (court and building) read, "In pursuance of the directions of the competent authority, the guided tour shall be conducted on every working Saturday, except second and fourth Saturdays and declared holidays in four slots from 10 am to 11:30 am; 11:30 am to 1 pm; 2 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.30 pm to 5 pm."

Officials would accost the public during the tour and introduce them to the various



sections of historical value. For conducting the guided tour smoothly, a pre-online booking would be mandatory. "A visitor can arrange pre-planned escorted visits with online booking made in advance," the official said, "and will be accompanied throughout the premises and introduced to parts of historical importance and they will also get a chance to see the courtrooms."

LA wildfires: 10 dead, thousands of buildings destroyed

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

The two biggest wildfires ravaging the Los Angeles area have killed 10 people so far and burned at least 10,000 homes, buildings and other structures, officials said Thursday.

The fast-moving Kenneth Fire started in the late afternoon in the San Fernando Valley just 3.2 km from a school serving as a shelter for fire evacuees and then moved into neighbouring areas by the evening. Officials expressed encouragement after firefighters aided by calmer winds and help from crews from outside the state saw the first signs of successfully beating back the region's devastating wildfires that have killed 10 people so far.

Detail story on page 8

MP is first State in the country to implement cyber tehsils: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that true officers are those who work in the interest of the public...

departments. He congratulated the officers and their families, recognizing their success as a result of collective hope, effort, and family support.

Officers in the Agriculture Department, 70 Assistant Veterinarians in the Animal Husbandry and Dairy Department, and 36 Naib Tehsildars in the Revenue Department.

capacity in all major cities including Bhopal. Milk production plays the most important role in increasing the income of farmers.

With this objective, we have to ensure appointments of revenue officers besides expansion in the staff of the agriculture and animal husbandry department.



Students of Government schools perform at a cultural programme 'Anugooni' organised by MP School Education Department, at Subhash School of Excellence in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

Chief Minister inaugurates two-day IFS Meet and Forestry Conference

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav commended the remarkable efforts of forest officials in reviving wildlife in areas like Panna, where wildlife had once completely disappeared.

stone for the state. The Chief Minister shared these insights while addressing the inaugural session of the two-day Indian Forest Service (IFS) Meet and Forestry Conference at the Pandit Khushilal Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya Auditorium.

and developing a better work culture. Madhya Pradesh has abundant forest wealth and there is immense potential for study and research in many disciplines including archaeology, geology, environment, botany.

our identity. He said that the government is committed to their conservation and development. Many activities and programmes are being run in the state keeping public participation at the centre.

Dietetics Day 2025: Focus on balanced nutrition and wellness

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under the guidance of AIIMS Bhopal's Executive Director, Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, the Department of Dietetics celebrated Dietetics Day on January 10, 2025, in line with the annual observance organized by the Indian Dietetic Association.



Development' was also organized, engaging both experts and the community. Prizes were distributed to children who actively participated and won in various competitions.

Shashank Purwar (Officiating Medical Superintendent). The event was meticulously organized under the leadership of Organizing Chairperson Prof. (Dr.) Amit Agrawal.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav greets forest officials after a group photograph during Vaniki Sammelan and Indian Forest Service (IFS) Meet-2025, in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

SUV veers to save tiger, rams into tree at Chandanpura

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Days after members of a cycling expedition were accosted by a tiger in the Chiklod forests, an SUV veered and hit a tree as the driver lost control after sighting a tiger in the Chandanpura area of the state capital on Friday morning.

toring in the area where the attacks on livestock have been reported." Piparde said the bovines were killed in the vicinity of the 13 Shutter area of the Kaliyasot reservoir.

ment in recent years. Municipal and forest authorities have put up warning signs in the area to inform residents and walkers of the presence of the big cats, who perhaps view the locale as their own turf.

2 boys beaten up, video goes viral

Bhopal: A disturbing video has surfaced from Amarpatan, in Maihar district, showing two young children being brutally beaten by a group of individuals. The video, which has gone viral, captures the children crying and pleading for mercy while being verbally abused by the assailants.

Alok Sharma for 24-metre wide road from Lalghati to Neori temple

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal parliamentarian Alok Sharma, on Friday, advocated for the proposed 24-metre width of the road from Lalghati to Neori Temple, emphasising its importance for traffic flow, security, and future planning, despite pressure to reduce its size.



movement. Residents from the residential localities surrounding the proposed road were also present on the occasion. They agreed that the width of the road should not be reduced.

New police posts opened at Idgah Hills, Hamidia Hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The City police on Friday inaugurated two new police posts in the Old City areas of the state capital. The police posts at the Idgah EWS multi-storey complex and Hamidia Hospital will strengthen law and order enforcement in the city.

Vishwas leads battle against land grab in Karond neighbourhood

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Hours after the Minister for Co-operation, Vishwas Sarang, blew the cover off alleged land-grab activity in the Karond area of the state capital, a large district administration posse descended on the area on Friday and dismantled infrastructure belonging to those encroaching on government land.

SDM Ravish Kumar Srivastava led a team comprising the district administration, police, and the municipal corporation

such incidents in the future. He said that land mafias capture government land and sell it to gullible buyers, causing a loss to both the public and the government.

To commit suicide, youth climbs tower, rescued

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A youth climbed a tower located at Polytechnic Square in Bhopal, causing panic among onlookers. The youth, later identified as Vinod Kumar Teji, was seen at a height of about 80 feet. Alarmed by the situation, people immediately contacted the police, who, in turn, called the Municipal Corporation team for assistance.



bring him down. ACP Anita Prabha Sharma mentioned that the police would investigate the situation further by contacting the employer. If it was found that the salary had indeed been withheld, steps would be taken to ensure the man received the payment.

PSC vacancies will be filled in a single year: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the tradition of celebrating 12 January Swami Vivekananda Jayanti as Youth Day has been started. The state government is ready to take all necessary steps so that the youth can realise their dreams, move ahead in life, take the state and society forward.



Chief Minister Yadav said that the implementation of Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission in the state from 12th of January. CM Yadav said this in a message issued to the media. Chief Minister Yadav said that on the occasion of Youth Day, the grant amount for the month of January will be transferred to the Ladli Bahnas of the state from Kalapal district Shajapur. The state govern-

ment is conducting multi-dimensional activities with the aim that the youth get all the opportunities for advancement and progress. Chief Minister Yadav said that the state government is going to fill the backlog posts in the state. It has also been decided to fill the posts of the last three years under the PSC by conducting three separate examinations in a single year. Chief Minister Yadav said that the main basis of the Regional Industry Conclave is the youth power of the state. Skill upgradation and training activities are being conducted with the aim that the youth get employment opportunities in the state itself. Through other IT parks started in the state

including Rewa, Ujjain, the youth have got employment opportunities within the state on the basis of their qualification and ability. Chief Minister Yadav said that the state government is going to fill the backlog posts in the state. It has also been decided to fill the posts of the last three years under the PSC by conducting three separate examinations in a single year. Chief Minister Yadav said that the main basis of the Regional Industry Conclave is the youth power of the state. Skill upgradation and training activities are being conducted with the aim that the youth get employment opportunities in the state itself. Through other IT parks started in the state

College student dies in mishap

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A tragic accident occurred in Bhopal on Friday afternoon when a speeding truck collided with a college bus, dragging it for a long distance. The incident, which took place near NIFT College in Bhauri, resulted in the death of one student and left two others seriously injured. Around 2 pm, a group of 55 people, including 51 students and four staff members from People's Engineering College, were returning from a visit to IISER College. While traveling on the road, the truck, bearing the registration number RJ17GA8818, hit the bus, number MP04ZH3229, from behind. The impact was so severe that the rear portion of the bus was badly damaged, and several students were trapped inside.



Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh with Congress State President Jitu Patwari during state Congress management committee meeting at PCC headquarters in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo



Private school owners stage a protest against heavy taxes on their school buildings and other basic facilities, at Rajya Shiksha Kendra in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

MD for immediate replacement of faulty meters

Bhopal: At a review meeting held in Gwalior, Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Company (MKVVCL) Managing Director Kshiti Singhal, on Friday, told officials to ensure the immediate replacement of faulty and non-functional meters in consumer premises. He also directed that applications for load enhancement and new connections be processed within the stipulated time, ensuring new connections and load increases are implemented accordingly. The meeting, attended by Chief General Manager Rajeev Gupta, General Manager Nitin Manglik, and other senior field officials, focused on improving revenue generation and addressing defaulter issues. Singhal emphasised the need for effective action against electricity theft, including disconnecting ser-

VICES for defaulters who have reconnected illegally, in line with Sections 135 and 138 of the Electricity Act 2003. He also urged improvements in billing efficiency, collection efficiency, and the reduction of technical and commercial losses. Singhal stressed the importance of expediting the installation of smart meters, informing consumers of their benefits. He directed better maintenance of distribution transformers to reduce failures and minimise tripping on 33kV and 11kV feeders. Additionally, he called for an uninterrupted power supply to high-voltage consumers and the timely resolution of their issues. Regarding ongoing electrical works under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), he instructed that projects be completed as per the contract terms, with action taken against negligent agencies.

Parking attendants overcharge, refuse digital payments at Hamidia

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In a blatant violation, parking attendants at the government-run Hamidia Hospital are charging double the stipulated fare printed on the slips they hand out after hurriedly scribbling the receipt numbers. Though the slips mention Rs 10 as the charge for two-wheelers, attendants insist on collecting Rs 20, which ironically is twice the amount the college hospital charges outpatients for treatment. Not surprisingly, the parking attendants refuse to accept digital payments and insist on cash transactions, often adding to the distress of both patients and caregivers who have to walk a considerable distance to arrange for the cash before they can retrieve their vehicles. Adding to visitors' woes, the irreverent parking staff refuse to

listen to reason, simply shutting up people by saying, "Pareshani hai toh upar baat kar lijiye (If you have a problem, speak to the higher-ups)." When contacted, the parking contractor maintained that the parking charges are collected as per the agreement with the hospital management. These charges are calculated on an hourly basis. "We are working as per the instructions. For further details, please contact the higher authorities," he says, but refuses to divulge details of the hospital official responsible for the parking. In the absence of a designated official to speak to the media, the hospital management remained unavailable for comment on the matter. Parking at Hamidia is charged hourly and can go up to Rs 200. Additionally, parking in non-designated areas results in fines of up to Rs 500.

Centenary celebrations of SB Bose Library from Jan 12

PNS ■ JABALPUR

Marking 100 years of the Siddhi Bala Bose Library Association, City Bengali Club is organising a centenary celebration which will include various events spanning the next 12 months. The centenary celebrations commence on January 12, to coincide with Vivekananda Jayanti. The Minister for Public Works Department, Rakesh Singh, will be the chief guest in the inaugural function. Institution office bearers and organising committee members inform that the institution was established with the aim of promoting the culture, art, language, and literature of the Bengali community and preserving this rich heritage. It was named in honour of Siddhi Bala Bose—the wife of Rai Bahadur Prabhat Chandra Bose. The land registration of the institution was completed

on January 24, 1925. The first president of the institution was Rai Bahadur SN Varat (1925-1929), and the first secretary was NL Mukherjee (1925-1932). Over the years, several prominent personalities have served the institution as office-bearers and members, including former President Pranab Mukherjee, Rai Bahadur Prabhat Chandra Bose, Tulsi Das Banerjee, Manaranjan Chatterjee, SK Varat, Dr RN Chatterjee, SC Mukherjee, JB Sen, KC Niyogi, and Justice CP Sen. The centenary inauguration will feature the unveiling of the centenary balloon, logo, and flag, the launch of a centenary song, the honouring of distinguished guests, recognition of office-bearers from other Bengali institutions in the city, along with a music programme by renowned singer Rajshekhar Basu. Marking the centenary year,

the postal department will release a special cover on January 24. The centenary year will also witness tree plantation, a performance of the famous play Lajja by the New Palli Theatre Group of Delhi on March 2. A number of social, literary, and cultural events will also be held throughout the year. On this occasion, a centenary pillar will be erected in the institution's premises, and a statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be installed. The Kali temple will be adorned with attractive lighting, and the institution's building will be decorated. This year, preparations are underway to celebrate Durga Puja in a grand manner. President Subrata Pal, Chairman Professor Gayatri Sinha, Chief Coordinator Dr Abhijit Mukherjee, Secretary Prakash Saha, and a host of office bearers and members presented the precursor to the year-long celebrations.

Rajaji Club shooters shine in National Championship

PNS ■ MHOW

The Rajaji Shooting Club is celebrating a wave of success for its talented shooters. In a remarkable display of skill and dedication, seventeen out of twenty shooters from the club have qualified in the prestigious 67th National Championship, underscoring the club's commitment to fostering excellence in shooting sports. Nine outstanding shooters have advanced to the rigorous selection rounds—Dushyant Kumar in the Senior Category for Air Rifle Men, Bilal Khan in both Junior and Senior Categories for Air Rifle Men, Harshit Patider in Youth, Junior, and Senior Categories for Air Pistol Women. Adding to these impressive

Nine outstanding shooters have advanced to the rigorous selection rounds

Categories for Air Rifle Men, Jayesh Patider in Youth Category for Air Rifle Men, KS Sanjana in Junior and Senior Categories for Air Rifle Women, Avnish Giri Goswami in Youth, Junior, and Senior Categories for Air Pistol, Yashveer Sharma in Sub-Youth Category for Air Pistol Men and Tanisha Patider in Sub-Youth Category for Air Pistol Women. The club wishes all the shooters continued success in their future competitions.

Results, three promising young shooters are currently competing in the Khelo MP Games: Harshit Patider, Param Yadav, and Angel Naik participating in Air Rifle or Air Pistol competitions in the Youth category.

Furthermore, two exceptional shooters, KS Sanjana and Bilal Khan, are representing their universities at the esteemed All India Inter University Games. The Rajaji Shooting Club extends its heartfelt congratulations to all the shooters on their outstanding achievements. These successes are a testament to the club's dedication to providing world-class training and unwavering support to its shooters. The club wishes all the shooters continued success in their future competitions.

Makarand, Nitish Bharadwaj, Pankaj Kapur to perform in city this March

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Indimoon Arts Festival will take place from March 4-9 at Ravindra Bhavan. The six-day event, dedicated to the late Alok Chatterjee, will showcase performances focused on theatre, literature, and music. Organised by Rang Theatre, in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Department of Culture, the festival will feature notable personalities from the arts world. The highlight of the opening day will be Chakravayuh—based on

the 13th day of the epic battle of the Mahabharata, featuring Nitish Bharadwaj. On the second day, Makarand Deshpande's Sar Sar Sarla will be staged, followed by Sharman Joshi in Raju Raja Ram on the third day. Pankaj Kapur will perform his own novel, Dophari, on the fourth day. On March 8, a Mumbai-based contemporary band, Euphony, will perform, and the festival will conclude with a live performance by Euphoria, India's first indigenous band, on March 9. All performances will begin at 7 PM.

New initiative to check cyber crimes

Bhopal: Shahdol Superintendent of Police (SP) Ramji Srivastava has launched an initiative to prevent cyber fraud and enhance communication within the district by creating WhatsApp groups through 15 police stations and three police posts. This initiative connects local villages, fostering better information sharing and coordination between the police and the community. So far, 524 WhatsApp groups have been formed, with over 1.25 lakh participants. Each group includes local residents and police personnel, from beat-in-charges to station heads, who serve as admins. SP Srivastava himself is involved in these groups, ensuring direct interaction with the public. The WhatsApp groups serve multiple purposes: sharing cyber fraud prevention tips, distributing

security awareness videos, providing important updates, and establishing direct communication with villagers. SP Srivastava stressed the importance of raising awareness about cyber fraud and ensuring the public is informed. Daily awareness videos are shared, with community members encouraged to spread them further. In addition to addressing cyber crimes, the groups are used for disseminating information about road safety, traffic rules, and emergency procedures. The initiative has also strengthened the district's information system by sharing photos of unknown individuals, accident victims, and fraudsters for identification. Contact numbers for police officers, including beat-in-charges and the SP's office, are provided, making it easier for residents to report incidents.

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Rajnath calls for enhanced cohesiveness of global community

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday here called for enhanced cohesiveness of the global community in view of the current security environment which, he said, is in a state of flux with multiple conflicts and challenges. Addressing Ambassadors' Round-Table, organised as a prelude to Aero India 2025, he stressed on the need to overcome the present geopolitical tensions for ensuring mutual prosperity and global peace. This 15th edition of Aero India is scheduled to be held at the Air Force Station, Yelahanka in Bengaluru, Karnataka from February 10 to 14. "It is of paramount importance that the like-minded countries should strive together for collective actions for peace and prosperity. Without these, our future generations will not be able to take advantage of economic growth or technological innovations that we are experiencing in today's

era," the defence minister told the Ambassadors and High Commissioners of various countries attending the event. He pointed out that India is emerging as a leading voice for the Global South, and it advocates for a multi-aligned policy approach, which ensures that diverse views are considered in the collective pursuit of prosperity. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has articulated India's commitment to addressing global challenges through five guiding principles: Respect, Dialogue, Cooperation, Peace and Prosperity. In today's geopolitical landscape, fostering unity among like-minded nations is essential for ensuring mutual prosperity and peace, while addressing contemporary challenges. India has always championed shared prosperity and shared responsibility based on the fundamental principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, 'One Earth, One Family', which was also the theme for G-20 Summit in 2023," he added.



Rajnath Singh described Aero India, Asia's largest aeroshow, as one such event, where nations come together and form bonds beyond boundaries. Elaborating on the vision behind the biennial event, he stated that it has proven itself to be the meeting ground for the aerospace and defence sectors to showcase their products/technologies. He defined it as a forum to forge strategic partnerships towards increasing opportunities for business, Transfer of Technology, joint development and co-production between various industries. The defence minister emphasised that, today, India possesses one of the largest defence industrial ecosystems in Asia and the government is committed to further enhancing the capabilities. He added that the Indian aerospace and defence sector represents an attractive opportunity for foreign companies seeking to establish new ventures and partnerships. He cited the significant milestone of setting-up of the man-

ufacturing facility of C-295 transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force through collaboration between Tata Advanced Systems Limited and Airbus Defence & Space. Rajnath Singh asserted that India has emerged as an attractive destination for investment, and Aero India 2025 presents an opportunity for friendly nations to jointly explore strengths and capabilities in the defence sector, addressing both strategic needs as well as tactical requirements. He added that the event will facilitate industry captains, technology leaders, intellectuals and entrepreneurs with new avenues for collaboration in defence industrial enterprises. "Aero India 2025 will serve as a vital forum for exploring partnerships that will form the base for future challenges. Together, we can create pathways for growth that are inclusive and sustainable," he said. The defence minister emphasised that air and space power have become pivotal elements in shaping strategies as such assets,

incorporated with Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning systems, provide an unprecedented advantage in battle-field scenarios. He described Aero Space Power as the new frontier of military dominance which acts as strategic deterrence. During the Round-Table, Ambassadors and High Commissioners of various countries were briefed on the major events of Aero India 2025, and extended a personal invite from defence minister for their senior most leadership. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar and other senior officials of the Ministry of Defence as well as the Government of Karnataka attended the Round-Table.

No tree felling in Mumbai's Aarey without our nod: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the tree authority of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation not to allow any further tree felling in Mumbai's Aarey colony without its permission. A bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Aravind Kumar said the authority could process the applications and then seek orders from the court. The order came after the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) informed the bench there was no pending propos-

al to cut of more trees in the area. The top court posted the hearing on March 5. The apex court had directed the Maharashtra government to inform if there was any proposal to fell more trees in Aarey forest. The court in 2023 permitted some forest-dwelling communities to move the Bombay High Court with their grievances over felling of trees in the forest for the metro rail project. On April 17, 2023, the apex court came down heavily on Mumbai Metro for trying to "overreach" its order permitting the felling of only 84 trees in the



forest for a car shed project and directed it to pay Rs 10 lakh as penalty. The court said it was improper on the part of the MMRCL to move the tree authority for felling of any trees in excess of 84. The top court, however, permitted the company to remove 177 trees from Aarey forest, saying a stay on tree felling would bring the public project to a standstill which was not desirable. The apex court in 2019 took suo motu cognisance of a letter petition addressed to the chief justice of India by law student Rishav Ranjan seeking a stay on the felling of trees in the

colony. On November 29, 2022, the apex court permitted Mumbai Metro to raise its plea to fell 84 trees at Mumbai's Aarey Colony with the authority concerned. The top court had directed MMRCL to strictly abide by its undertaking on no tree felling and warned of strict action in case of violation. The apex court had restrained the authorities from felling any more trees after the solicitor general submitted on behalf of Maharashtra government no more trees would be cut. The felling of trees in the colony was opposed by green activists and Aarey residents.

Project 'Veer Gatha 4.0' as part of R-Day celebrations garners incredible nationwide response

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The fourth edition of Project 'Veer Gatha 4.0', a joint initiative by Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education as part of Republic Day celebrations, has garnered an incredible nationwide response. This year, approximately 1.76 crore students from around 2.31 lakh schools participated in the competition, defence ministry said here on Friday. One hundred (100) winners are selected at the national level. The winners are divided into four categories, with 25 winners from each: Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5), Middle Stage (Grades 6-8), Secondary Stage (Grades 9-10) and Secondary Stage (Grades 11-12). The first 100 winners will witness the traditional parade at Kartavya Path as Special Guests. Launched on September 05, 2024, Project Veer Gatha 4.0 presented a variety of thought-provoking topics for essay and paragraph writing. Students had the opportunity to write about their chosen role models, particularly focusing on Gallantry Award recipients. They were also encouraged to explore the inspiring lives of freedom fighters such as Rani Laxmibai, the 1857 First War of Independence, and the significant role of Tribal Uprisings in India's Freedom Struggle. This diverse array of topics not only enhanced the quality of the entries, but also deepened participants' understanding of India's historical and cultural legacy. The project involved schools conducting activities at the local level, nationwide interaction programmes by Gallantry awardees (both offline and online), and the submission of top entries via MyGov portal. The school-level activities concluded on October 31, 2024. Following evaluations at the State and District levels, nearly 4,029 entries were submitted



for national-level evaluation, where top 100 entries were selected as SUPER-100 winners. These winners will be felicitated jointly by the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education in New Delhi. Each winner will receive a cash prize of Rs 10,000. In addition to the 100 national-level winners, eight winners at the State/UT level (two from each category) and four winners at the district level (one from each category) will be selected and honoured by State/UT/District authorities. Project Veer Gatha was launched in 2021 as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to commemorate India's 75th year of Independence. The project aims to raise awareness of Gallantry awardees' acts of bravery and the life stories of these heroes. The initiative helps instill patriotism and civic values in students. The journey of Project Veer Gatha from Edition 1 to Edition 4 has been inspiring, expanding the reach of the competition across the length and breadth of the country. In the first two editions of Project Veer Gatha, 25 winners were selected at the national level, with around eight lakh students participating in the first edition and 19 lakh in the second edition. The third edition marked a significant milestone, with the selection of 100 national winners for the first time and an increased participation of 1.36 crore students. The momentum continued to grow in Veer Gatha 4.0, reinforcing the widespread impact of this initiative.

Shah to chair regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah on Saturday here will chair a regional conference on "Drug Trafficking and National Security". The conference, organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), aims to address the growing concern of drug trafficking and its impact on national security, with a special focus on eight states and Union Territories of northern India, home ministry said here on Friday. During the event, Shah will launch the Drug Disposal Fortnight, inaugurate the new office complex of the NCB's Bhopal zonal unit and extension of the MANAS-2 helpline to all 36 states and Union Territories. The conference will focus on the sharing of real-time information from the National Narcotics Helpline 'MANAS' portal with the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) of States and Union Territories, evaluating the progress of States in combating drug trafficking, and assessing the effectiveness of the Narcotics Coordination



Mechanism (NCORD). It will also address strengthening and enhancing the functionality of State Forensic Science Laboratories (SFLs), utilizing the NIDAAN database to bolster efforts against drug trafficking, implementing provisions of the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act, establishing special NDPS courts for the speedy trial of drug-related cases, and fostering a Whole-of-Government approach to ensure comprehensive collaboration among all agencies to combat drug trafficking and abuse effectively. During the drug disposal fort-

night starting from January 11-25, a total of 44,792 kilograms of seized narcotics, whose international market value is Rs 2,411 crore, will be disposed of. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy against drug trafficking. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is implementing a three-pronged strategy to achieve a drug-free India by 2047. This includes strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing coordination among narcotics agencies, and launching a massive public awareness campaign.

DG NCC inaugurates 'Idea and Innovation Competition' for cadets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Director General National Cadet Corps (DG NCC) Lt General Gurbirpal Singh here on Friday inaugurated 'Idea and Innovation Competition', to provide cadets with tools and guidance to develop solutions to real-world challenges. This unique initiative which was taken up for the first time in NCC Republic Day Camp (RDC) provided cadets with the tools and guidance to think critically and develop solutions to real-world challenges, defence ministry said. Before the competition, the NCC organised a series of workshops and contests pan India under the aegis of all 17 NCC State Directorates, with the aim to inspire and meet the aspirations of cadets. The initiative yielded remarkable results, with cadets generating an impressive 256 innovative ideas and solutions. Out of these, 56 top innovations were shortlisted and showcased during the Republic Day Camp 2025. The innovations highlighted



the cadets' ability to think outside the box, demonstrated creativity, teamwork, and a commitment to nation-building. The Idea and Innovation competition resonated deeply with the cadets, emphasised entrepreneurship, problem-solving, and the spirit of innovation in the cadets. These initiatives not only underlined the NCC's dedication to nurture future leaders but also boost the potential of young minds in addressing pressing societal challenges. The aim of the initiative was to align NCC training with contemporary aspects and give exposure & opportunities to cadets towards 'Yuva Setu' and prepare them for 'Viksit Bharat'.

Former UP Police DG appointed president of IPF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Former Uttar Pradesh Police director general O P Singh has been appointed the new president of the Indian Police Foundation (IPF), an independent think tank on policing subjects. A message shared by outgoing President N Ramachandran with other members of the organisation said Singh's skills and "team building" abilities apart from "remarkable contributions and visionary leadership make him the ideal choice to further the vision and mission of the Foundation." According to the message, Singh was "unanimously" elected as the IPF president and CEO during a meeting of the executive council held here on Friday. The 1983-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer retired from service in January 2020. Apart from heading the Uttar Pradesh Police, he served as the director general of two central forces -- the Central Industrial Security Force and the National Disaster Response Force.

India marks significant milestone in journey towards achieving climate goals with launch of Bharat Climate Forum

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

India marked a significant milestone in its journey toward achieving climate goals and economic self-reliance with the launch of the Bharat Climate Forum on Friday. A national platform dedicated to unifying stakeholders from policy, industry, finance, and research to accelerate cleantech manufacturing in India, the Bharat Climate Forum aims to drive sustainable economic growth and innovation. Hosted by the Centre for Indigenous Economic Understanding (CIEU) and Dalberg Advisors, the Bharat Climate Forum is supported by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), NITI Aayog, and International Solar Alliance (ISA). Addressing the launch, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Atmanirbhar Bharat embodies India's drive for eco-



economic sovereignty and technological leadership through innovation and collaboration. "Our 4G-5G telecom stack showcases this spirit which the cleantech sector can imbibe, with public-private partnerships enabling world-class, competitive solutions. I think the Bharat Climate Forum organizers for highlighting India's commitment to cleantech innovation for a sustain-

able future," he said in a statement. The forum comes at a time when India is pursuing ambitious climate targets, including achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 and scaling up non-fossil fuel capacity to 500 GW by 2030. Despite progress in renewables, challenges such as reliance on imports for solar and wind infrastructure persist. Ashwani Mahajan, National

Co-Convener of Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Member-Secretary of the Bharat Climate Forum, emphasized the need for a comprehensive manufacturing policy to address these challenges. The forum also spotlighted the economic opportunities in cleantech. By 2030, Dalberg estimates suggest that cleantech manufacturing could create a domestic market worth \$120-150 billion annually and generate export opportunities of \$40-45 billion while generating 50 million new jobs by 2070. Jagjeet Singh Sareen, Partner, Global Climate Practice at Dalberg Advisors and Member-Secretary of the Bharat Climate Forum mentioned, achieving the 1.5-degree target requires urgent acceleration in our efforts. The inaugural event witnessed the launch of Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal an initiative to strength-

en India's clean tech value chains—spanning solar, wind, hydrogen, and battery storage. The Forum launch was also addressed by several distinguished attendees including Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa who provided insights into delivering cost-competitive clean tech solutions. Bharat Climate Forum 2025 is an influential platform that brings together key stakeholders from the government, industry, and global community to accelerate India's clean energy transition. CIEU is committed to fostering comprehensive research, facilitating dialogues, and curating innovative ideas that address the needs of diverse communities. Dalberg Advisors is a strategic advisory firm that combines the best private sector strategy skills and rigorous analytical capabilities with deep knowledge and networks across emerging and frontier markets.

New FIR against Karti Chidambaram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

CBI has registered a fresh case against Congress MP Karti Chidambaram, accusing accepting bribes for lifting the ban on liquor manufacturer Diageo and FDI clearance for Sequoia Capital and routing bribe money through Vasan Eye Care and his own firm Advantage Capital. As per the CBI FIR, Karti got around Rs.87 crore on these deals by misusing father and former Finance Minister P Chidambaram's office. Apart from Karti, other accused are Chidambaram family's Chartered Accountant S Bhaskararaman, Vasan Eye Care promoter (late) Dwarakanathan, bribe gives liquor company Diageo Scotland and venture capital firm Sequoia Capital and Karti controlled firms Advantage Strategic Consulting, Vasan Eye Care, which is now defunct. CBI FIR charges Karti and his firm Advantage for accepting



bribe of 15,000 Dollars for lifting ban on liquor company Diageo Scotland which supplies famous brand Johnnie Walker Whiskey. CBI FIR says more than 86 crore was routed by Karti controlled firms Vasan Eye Care and Advantage Strategic Consulting in providing Foreign Direct Investment clearance for Mauritius based venture capital firm Sequoia Capital's proposals from Finance Ministry then headed by P Chidambaram. Detailing the money trail, CBI FIR says these

transactions happened between 2008 to 2010. Karti is currently facing three CBI cases - Aircel Maxis deal, INX Media bribery and Chinese Visa case. This is his fourth case, facing corruption, misusing his father former Finance Minister P Chidambaram. He is also facing Enforcement Directorate's case in Aircel Maxis and INX Media bribery case. In Aircel Maxis deal and INX Media bribery case, Karti is a Co-Accused with his father P Chidambaram.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw unveils upgraded Amrit Bharat trains with 12 key enhancements

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
CHENNAI

The Ministry of Railways has added 12 major improvements on the Amrit Bharat Version 2.0 trains and 50 such trains will be manufactured at ICF over the next two years, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Friday. Vaishnaw, who inspected the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) along with its General Manager U Subba Rao, said the state government should place service to people above politics and the Centre and his Ministry is committed to take measures for the welfare of the people.

"Very happy to see the Amrit Bharat Version 2.0 (being manufactured here). As you can recall, the Amrit Bharat Version 1.0 was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi last January 2024 and based on the experience in the last one year, many improvements have been made in the Amrit Bharat Version 2.0," Vaishnaw told reporters at the ICF here. Sharing some of



the salient features that have been improved in the Amrit Bharat trains, he said, "12 major improvements have been done in the entire train. Semi-automatic couplers, modular toilets, chair pillars and partitions, emergency talk back feature, emergency brake system, continuous lighting system like Vande Bharat trains, seats and berths with

new ergonomic design have been improved." He said the entire pantry car in the Amrit Bharat Version 2.0 trains have been built using a new design. Targeted at low income and low middle income families, he said, "50 such Amrit Bharat Version 2.0 trains would be manufactured in the coming two years (at the Integral Coach Factory). This

will provide a very affordable service and very high quality of travelling experience to people travelling long distances." Responding to a query about the apprehension raised by the Commissioner of Railway Safety on the construction of the historic Pamban bridge in Rameswaram, he said the designing of the bridge was done based on the Research

Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO). "When you do the RDSO standard, such a standard of designs is done for bridges which are constructed in large numbers. This is a unique bridge. Pamban Bridge is once in a lifetime that you design and construct a bridge of this type," he said. He cleared the air that the Commissioner of Railways Safety was explained that this is not a standard bridge and uniquely designed bridge and the services of the best international experts have been taken for designing. "The CRS has understood and they have now given the clearance on the bridge design. Panel report has also come," he said. The minister said the Railways has installed the KAVACH (a facility to help prevent train accidents) in 10,000 locomotives and 15,000 km of track side fittings are also being done. "Telecom towers are also being installed. Cameras are being installed on the front of the locomotives.

Trinidad, Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo wins Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award by President Murmu



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
BHUBANESWAR

Trinidad & Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo and 26 others were conferred the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award by President Droupadi Murmu on the last day of the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention here. Murmu congratulated all the awardees and appreciated them for working for the society in different fields. She said that their success

stories are not just a matter of pride for India, but they also inspire millions across the world to strive for excellence. Murmu said Kangaloo's outstanding contributions in leading her nation, with a special focus on women and the Indian diaspora, have set a high benchmark on the world stage. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award is the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians. The awardees represent the excellence achieved by the Indian diaspora in various fields.

The Trinidad & Tobago President got the award in the public affairs category. Other awardees included Ajay Rane (Australia, community service), Marialena Joan Fernandes (Austria, education), Swami Sanyuktanand (Fiji, community service), Saraswati Vidya Niketan (Guyana, community service), Lekh Raj Juneja (Japan, science and technology), Prem Kumar (Kyrgyz Republic, medical science) and Soukthavy Chowdhury (Laos, business).

BSF foils cattle smuggling attempt on India-Bangladesh border, recovers 10 bulls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
KOLKATA

BSF jawans were attacked by Bangladeshi cattle smugglers on the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on Thursday night, a statement from the paramilitary force said. In a retaliatory action carried out in self-defence, the jawans successfully foiled the smuggling attempt and recovered 10 bulls, it added. The incident took place at Khatadah border outpost (BOP), where BSF personnel saw smugglers approaching



the border fence from the Indian side with cattle. Simultaneously, smugglers from the Bangladesh side crossed the international border into India.

When the BSF jawans challenged them to stop, the smugglers ignored the warning and advanced aggressively, wielding sharp-edged spears while attempting to cut the border fence. In response to the threat, a BSF jawan fired a blank round as a warning. "Taking advantage of the darkness and uneven terrain, the smugglers fled back to Bangladesh. A subsequent search of the area led to the recovery of 8 bulls of Haryana origin and three sharp-edged spears left behind by the attackers," the statement by BSF South Bengal Frontier

said. Previous incidents of similar smuggling attempts and assaults have been reported at Pipli BOP (Kolkata sector) and BOPs HC Pur and Nawada (Malda sector), where BSF jawans were forced to defend themselves using stun grenades and other weapons, the statement added. A BSF spokesperson said despite frequent flag meetings with the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to raise concerns about these attacks, no concrete action has been taken by Bangladeshi authorities.

Assam coal mine tragedy: 'Sardar' of trapped miners arrested as rescue efforts continue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
GUWAHATI

The 'sardar' of workers of the coal mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district, where eight miners remained trapped, was arrested, even as a dewatering exercise continued in the quarry to facilitate the resumption of rescue operations, police said on Friday. The fate of the trapped miners appeared to be grim with personnel involved in the rescue operations racing against time to bring them out of the ill-fated quarry, while the body of one labourer,

hailing from Nepal, has been recovered from there, an official said. "The 'sardar' (head) of the miners, who had fled the quarry site soon after the incident on January 6, was arrested on Thursday night from a place after an extensive search operation. This is the second arrest in connection with the case," said a senior officer who did not divulge the place of arrest. The arrested person has been identified as Hanan Laskar, and Punish Nunisa, the leaseholder of the quarry, was held on the second day of the incident in connection with

the case, the official said. The labourers were on Monday trapped inside the 3-Kilo Coal Quarry in Umranago area, around 250 km from Guwahati, after a sudden gush of water flooded the site. A case was registered in connection with the incident at the mine which appears to be 'illegal', Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said. Nine labourers were trapped inside the mine after a sudden gush of water flooded the quarry, and the body of one labourer has been recovered so far.

AAP's Sanjay Singh assures Goa court he will refrain from defaming CM's wife

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
PANAJI

Am Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh has assured Goa court that he will refrain from making any defamatory statements against CM Dr. Pramod Sawant's wife Sulakshana Sawant. Sanjay Singh's lawyer submitted in Bicholim Judicial Magistrate of First Class (JMFC) court that his client will refrain from commenting against CM Dr. Pramod Sawant's wife Sulakshana Sawant. The court in Goa had issued a notice to Sanjay Singh in a Rs 100-crore defamation case filed against him by Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant's wife for allegedly naming her in the cash-for-jobs scam. The court had sought Singh's reply by January 10, 2025. Next hearing on the matter is kept on 24th January 2025. Pramod Sawant's wife Sulakshana Sawant had filed a case in the court of Civil Judge Senior Division, Bicholim, North Goa. Sulakshana Sawant, in her complaint, had requested the court to direct Sanjay Singh to publish an apology clarifying that the said defamatory video/article and interview are false, not based on facts, and tender an unconditional apology. The complainant had also urged the court to restrain Sanjay Singh from making any public statements maligning her by injunction on social media or other platforms.

Farmer leader Dallewal challenges Punjab BJP: meet Modi instead of Akal Takht Jathedar to end fast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab BJP has appealed to the Akal Takht but should approach Prime Minister Narendra Modi if they want him to end his hunger strike, farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal said on Friday as his fast-unto-death entered day 46. In a three-minute video message released on Friday, the 70-year-old farmer leader asserted he will end his fast only after the Centre accepts farmers' demands which include a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price for crops. A BJP delegation, comprising Sukhminder Pal Singh Grewal and Sarchand Singh, appealed to Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh on Thursday to intervene to end the indefinite fast of the farmer leader. The delegation expressed concern over Dallewal's deteriorating health.



In his video message Dallewal said, "We have got information that the leaders of the Punjab unit of BJP appealed to the Akal Takht to intervene in order to end Dallewal's fast-unto-death. (They appealed to the Akal Takht that) a direction be given so that he should end his fast. I respect the Akal Takht." "But the Punjab BJP should approach (PM) Modi ji, the vice president (Jagdeep Dhankhar), Agriculture Minister (Shivraj Singh Chouhan), (Home Minister) Amit Shah ji. Instead of meeting them, they are

approaching the Akal Takht Jathedar," he said. Farmer leaders camped at the Punjab-Haryana border also burnt effigies of the central government on Friday. Dallewal, who is the convener of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), has been on the indefinite hunger strike at the Khanauri border point between Punjab and Haryana since November 26 last year over farmers' various demands including seeking a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

Gurugram police busts international scam: two airtel employees arrested for aiding Indonesian and Chinese fraudsters

PARVESH SHARMA ■
GURUGRAM

A cybercrime team of Gurugram police has arrested two Airtel company employees who had provided virtual numbers to Indonesian and Chinese fraudsters to cheat people through WhatsApp/Telegram in the name of part-time job/investment. As per the instructions of Priyanshu Diwan, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Cyber Crime, Gurugram, the police team of Cyber East, Gurugram and the joint team of Indian Cyber Coordination Center (I4C), MHA, Govt of India, took action based on technical analysis and nabbed the suspects on Thursday. The accused have been identified as Neeraj Walia, a



resident of District Baghpat (Uttar Pradesh), and Hemant Sharma. The accused were arrested as per rules in the case under sections 318(4), 319, 61(2) BNS at Police Station Cyber Crime East, Gurugram. According to the police, the complainant filed a complaint that he received a call from a landline number in Gurugram in which he was offered a part-time job.

In which the complainant/victim had to post reviews of different hotels. On completing the task, Rs 200 were transferred to the victim's bank account. After that, the victim was added to the Telegram group by the accused. After that, while giving him the task, small amounts were transferred to his account 2-3 times. Later on, money was transferred from him in the name of investing for these tasks. After that, more money was demanded to withdraw this money. During police interrogation, it was found that Neeraj works as a site verifier in Airtel company and Hemant is his team leader. "The accused had issued the landline number/DID number used in the crime in the name of Ekamdarsh

Services Pvt Ltd. Despite the above company not being present on the mentioned site, the accused violated TRAI rules and issued a landline number in the name of the above company," Diwan said. Using the above number, the companions of the accused cheated people in the name of task-based investment. The accused also disclosed that, in connivance with the operational manager of Ekamdarsh Services Pvt Ltd, a company registered at a fake address, had provided many more numbers to an Indonesian person apart from the above landline number/DID number. "In connection with the matter further investigation is underway. The accused have been taken on police remand for intensive interrogation," he added.

Prayagraj transforms into mega tent city for Maha Kumbh 2025

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
PRAYAGRAJ

The Maha Kumbh 2025 has transformed the sandy banks of Prayagraj's Sangam into a spectacular tent city, a temporary settlement capable of accommodating more than 20 lakh devotees at a time. With over one lakh tents ranging from basic to luxurious, this extraordinary project represents a harmonious blend of engineering, tradition, and spiritual fervor. The scale of this undertaking is staggering. Approximately 68 lakh wooden poles have been used, their combined length exceeding 20,000 kilometers-greater than the distance from Prayagraj to Washington, D.C. Additionally, 100 kilometers of fabric and 250 tonnes of CGI sheets were used for roofing. Over 3,000 workers have been laboring in three shifts for months, meticulously converting these raw materials into a vast, functional city. Each tent is crafted with care, employing durable fabrics like cotton and terrycot,



often lined with polythene to ensure protection against rain. A project of this magnitude owes its success largely to the expertise of Lalluji and Sons, a company with a 104-year legacy of managing Kumbh preparations. Known as the "Vishwakarma of Kumbh," the company has constructed 75% of the tent city. According to Deepanshu

Agarwal, Managing Partner of Lalluji and Sons, preparations began 18 months ago, encompassing tasks such as crafting new tents, repairing old structures, and executing extensive logistical planning. Despite challenges, including delays caused by prolonged monsoons, the team has worked tirelessly to meet the deadlines.

For many workers, the Kumbh is not just an event but a lifelong calling. Rambachan, a 60-year-old veteran, reminisced about the days when wages were ₹10 per day. "Now we earn ₹500 daily, but the joy of contributing to something this significant is priceless," he said. Younger workers like Kuldeep echoed his sentiments, describing the pride they feel in their work. The tent city is a marvel not only in its scale but also in its offerings. While some tents cater to Kalpwasis, who live in simplicity and gather around bonfires for prayers, others provide modern luxuries. Premium accommodations include marble flooring, Wi-Fi, electric blankets, and even televisions, blending comfort with tradition. Pilgrims like Raghunath, a 68-year-old from Rajasthan, and Sushila, a 50-year-old from Varanasi, expressed awe at the modern amenities, describing the experience as unparalleled. Spanning 3,200 hectares-800 hectares more than in 2019-the Maha Kumbh 2025 tent

city is twice the scale of its predecessor. With temporary police stations, administrative offices, and facilities for millions, it stands as a testament to human ingenuity, devotion, and the enduring spirit of one of the world's largest spiritual gatherings. CM inaugurates 'Kumbhvani' Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated Prasar Bharati's FM channel 'Kumbhvani' at the Circuit House on Friday, during the second day of his Prayagraj tour. Expressing his best wishes for the success of the channel, CM Yogi stated his confidence that 'Kumbhvani' will not only reach new heights of popularity but also extend the spirit of Mahakumbh to remote villages where many people, despite their desire, cannot physically attend the event. He emphasized that the channel would serve as a vital medium to deliver all relevant information about Mahakumbh to these distant communities. Highlighting the importance

of live broadcasting, CM Yogi said, "Such efforts would enable those in far-flung areas to experience and understand the grandeur of Mahakumbh." He said this would allow them to share the pride of this grand celebration of Sanatan Dharma with future generations. He also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Prasar Bharati for their efforts in launching Kumbhvani. "It is a remarkable moment, and Prasar Bharati has beautifully captured its essence through Kumbhvani," he said. The Kumbhvani FM channel will not only broadcast live coverage of the daily events but will also share religious references and stories related to the Mahakumbh in remote villages, making the spiritual essence of the event accessible to all. Kumbhvani on 103.5 MHz Prasar Bharati has launched the OTT-based Kumbhvani FM channel to disseminate comprehensive information

about the Maha Kumbh. Broadcasting at a frequency of 103.5 MHz, the channel will be on air from January 10 to February 26, operating daily from 5:55 AM to 10:05 PM. Kala Kumbh serves as an authentic document of Kumbh's developmental journey In another development Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the Kala Kumbh in Sector 7. After opening the UP State Pavilion, CM Yogi visited the Kala Kumbh, a unique camp created by the Uttar Pradesh Culture Department, located right across from the pavilion. Chief Minister Yogi proceeded to the exhibition hall, where he admired the distinctive artworks, temple replicas, and thematic exhibitions. Praising the initiative, he described Kala Kumbh as an authentic documentation of the Kumbh's developmental journey. On this occasion, Principal Secretary of Tourism and Culture, Mukesh Meshram, presented

the Chief Minister with a memento. Spanning approximately 5 acres within the fairgrounds, the Kala Kumbh features an exhibition gallery and a stage for cultural performances. The gallery displays photographs, replicas, and exhibits tracing the journey of Bhatkhande Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, monuments of Uttar Pradesh, protected heritage sites, manuscripts, and artefacts. A key highlight of the Kala Kumbh is the section dedicated to the historical perspective of Mahakumbh. This eighth segment of the exhibition delves into administrative insights from all Kumbh events held in Prayagraj between 1866 and 1954, presented through government letters, records, and official documents. This section includes reports, correspondences, administrative orders, and other records, offering a comprehensive view of Kumbh over the last 150 years.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Transforming defence

The 'Year of Transformation' can give necessary momentum for defence manufacturing and innovation

India's defence landscape is set to undergo a transformative shift in 2025, as the Ministry of Defence (MoD) embarks on an ambitious overhaul aimed at modernising procurement processes, expanding indigenous manufacturing capabilities and boosting research and development (R&D). The year has been declared as the 'Year of Transformation,' with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and other top officials outlining a vision to address long-standing challenges while positioning the country for greater self-reliance and competitiveness in defence. One of the key focus areas for the government is to revamp the Defence Acquisition Procedures (DAP). These procedures, which have been criticised for their complexity and inefficiency, are set to be replaced with a more streamlined, lighter, and faster version. The aim is to cut down delays in procurement timelines and eliminate bureaucratic hurdles that have long impeded defence modernisation. The new framework will not only make the system more efficient but will also create a level playing field for both established players and newcomers in the defence sector. In addition to reforming procurement, the government has placed a strong emphasis on boosting indigenous manufacturing and R&D.

While India is the world's fifth-largest manufacturing economy, its defence manufacturing capacity remains relatively small in comparison to its overall economic standing. To address this gap, the government plans to allocate more resources to defence R&D, with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) targeting an increase in R&D spending from 5 per cent to 15 per cent of the defence budget in the coming years. One area that has garnered particular attention is the development of aero engines. India has faced challenges in developing these critical technologies domestically, and the government has signaled that joint ventures with foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) will be essential for progress. With significant investments required—potentially as high as Rs 50,000 crore—the government is determined to make the necessary commitments to build the infrastructure and expertise required for successful co-development of aero engines and related technologies. Another significant initiative is the creation of a more competitive defence industry ecosystem. Currently, India's defence sector is largely dominated by Public Sector Undertakings. The government aims to level the playing field by encouraging the participation of startups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises through policy changes. Despite these ambitious plans, India's defence ecosystem still faces several challenges. One of the most significant hurdles is the relatively small manufacturing base in sectors like aerospace, where India's ability to scale production and develop cutting-edge technologies has been limited. Besides, archaic policies, delays in preparing Requests for Proposals and overly complicated procedures have often led to extended timelines. This must change if defence sector is to become competitive and innovative.

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PICTALK



Devotees carry 'kalash' during 'Hindu Rashtra Seva Mela' at Goregaon

The trust factor in human interaction



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The temperament and conviction of individuals play a pivotal role in shaping trust, whether in personal relationships or organisational dynamics

There is a general feeling that if something is committed on paper, with other things being equal, it is reliable evidence that it will be carried out. If it is on a legal document, the credibility quotient is still higher, and if there are clauses that recognise the punitive element of violation, the feeling of reliability further goes on. This, like many truths, goes a certain distance.

This cannot be the place to explore the veracity of such belief, but there is an occasion to look at certain other aspects of reliability, especially the temperament of the people involved. Some people take their words seriously, and others casually. This attitude permeates their entire behaviour, and in certain matters, it becomes even more evident that they take their words seriously. Other types of people are quite figuratively the opposite, and they take their own words so lightly that when they utter them, they are not sure what conviction they carry. Between these two extremes, the larger part of the population rests with varying degrees of reliability and different levels of conviction.

This simple truth makes the entire range of human conviction open to many shades of possibilities and makes dealing with each other either at a direct level or at a group level, an extremely dubious proposition wherein liability is concerned. This even affects official interaction as indeed it does personal interaction. It is therefore necessary in a group culture to inculcate the correct values of interpersonal dynamics. People cannot be 'taught' to be reliable. This is because the fundamental principles of values, like eternal values, remain the same. Every domain of human life talks about what is right, what is beautiful, and what is essential to keep groups sustainable and harmoniously together. In such circumstances where it is recognised that observing pristine standards



may be difficult, many people practice silence. They simply do not talk about values at all. This may or may not work because silence and lack of communication would allow each one to create his norm and use his interpretation. What matters most then is how the leader of the group behaves as an exemplar and what other members of the group see as the essence of acceptable behaviour. Positive or negative recognition then follows. For this, the informal and formal leaders of the group must agree on certain examples and set an example collectively. It is difficult, especially when there is no clear reference point and no way of verifying what rules the roost. If the group has a powerful man, his behaviour is noticed and others try to imitate him. If the powerful man acquires power by formal position, it is one story. If, however, he acquires power through organising cliques and factions and through manipulations, there are always dangers of somebody calling the bluff or indeed power slipping out of his



IF THE POWERFUL MAN ACQUIRES POWER BY FORMAL POSITION, IT IS ONE STORY. IF, HOWEVER, HE ACQUIRES POWER THROUGH ORGANIZING CLIQUES AND FACTIONS AND THROUGH MANIPULATIONS, THERE ARE ALWAYS DANGERS OF SOMEBODY CALLING THE BLUFF

hand. All this is not conducive to organisational stability or, for that matter, even clarity. It makes the job of a new entrant particularly complex. The complexity would be enhanced if the new entrant could not navigate his way intelligently with perspicacity and shrewdness. If the group has a large number of turnovers, then the complexity is further compounded. Under the circumstances, it's perhaps best to recognise that, like all truths, simplicity is the best approach. Being truthful, simple, and straightforward is the foundation of sound behaviour, stable relationships, and the achievement of goals constructively and dependably. Like all foundations of a sound civil society, positive thinking, straightforward action, and dependable follow-up is the way to go forward. It is the human mind that creates complications. Legality and other elements that try to substitute the basic character of dependability, without the right ambience, will remain halfway houses. It can lead to

quibbling, litigation, and, at times, disappointment. However, stability will remain a matter of character, and that is where civil societies need to pitch. Whether this is in a formal organisation or an informal civil setup, it would hardly make a difference. Truth remains the truth and for the best way, it is important to follow it up relentlessly with simplicity and dignity. Like many tales, this too has a tailpiece. There is a Sanskrit dictum, "Satyam bruyat, priyam apriyam". A free translation of this shall be "Speak the truth, speak the pleasant; do not speak the truth which is unpleasant". There can be many views on this, and each will have its assumptions and derivations. If assumptions vary, as do the derivations, conclusions would be also varied. That is the nature of truth: multifaceted, each appearing right in its way. One has to navigate one's way.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TWO TIER SYSTEM IN TEST CRICKET

Madam — There are talks between Australia, England, and India and the International Cricket Council's (ICC) new chair, Jay Shah to split Test (cricket) playing nations into two tier, with Australia, England and India in one tier and the rest in a different tier. The concept has gained impetus post the BGT series, where the attendance and TV viewership touched new records. If agreed upon by the ICC council, this will come into effect post-2027 after the present commitments are met by these nations. The objective is that these three nations will play against each other twice in three years as against the present four-year schedule. While the idea may have sprung up from the revenue point of view, ICC must focus on its unwritten objective of improving the quality and skill level of the weaker member nations and making all the members play competitive cricket.

The choice of three nations—India, Australia, and England—also in the upper tier, is arbitrary if it is on the basis of the quality of cricket displayed. If it is so, India has not displayed quality cricket, both in the home series against the Kiwis and down under in the BGT series recently. Also, the Windies have stunned the Aussies in Gabba in a pink ball test in 2024. The recent entrants to the test-playing nations, like Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan have also displayed talents and enthusiasm. Hence such an idea of an arbitrary split must be shunned. If the ICC is serious about splitting, it must be based on the performance in a given time period, say between 2025-28, on the number of points scored by each nation on the number of test wins/losses and can consider having two or three divisions amongst the twelve member countries. Having done that on the basis of points scored, one can consider promotion or demotion of the first and last two, respectively, which will also instill a sense of competitiveness and thereby sustain interest in the test cricket.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

A policy shift for Afghanistan



In a major and surprising development, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Afghan Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai on Wednesday. Though its relations with Afghanistan had nosedived after the Taliban seized power in the mountainous, landlocked republic in 2021, New Delhi, in a smart move, kept providing humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghanistan. The Taliban also requested the Indian delegation to reopen its diplomatic mission in Afghanistan. Now, Misri's meeting marks a major shift in New

Delhi's policy towards the Taliban. This meeting has taken place at a time when Afghanistan is witnessing heightened tensions with Pakistan concerning the Durand Line—the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan—as well as regarding the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). By condemning Pakistan's airstrikes in Afghanistan, New Delhi has played a well-calculated diplomatic move. Besides the Pakistan factor, Iran's Chabahar Port is also going to play a major role in India-Taliban relations as Kabul is looking to leverage its ties with India by using the Chabahar Port. Thus, both the Taliban and New Delhi have realised that bilateral ties are mutually beneficial for both countries. By playing a vital role in restoring peace, stability, and development in Afghanistan, New Delhi can secure geopolitical leverage over Pakistan at the crossroads of South and Central Asia.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

HONOURING INDIAN DIASPORA

Madam—The city of Odisha turned out to be the venue for the 18th Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas this year. In order to honour the immense contribution of the Indian diaspora, it is particularly required to appreciate the exceptional contribution of Indians overseas. For many decades, millions of Indians have paid visits to foreign countries to grab vibrant opportunities in different spectrums of life. Indians made exceptional contributions to the economic success of the different nations, assisting India to create its own niche soft power on the basis of its people settled overseas. Indians are globally renowned for contributing the world's highest remittance back to India with 129 billion USD in 2024. The spirit of the Indian diaspora is ever vibrant and zealous, and this celebration at Odisha's Bhubaneswar for appreciating Pravasi Bhartiya is a welcoming initiative. Let's take a moment to thank & appreciate the Indian diaspora, who are continuously extending the legacy of India all around the world.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

MAHAKUMBH MELA IN PRAYAGRAJ

Madam — The Great Mahakumbh Mela 2025, set to take place in Prayagraj, which is held only once in a period of 144 years, which is beginning from January 13 to February 26, is much more than a religious gathering—it is a profound celebration of spirituality, culture, and cosmic alignment. This ancient festival, rooted in the Sanatan tradition, is believed to influence not only human affairs but also cosmic and terrestrial energies. The event is centred on the holy confluence of three rivers—the Ganga, Yamuna and the Saraswati. The Mahakumbh exemplifies India's rich cultural diversity, drawing millions of devotees, ascetics, and pilgrims from all walks of life. Through practices like ritual bathing, chanting, meditation, and spiritual discourses, it becomes a unifying force, blending traditions and beliefs into a harmonious whole.

Anushka Bohra | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Breaking barriers: The rise of women investors in India's equity markets

Among the most notable trends in the equity market is the surge in women investors, whose participation has grown 6.8 times since 2015

The Indian equity market has radically transformed over the past two decades. The advent of smartphones, digital trading platforms, and increased financial literacy has ushered in a new era of investors — young, financially aware, and open to taking calculated risks. Recent data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE) reveals that women now constitute over 22 per cent of equity market investors in India, a 6.8X growth since 2015. This surge in female participation is particularly noteworthy given the tepid adoption of demat trading in its early days. It could be attributed to women enjoying greater financial independence, a growing interest in equities, and a disciplined approach to sustainable wealth creation. The rise in women's financial awareness has also been a critical driver of this growth. A study by CRISIL and DBS found that 47 per cent of women now make independent financial decisions. This newfound autonomy is reflected in the increasing number of women investing



in mutual funds. According to AMFI data, women's share in industry AUM rose to nearly 21 per cent by the end of December 2023, against 15.2 per cent in March 2017. Importantly, this trend is not limited to major cities; women in smaller towns show equal enthusiasm for capital market investments. However, the same CRISIL and DBS study revealed that women still allocate 51 per cent of their investable assets to fixed deposits and savings bank accounts, 16 per cent to gold, 15 per cent to mutual funds, 10 per cent to real estate, and just 7 per cent of their investable corpus—being the least preferred option. Given the proven potential for substantial market returns, women's risk-averse attitude towards equities is particularly perplexing.

Over the past five years, benchmark indices have delivered over 100 per cent returns. For instance, based on a daily rolling return analysis, the Nifty 50 Total Returns Index has shown positive returns of approximately 93 per cent over three years. These double-digit returns from long-term equity investments have far outpaced the single-digit interest rates offered by traditional savings accounts and fixed deposits. However, women tend to be cautious when it comes to equities. The potential impact of increased women's participation in equity markets is substantial. A BCG study found that women contribute \$5 trillion annually to the global wealth pool. Encouraging more significant equity investment among women and prudent risk management practices is crucial for building a stronger financial future for individuals and the nation. Regulators are already implementing measures to create a safe and transparent market environment for women investors. For instance, initiatives like the Women's

Investor Awareness Programme actively educate and empower women by simplifying stock market concepts and encouraging them to take control of their financial futures. Simultaneously, the industry complements these efforts by developing accessible and informative content in regional languages and diverse formats, such as podcasts and video tutorials, to make complex financial concepts easier to understand. Women themselves must actively participate in the stock market by engaging in discussions, seeking knowledge, and taking the initiative to invest. Starting with a systematic investment plan is a smart approach to building wealth over time. Additionally, consulting financial experts can help women navigate the market with confidence. It is time for women to seize this opportunity, take control, invest wisely, and contribute to rebuilding a more equitable and financially robust India.

(The writer is Director & Chief Business Officer at m.Stock by Mirae Asset Capital Markets; views are personal)



ARUN CHAUDHARY



FIRST COLUMN

HOMESCHOOLING: AN OPTION WORTH EXPLORING

While it comes with challenges, its benefits make it an increasingly compelling choice



SAKSHI SETHI

Childhood is a short season, and homeschooling gives a child more time to truly enjoy it. In recent years, homeschooling has seen a significant rise in popularity as parents increasingly opt to educate their children at home rather than through traditional schooling systems. This shift reflects a combination of concerns about conventional education and the desire for more tailored learning experiences. One of the primary reasons parents choose homeschooling is the ability to customise education to suit their child's unique needs.

There is no denying that curriculum is a valuable tool but at the same time a terrible master. Traditional classrooms often struggle to accommodate different learning paces and styles, whereas homeschooling allows parents to tailor lessons, fostering deeper understanding and engagement. Many parents cite dissatisfaction with public or private school systems as a motivator for homeschooling. Issues such as overcrowded classrooms, underfunding, and lack of individual attention can negatively impact the quality of education. Additionally, concerns over bullying, peer pressure, and exposure to harmful influences prompt parents to seek alternatives.

Homeschooling allows families to integrate their cultural, ethical, or religious values into the curriculum. Parents can teach their children in alignment with their personal beliefs, creating an educational experience that reflects their family's principles. Unlike traditional schooling, homeschooling offers flexibility in schedules and teaching methods. Families incor-



porate travel, extracurricular activities, or non-traditional subjects into their routine, enhancing the learning experience. This adaptability appeals to families seeking a more balanced lifestyle.

Unlike traditional schooling, homeschooling offers flexibility in schedules and teaching methods. Families can incorporate travel, extracurricular activities, or non-traditional subjects into their routine, enhancing the learning experience. This adaptability appeals to families seeking a more balanced lifestyle. While homeschooling offers many benefits, it is not without its challenges. Parents often need to dedicate significant time and effort to planning and teaching. Additionally, concerns about socialisation can arise, as homeschooled children may have fewer opportunities for peer interaction. However, many families address this by participating in extracurricular activities, and community events. Homeschooling is not a new phenomenon.

In olden times, education often took place at home, with parents or private tutors guiding the learning of their child. The rise of formalised schooling in the 19th and 20th centuries shifted education to institutions, but homeschooling remained a choice for families who sought alternatives. Modern homeschooling driven by educational reformers and parents seeking greater control over their children's education began gaining traction in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, it continues to evolve, integrating technology and innovative teaching practices. Technology undoubtedly has played a pivotal role in making homeschooling more accessible and effective. It has also enabled collaboration and connection among homeschooling communities. Online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and educational applications such as Scholastic Kids, Udemy, Duolingo, Funbrain and many more provide parents with resources to create comprehensive curricula. The shift to homeschooling reflects a broader desire among parents to take control of their children's education and provide a more personalised, values-driven learning environment. While homeschooling comes with its challenges, the benefits of flexibility, individualised attention and alignment with family priorities make homeschooling an increasingly appealing choice for families worldwide.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Junta faces collapse amid escalating defeats



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Losses across key regions, coupled with mass defections and severe military setbacks, suggest a crumbling grip of Military on power in Myanmar



By all indications, 2025 is going to be, militarily, a dismal year for Myanmar's ruling junta. It is clearly losing its war against the opposition National Unity Government (NUG) and its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF), ethnic armed organisations (EROs), and the Three Brotherhood Alliance (Henceforth the Alliance). Comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), also active in the Shan State and the Arakan Army (AA), based in the Rakhine State in the country's western part, the alliance has been acting in close cooperation with the PDF and other ethnic armies.

Crystal-gazing is a hazardous business. Nevertheless, a fling at it is warranted by the unfolding events in that star-crossed country. A report under the headline, 'Junta's Writ Only Runs in One-third of Myanmar: NUG,' (datelined January 6, 2025), in the news website The Irrawaddy, cited the NUG as stating that the military regime controlled only 107 of the country's 330 townships. The PDF and EROs fully or partly controlled 144 townships or 44 per cent of the country. The website, which enjoys a high-measure of credibility, carried an article by Maung Kavi (datelined January 8, 2025) under the headline, 'Myanmar Junta Boss warns resistance as Regime Loses Ground Nationwide,' saying that the NUG had further claimed that nearly 1,500 of the junta's soldiers and police personnel had defected to the civil disobedience movement and 480 of them had taken up 'revolutionary duties.'

The report titled 'Junta's Writ Only Runs in One-third of Myanmar: NUG,' further states that 315 officers were killed and 127 injured in course of the last year. In the same period, 53 senior officers ranging in rank from colonel to major general, were either killed, injured, or taken prisoner. Among the rank and file, 14,093 soldiers and border guard policemen were killed and 7,363 injured. Anti-regime groups seized 741 junta



THE ODDS ARE NOW RAPIDLY STACKING UP AGAINST THE JUNTA. NO DOUBT, THE LATTER HAS TANKS AND OTHER ARMoured VEHICLES, ARTILLERY AND AIR FORCE. TANKS AND ARMoured VEHICLES ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO DEPLOY IN THE AREAS DOMINATED BY THE ETHNIC FORCES

positions. They were mostly captured by ethnic armies, but 162 were taken by PDF and People's Defence Teams in Sagaing, Magwe, Mandalay, Bago and Tanintharyi regions.

The military lost in 2024 some 140 battalions and two regional commands - North eastern Command in northern Shan State and Western Command in Rakhine-plus one regional operations command, five military operations commands, six operational bases, two airbases, 17 border guard police bases, as well as many infantry and light infantry battalions, and artillery, logistics, signal, and military engineering units.

While one should not take the NUG's claims at face value reports from the ground indicate that the Sit-Tat (as the junta's army is called) has suffered severe body blows during the last year. The Three Brotherhood Alliance has gained significant ground since launching its offensive, code-named Operation 1027, on October 27, 2023. The AA had established control over almost the entire Rakhine State by April, 2024. In a major development, the MNDAA claimed on July 31, 2024, that it had captured Sit-Tat's military base in Lashio, a city in Shan State close to the border with China, and its airport. This was a major loss for the junta.

As Vivek Shankar has pointed out in a piece in The New York Times datelined August 5, 2024, the 'city of Lashio and its airport lie on a crucial trade corridor to Yunnan Province in China, which is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a high-speed rail link and other infrastructure projects on both sides of the border.'

Besides gains in the north, the anti-junta forces had captured four towns in northern Mandalay.

According to a report by Andrew Nachevson published in Al Jazeera dated September 23, 2024, their capture had placed them within striking distance of the city of Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest urban centre, with a population of nearly two million.

On October 8, 2024, the Sit-Tat suffered a serious reverse with the fall of the township of Pinlebu to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), an important part of the coalition of forces fighting the junta, and its allies. Located on the border of the Sagaing Region and Kachin State, its capture opened up to the opposition forces the routes leading to the Kawlin township and the surrounding areas.

Besides its geo-strategic significance, the township's fall is important for what it revealed of the Sit-Tat's state. A report by Saw Lin, published in the news website, The Irrawaddy, on October 14, 2024, cites the NUG as claiming that the junta's troops, numbering 800, were defeated despite 670 airstrikes and the dropping of over 5,000 bombs, that around 70 junta soldiers were killed, 275 were missing, 225 were wounded, 48 surrendered and 102 captured during the fighting. Around 400 firearms and other military equipment were seized.

In keeping with the trend, the Junta had ceded three townships and the Western Command headquarters in Rakhine State in December, 2024, as the ethnic Arakan Army gained control over 14 of the 17 townships in the westernmost state. On January 1, 2025, the Sit-Tat retreated from a heavily-fortified police station in Sagaing Region's Budalin Township after a yearlong siege by regional resistance forces, making it easier for the latter to operate in the region.

According to Maung Kavi's report

cited earlier, the junta, which has been losing towns and bases to EROs in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin and Karen states, has not been able to launch any military operation to retake the northern Shan State, almost the whole of which it had lost in 2024. The Sit-Tat is in a bad way.

Its morale is low. There is internal discord. Several three-stars generals have been removed. Many younger officers are unhappy as they recognise that almost the entire country is against them. According to a piece by Ye Myo Hein (datelined May 4, 2023) featured by the United States Institute of Peace, it was found the Sit-Tat, whose 'head-count,' showed a 'strength of a total 300,000-400,000 before the coup,' showed that it currently 'had a strength of about 150,000 personnel.

Roughly 70,000 are combat soldiers. At least 21,000 service members have been lost through casualties, desertion and defection since the coup. At this troop level, the Sit-Tat is barely able to sustain itself as a fighting force, much less a government.'

The odds are now rapidly stacking up against the Junta. No doubt, the latter has tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and air force. Tanks and armoured vehicles are very difficult to deploy in the areas dominated by the ethnic forces. With densely forested mountainous terrains, deep gorges and steep climbs, these are ideal for staging ambushes. Moreover, air-strikes and artillery do not win wars, even when backed by heavily armed and trained infantry. Otherwise, the United States would have swept to a victory in Vietnam.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

Real-time travel assistance: Transforming the Indian travel experience

From the integration of cutting-edge technology to the emergence of unique destinations, the way we explore has been redefined

The travel industry in India has undergone a significant transformation in the past decade. The advent of technology, the emergence of unique destinations, and travellers' shifting preferences have reshaped the way we experience travel. While convenience and connectivity have expanded exponentially, so have the challenges that come with travelling through this vast and diverse country.

In such a scenario, the idea of real-time travel assistance is much more than a luxury, gradually becoming a necessity. India is a land of incredible diversity, which often presents challenges for travellers, both domestic and international. With 28 states and countless languages, customs, and tradi-



HARISH KHATRI

tions, exploring India can be as overwhelming as it is enriching. A misplaced document, a language barrier, or a medical emergency in an unfamiliar city can turn a dream vacation or a crucial business trip into an overwhelming ordeal. This is where the concept of real-time assistance steps in, bridging the gap between exploration and ease.

The Need for Immediate Support: Travelers today demand solutions that are immediate, efficient, and humanised. The expectations from travel experiences are no longer confined to curated itineraries and luxury stays. Safety, comfort, and resolution to unexpected issues are just as critical to creating memorable journeys. Whether it's assis-

tance in locating a nearby pharmacy late at night, navigating bureaucratic hurdles in a foreign environment, or finding reliable medical aid during emergencies, travellers increasingly rely on services that ensure a smooth journey. Real-time assistance goes beyond static travel guides or pre-recorded helplines. It operates as a different system where timely, empathetic, and accurate support becomes a part of the travel experience. It is this proactive approach that helps mitigate common traveller challenges and allows for a seamless journey, irrespective of the destination.

Empathy in Travel Assistance: A game-changer at its core, real-time travel assistance is about offering humanised solutions. Travellers often find themselves in vulnerable situations where a touch of empathy can go a long way. Imagine being stuck at a remote train station with no one to guide you to your next stop or dealing with a sudden health scare in a busy urban centre where you don't know the language. These are moments when an empathetic, knowledgeable professional on the other end



of a call or chat can provide not just solutions, but also reassurance. It is this empathy paired with technology that is revolutionising travel assistance in India. Real-time support services aim to address the emotional and logistical needs of travellers in equal measure.

Utilising Technology to Enable Seamless Experiences: The amalgamation of technology and travel assistance has unlocked possibilities previously deemed unattainable. Advanced algorithms, live

tracking, and geo-location services now enable assistance providers like India Assist to respond with precision and speed. Right from helping a traveller recover a lost wallet, guiding them to the best transport options, or facilitating emergency care, technology serves as the backbone of real-time assistance.

Moreover, AI-powered systems can predict and preempt potential challenges, ensuring that travellers are equipped with solutions even before they face a problem. Combined with human expertise, such systems provide an unprecedented level of service that adapts to the ever-changing needs of travellers.

A Vision for the Future of Indian Travel

As India continues to grow as

a preferred travel destination for global tourists and a thriving market for domestic explorers, the need for reliable, real-time support systems will only increase. From first-time solo travellers to seasoned professionals on the move, everyone stands to benefit from a travel arena where assistance is no longer a reactive measure but an integral part of the journey.

The impact of such assistance goes beyond individual convenience. It enhances the overall travel ecosystem, fostering trust and confidence among travellers. When individuals feel supported, they are more likely to venture into less-explored destinations, bolstering local economies and creating new tourism opportunities. Real-time assistance also

aligns with India's vision of creating a more inclusive and welcoming travel environment. Addressing the unique needs of every traveller, be it accessibility, safety, or cultural understanding — opens the doors to a more diverse and enriching travel experience. As we move forward, the travel industry must imbibe the ethos of real-time assistance, not as an add-on service but as a core pillar of the travel experience. After all, the most unforgettable journeys are not just about the destinations we visit — they are about the challenges we overcome and the moments of human connection that transform challenges into memories.

(The writer is founder and MD of India Assist; views are personal)

Over 10,000 structures lost in LA blaze

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

The two biggest wildfires ravaging the Los Angeles area this week burned at least 10,000 homes, buildings and other structures...

announced the Eaton Fire near Pasadena that started Tuesday night has burned more than 5,000 structures...

synagogue, seven schools, two libraries, boutiques, bars, restaurants, banks and groceriers were lost. So too were the Will Rogers' Western Ranch House and Topanga Ranch Motel...



(Above) President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris lead a briefing regarding the federal response to the spread of wildfires in the Los Angeles area...



devastation and loss," said Barbara Bruderlin, head of the Malibu Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce. "There are areas where everything is gone, there isn't even a stick of wood left, it's just dirt..."

Imran warns of plan to impose 10-year dictatorship in Pak

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan has said that economic progress can never happen as long as the current "fascist system" is in place...

Pakistan, of which two years have already passed. Judges or police officers who become a party to oppression are rewarded with promotions here...

The PTI supremo reminded that many of his party men who took part in the November 26 protest in Islamabad are still missing. "These individuals disappeared from D-Chowk in Islamabad, not from some remote tribal area..."

Biden admin succeeds in temporarily blocking plea deal for accused 9/11 mastermind

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration succeeded Thursday in temporarily blocking a guilty plea by accused 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed...



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed

The federal appeals panel agreed Thursday evening to a temporary stay. It stressed that the stay would hold only as long as it took to more fully consider arguments in the government's request...

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAINA GUPTA W/o Dwarika Prasad Gupta R/o RZ-179, Gali No.4 Dabri Vaishali Dabri South West Delhi-110045 have changed my name to RITU GUPTA for all future purposes.

I, Mansaram Betal, Father of No.3200947F Hav Chanchal Kumar Betal, R/o- Vill-Ramnagar PO- Ramnagar Mobarakpur, PS- Arambagh, Dist- Hooghly, W.B.- 712616, have changed my name from Mansaram Betal to Manasharam Betal, vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Shahzadi Khatoun W/o Imamuddin R/o A-384, New Panchwati Colony, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Shahjadi Khatoun.

I, Jagmal Singh, Father of No. 16012348K Hav Rajesh Mitharwal, R/o- A-384, -15, Kotri Loharwas, Kotri, Dist-Sikar, Rajasthan- 332709, have changed my name from Jagmal Singh to Jagmaal Singh vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Mohd Imamuddin S/o Ajjishah R/o A-384, New Panchwati Colony, Bajriya, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Imamuddin.

Earlier, my name was BEERMATI TYAGI (बीरमति त्रयागी) and BRAHMAVATI (ब्रह्मवती) and now I have changed my name to BARMAWATTI. In the future, I want to be recognized and identified by this name. BARMAWATTI, Wife of Late Shri Prempral Tyagi, Resident of A-545, Ganeshpuri, Near Shiv Shalimar Garden, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad..

I, here to known as Buggu Jain D/o. Rahul Jain, R/o. B-8/ 224, Sector-5, Rohini, Delhi, 110085 changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Raaisha Jain for all future purposes.

I, Sudeep Punia S/o Umed Singh R/o k-2/25 Dharam Market, krishan Vihar, Nithari, North West Delhi- 86, have changed my name Sudeep Kumar to Sudeep Punia for all purposes.

I, No. 15437480M NK Deoraj Bishwakarma, R/o- Ord Terai Tea Garden Po- Belgachi, Ps-Naxalbari, Teh- Siliguri, Dist- Darjeeling, W.B.- 734423, declare that Hira Kami is my father, in my service document's his name is wrongly written as Hira Bishwakarma, whereas his correct name is Hira Kami, vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Rajni Gupta W/o Sandeep Gupta R/o B-14 First Floor, Hargovind Vihar, Sector 4, Rohini, Delhi - 85, have changed my name Rajni Bala Garg to Rajni Gupta for all purposes. Rajni Bala Garg and Rajni Gupta Both are same person.

I, No. 15437480M NK Deoraj Bishwakarma, R/o- Ord Terai Tea Garden Po- Belgachi, Ps-Naxalbari, Teh- Siliguri, Dist- Darjeeling, W.B.- 734423, declare that Lachmi Kami is my mother, in my service document's her name is wrongly written as Laxmi Bishwakarma, whereas her correct name is Lachmi Kami, vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Smt Arti Betal, Mother of No.3200947F Hav Chanchal Kumar Betal, R/o- Vill-Ramnagar PO- Ramnagar Mobarakpur, PS- Arambagh, Dist- Hooghly, W.B.- 712616, have changed my name from Smt Arti Betal to Arati Betal, vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Isita Karmakar, W/o No.3200947F Hav Chanchal Kumar Betal, R/o- Vill-Ramnagar PO- Ramnagar Mobarakpur, PS- Arambagh, Dist- Hooghly, W.B.- 712616, have changed my name from Isita Karmakar to Isita Karmakar Betal, vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Raj Kumari, W/o Satinder Singh, R/o- RZ- 46 J, Street No. 2, Main Sagar Pur, Delhi - 110046, declare that Abhishek Singh is my son, in his educational Certificate, my name is erroneously written as Shashi Singh, whereas my correct name is Raj Kumari, both names pertain to one and same person, i.e. myself.

I, No. 15437480M NK Deoraj Bishwakarma, R/o- Ord Terai Tea Garden Po- Belgachi, Ps-Naxalbari, Teh- Siliguri, Dist- Darjeeling, W.B.- 734423, declare that Lachmi Kami is my mother, in my service document's her name is wrongly written as Laxmi Bishwakarma, whereas her correct name is Lachmi Kami, vide affidavit dated 10/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

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NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement systems Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi - 110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items :-

THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058

APPENDIX IV [See rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property) Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of 'The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.', Head office at C-29 Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Pur, New Delhi - 110058, having its registered office at 1916, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055, under The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a demand notice on dated 10-10-2024, calling upon the borrower & mortgagee Smt. Mamta Dangwal, W/o. Sh. Deepak Mahindru R/o. C-104, Street No.8, West Vinod Nagar Delhi-110092 also at Smt. Mamta Dangwal W/o. Sh. Deepak Mahindru C/o. New Saraswati Wagon (India) Pvt. Ltd. 2nd Floor, MGM Tower, 19, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 8,30,584/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Thirty Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty Four Only), together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPERTY All that part and parcel of the BUILT UP ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR, UP TO THE EXTENT OF CEILING LEVEL, HAVING ITS PLINTH COVERED AREA, 41.80 SQ. METERS, i.e. 50 sq.yds., COMPRISING OF TWO BED ROOMS, ONE DRAWING ROOM DINING ROOM, ONE KITCHEN AND TOILET/BATHROOM, WITH COMMON RIGHTS TO USE STAIRCASE, PASSAGE, ENTRANCE AND ROOF/TERRACE OF TOP FLOOR, BUILT ON PART OF PROPERTY BEARING NO.C-104, OUT OF KHASRA NO.811, SITUATED AT ABADI OF C-BLOCK, GALI NO.8, KUMAON SQUARE, WEST VINOD NAGAR, IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE MANDAWALI FAZAL PUR, ILLAQA SHAHDARA, DELHI-110092. Falling Under the Registration of Sub-Registrar-VIIIA, Preet Vihar, Delhi.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Indian Overseas Bank Wazieabad Branch (Shyam Chowk, Near Girls, Govt. High School, Wazirabad, Gurgaon, Haryana 122003, Phone - 0124-2577240, E-mail id: lab3714@iob.in

APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) [Rule 8(1)] Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Overseas Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 29.03.2022 Calling upon the borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors Shri Dipankar Das H. No. 1206, Spring Green Apartment, Anora Kala, Faridabad Road, Lucknow-226028 (Give full address) (hereinafter referred as 'borrowers') to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 1,01,03,795.80 as on 28.02.2022 with further interest at contractual rates and rests, charges etc. till date of realization within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No. 1203, 12th Floor, Block D- 6, Aloha, situated at AEZ inspirations, Sector 57 Gurgaon (Haryana), 122003, within the registration sub-district Gurgaon and District Gurgaon

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPERTY All that part and parcel of the BUILT UP ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR, UP TO THE EXTENT OF CEILING LEVEL, HAVING ITS PLINTH COVERED AREA, 41.80 SQ. METERS, i.e. 50 sq.yds., COMPRISING OF TWO BED ROOMS, ONE DRAWING ROOM DINING ROOM, ONE KITCHEN AND TOILET/BATHROOM, WITH COMMON RIGHTS TO USE STAIRCASE, PASSAGE, ENTRANCE AND ROOF/TERRACE OF TOP FLOOR, BUILT ON PART OF PROPERTY BEARING NO.C-104, OUT OF KHASRA NO.811, SITUATED AT ABADI OF C-BLOCK, GALI NO.8, KUMAON SQUARE, WEST VINOD NAGAR, IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE MANDAWALI FAZAL PUR, ILLAQA SHAHDARA, DELHI-110092. Falling Under the Registration of Sub-Registrar-VIIIA, Preet Vihar, Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-NOTICE INVITING TENDER For and on behalf of President of India, Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (RSO), Northern Railway, Delhi Division, New Delhi invites E-Tender in prescribed tender form for the following work:

PUBLIC NOTICE (In case there is no will) Plot / Property No-APARTMENT No. CM633A, 33RD FLOOR, BLOCK 6A, THE CAMELLIAS, DLF 5, GURUGRAM, HARYANA, ALONG WITH CAR PARKING NOS.633A-PB1-1, 633A-PB1-2, 633A-PB1-3, 633A-PB1-4 AND 633A-PB1-5 was registered in the name of Mr. RAJIV KRISHAN LUTHRA S/o Late Mr. Anirudh Krishan Luthra, R/o 3/15 Shanti Niketan, New Delhi : 110 021, who has expired on 10th May 2023. Accordingly the name of Mrs Gayatri Luthra, Ms. Sanaa Krishan Luthra and Ms. Arshia Krishan Luthra are being noted in DLF's record in respect of the captioned Plot / Property. If anybody has any objection to this, he or she may approach M/s DLF Ltd or the undersigned within 21 days of publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE General Public is hereby informed that my client Mr. Harish Chander Chopra, S/o Late Sh. Mohan Lal has retired from partnership firm M/s Mohan Lal Harish Chander having its office at C-98, New Subzi Mandi, Azadpur, Delhi, w.e.f. 16.12.2024 and he is not a partner in the said firm anymore. All the liabilities of the firm existing at the time of his retirement in the books of accounts have been taken over by the continuing partners of the firm. Anybody, person, body corporate dealing with the said firm or continuing partners shall do so with the knowledge of fact that my client has already retired from the firm and shall not be liable for any act or liability of the firm or its continuing partners.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND POOJA TYAGI who are purchasing the Apartment No.D-083on 8th Floor, Tower-D, having super area measuring 166.93 Sq. Mtrs. (1796.17 sq. ft.), project known as 'RAHEJA VEDAS' situated in the scheme named 'Rajeha's Vedant' Vedas & Vedant Floors', situated at Sector-108, Tehsil Kadpur, District-Surgram, Haryana, from Mr. Devendra Goswami and Mr. Armit Bhatti, vide Sale Deed dated 01.08.2024, bearing document no.5788, now ANJU TYAGI and POOJA TYAGI intend to purchase the same and mortgage against the financial assistance from IDBI Bank Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person having any type of claim/right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. (Lucey Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40046316

PUBLIC NOTICE AND POOJA TYAGI who are purchasing the Apartment No.D-083on 8th Floor, Tower-D, having super area measuring 166.93 Sq. Mtrs. (1796.17 sq. ft.), project known as 'RAHEJA VEDAS' situated in the scheme named 'Rajeha's Vedant' Vedas & Vedant Floors', situated at Sector-108, Tehsil Kadpur, District-Surgram, Haryana, from Mr. Devendra Goswami and Mr. Armit Bhatti, vide Sale Deed dated 01.08.2024, bearing document no.5788, now ANJU TYAGI and POOJA TYAGI intend to purchase the same and mortgage against the financial assistance from IDBI Bank Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person having any type of claim/right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. (Lucey Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40046316

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Table with 7 columns: Sr. No., Name of Board/Corp./Auth, Name of Work, Notice Tender, Opening Date, Amount / End (Approx.) in Rupees, Website of the Board Corp./Auth, Nodal Officer/Contact Details/Email

Canada's Indian-origin MP Chandra Arya says he'll run for prime ministership

PTI ■ OTTAWA

Canada's Indian-origin MP Chandra Arya has announced that he is running to be the next Prime Minister...

significant structural problems" that haven't been seen for generations, Arya said, adding that solving them will require tough choices...



Thursday evening to discuss and outline the initial rules of the up-coming leadership race, the party statement added.

Thursdays evening to discuss and outline the initial rules of the up-coming leadership race, the party statement added.

Kremlin welcomes possibility of Trump-Putin meeting

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Kremlin has welcomed US President-elect Donald Trump's readiness to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin...

were behind the overtures for talks. "We have to get that war over with," Trump said when referring to his possible meeting with Putin.

tion could be doomed. The outgoing Biden administration is providing Ukraine with as much military support as it can...

relations as possible for Trump and his team," Peskov said. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that in any peace negotiation his country would need assurances about its future protection from Russia...

PUBLIC NOTICE: I, (Ex JCO) Phool Chand S/O Late Prabhu Dayal Singh, Vill-Jonawas, Teh & Distt. Mahendergarh (HR) My son Abhishek Yadav who is out of control of me and dispossessed or ousted from my movable and immovable property.

PUBLIC NOTICE: My client Ms. Suman W/o Late Sh. Gurbachan Singh R/o H.No. FD-20, Ground Floor Shivaji Enclave, New Delhi-110027, her son Mr. Nawal and her daughter in law Ms. Upasna Tripathi have been doing acts and deeds against the wish and will of my client and they do not give any respect to my client, her family members and relatives...

PUBLIC NOTICE: This is to inform you that Mr. Sahabuddin, son of Mr. Rafique, intends to purchase residential freehold vacant land, measuring 44.5 square yards (37.20 square meters), located in Pratap Vihar, Khoda Colony, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & District Ghaziabad, U.P. from Mr. Mohd. Sager, son of Mr. Sheikh Yakub...

THE JAGRITI NAGAR CO-OPERATIVE HOUSE BUILDING SOCIETY LTD. REGN NO. - 2183 Jagriti Enclave, Vikas Marg, Delhi-110092 PUBLIC NOTICE: In terms of the provisions of Schedule-VII of DCS Rules 2007, the general public is hereby informed that Smt. Ratna Mohla w/o Late Shri Pratap Kishan Jetley (Membership No. 668) of The Jagriti Nagar Co-operative House Building Society Ltd. is being forwarded by Managing Committee of the society for draw of lots in her name through RCS/DDA as per the provisions of DCS Act 2003 & Rules 2007 framed thereunder & guidelines thereof.

Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited (CIN: L51101HR2007PLC077999) Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2024. Table with columns: Particulars, Quarter ended 31-Dec-24, Quarter ended 30-Sep-24, Quarter ended 31-Dec-23, Year to date 31-Dec-24, Year to date 31-Dec-23, Year ended 31-Mar-24. Includes financial data and notes.

NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL PALIKA KENDRA: NEW DELHI EMPLOYMENT NOTICE: Application are invited from retired Vice Principal/Principal/Dy. Director (Academic/Educational) and Deputy Education Officer from Central Govt./State Govt./Municipal Bodies/NDMC/Kendriya Vidyalaya for overall coordination of the academic activities of NDMC and Navyug Schools of Education Department in NDMC for the academic session 2025-2026.

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot Ph: 01639-256232-256236 ADVT. No. BFU-25/01 Online applications are invited w.e.f. 13-01-2025 to 03-02-2025 from eligible candidates through university website i.e. www.bfuhsggsmch.org for recruitment to the posts of Divisional Accountant-01, Accountant-03, Cashier-02, Senior Assistant (Accounts)-01 on regular basis at University office and constituent colleges/ institutions of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot.

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot Ph: 01639-256232-256236 ADVT. No. BFU-25/02 Online applications are invited w.e.f. 13.01.2025 to 03.02.2025 from eligible candidates through University website i.e. www.bfuhsggsmch.org for recruitment to the posts of Associate Professor-Radiodiagnosis-01, Assistant Professor-11 (Forensic Medicine-03, SPM-02, Radiodiagnosis-03, Anaesthesiology-01, General Surgery-02) and Statistician (SPM)-01 on regular basis at constituent Colleges/Institutions of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Guru Gobind Singh Medical College & Hospital, Faridkot).

CORRIGENDUM NO. 1 FOR TENDER NO. N_11_HQ_IDS_2024-25 DATED: 09-01-2025 Tender Notice No. N_11_HQ_2024-25. Name of work: Provision of Elephant Intrusion Detection System for detection of elephant movements with tracking and Level crossing alerts to increase Safety and capacity enhancement over N.F. Railway in Rangliya Division. Date & Time of closing of Tender: 15:00 hrs. on 24-01-2025.

Equinox India Sylvanus Properties Limited (CIN: U70109DL2006PLC150229) Extract of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2024. Table with columns: Sl. No., Particulars, Quarter ended 31 December 2024, Corresponding quarter ended 31 December 2023, Previous year ended 31 March 2024. Includes financial data and notes.

Equinox India Equinox India Developments Limited (formerly Indiabulls Real Estate Limited) Statement of Unaudited Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2024. Table with columns: Sl. No., Particulars, 3 months ended, Preceding 3 months ended, Corresponding 3 months ended, Year to date figures for current period ended, Year to date figures for previous period ended, Previous year ended. Includes financial data and notes.

CONSTRUCTION OF SPURS FOR RIVER TRAINING AND OTHER PROTECTION WORK E-Tender Notice No. SCL/ENG/08 of 2025 Dated: 08-01-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Brief Description of Item: Construction of Spurs for River Training and other protection work in river Dhaleswari at Br. No. 133 between Jamira-Bhairabi section under ADEN/Badarpur Ghat. Tender Value: ₹6,28,41,472.69/-, Earnest Money: ₹4,64,200/-. Date & Time of closing of Tender: 15:00 hrs. on 30-01-2025 and opening at 15:00 hrs. of 31-01-2025.

India's economy projected to grow 6.6 per cent in 2025: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS The Indian economy is projected to expand by 6.6 per cent in 2025, primarily supported by robust private consumption and investment, according to a United Nations report.

released here on Wednesday. It also said that the near-term outlook for South Asia is expected to remain robust, with growth projected at 5.7 per cent in 2025 and 6.0 per cent in 2026, "driven by strong performance in India as well as economic recovery in a few other economies", including Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.



largest in the (South Asia) region, is forecast to expand by 6.6 per cent in 2025, primarily supported by robust private consumption and investment. Additionally,

capital expenditure on infrastructure development is expected to have strong multiplier effects on growth in the coming years," the report said. It added that strong export growth in services and certain goods categories, particularly pharmaceuticals and electronics, will bolster economic activity for India.

कार्यालय नगर परिषद पटेरा जिला - दमोह (म. प्र.)
क्रमांक/न.पा./लो.नि./2025/41
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
पटेरा दिनांक 09.01.2025

राज्य आपदा आपातकालीन मोचन बल मुख्यालय म.प्र.
पुलिस ऑफिसर मेष के सामने, नूरबाग कैम्प, भोपाल.-462008
क्रमांक:-/05/जे.क्र./आ.प्र./2025
भोपाल, दिनांक :- 03.01.2025

IDBI BANK LTD., WTC Complex, Cuff Parade, Mumbai, Website: www.idbibank.in
IDBI BANK LTD., Saraogi Mansion, Hanuman Ganj, Ramlala Ground, Ghanta Ghar, Katni - 483501 M.P.
POSSESSION NOTICE RULE 8 (1) FOR IMMovable PROPERTY

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE
ICICI Home Finance
Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400051

BANK OF INDIA
E-AUCTION (SALE NOTICE)
(Under Sarfaesi Act 2002)

कार्यालय अधीक्षक केन्द्रीय जेल भोपाल म.प्र.
क्रमांक/...../निवाह/2025
भोपाल, दिनांक01.2025
ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा सूचना
वर्ष 2025-26 हेतु
(प्रथम आमंत्रण)

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE/IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-auction Sale Notice For Sale of movable/ Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rules 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CAPITAL DIVISION NO. 2., PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, E-5, ARERA COLONY, BHOPAL
Phone- 0755-2465467
Bhopal, dated : 07-01-2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.
Corporate Office: Unit No. 802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V. Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400069

POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix IV (for immovable property)
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

investments and strong export performance are partly offset by subdued consumption growth and lingering weakness in the property sector. The Chinese authorities have stepped up policy support to lift property markets, address local government debt challenges, and boost domestic demand; the impacts of relevant initiatives are expected to be manifested over time, it said. The shrinking population and rising trade and technology tensions, if unaddressed, could threaten the country's medium-term growth prospects, it said.

SpiceJet to fly 10 grounded aircraft by mid-April

PTI ■ MUMBAI Domestic carrier SpiceJet on Friday announced plans to bring back into operations 10 of its grounded aircraft, including four Boeing B737 Max, by mid-April. The airline said it has added 10 planes to its fleet since October 2024 -- three grounded aircraft that were brought back into service and seven inducted on lease.

Change of Name
This is to inform the general public that earlier my name was Kalicharan Pawar, father Bhagwat Pawar. Which has been changed to Paras Pawar, father Bhagwat Pawar. Hence, in future I should be known and recognized by the name of Paras Pawar, father Bhagwat Pawar.

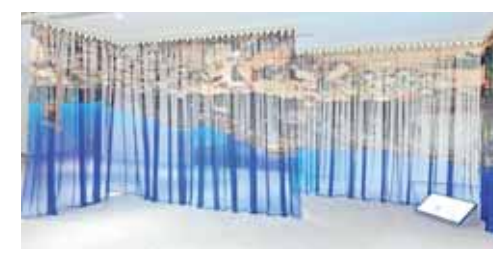


ROOTS AND REFLECTIONS

At KNMA's *The Elemental You*, artists explored Earth's essence through works reflecting nature's intricate narratives and connections, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

"To see a world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wildflower..."

These words by William Blake come alive as you enter *The Elemental You*, an exhibition at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. Curated by Akansha Rastogi, it brings together the works of Simryn Gill, Neha Choksi and Hajra Waheed, each exploring the element of "Earth" with a vision that is both timeless and urgent. The experience engages your senses on multiple levels. Neha Choksi's *Porous Earth* series draws attention to limestone cast in kiln-glass, revealing stories of geological change and human fragility. Her work highlights the delicate interplay between the permanence of Earth's materials and the fleeting nature of human life. Simryn Gill shifts focus to *Port Dickson*, an industrial port town in Malaysia. Her long-term photographic documentation captures moments of transformation and decay, inviting viewers to reflect on what persists and what fades with time. There is a quiet, poignant beauty in her images that speaks of history and memory. Hajra Waheed's

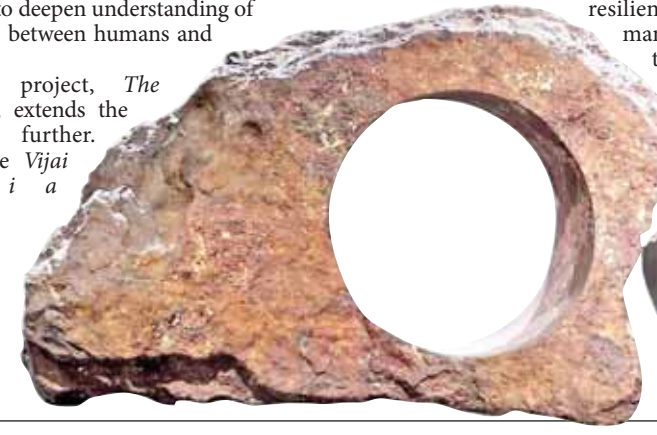


interpretation of the night sky leads you to consider boundaries, both physical and emotional. Her drawings evoke the vastness of Kashmir's starlit skies, working together with personal and collective narratives. It's as though the heavens hold untold stories, offering a sense of both wonder and loss. The exhibition is unhurried, encouraging visitors to take their time with each piece. The pathways, "To Think Like a Mountain," "Survival as Revival," and "Clearing," are designed to deepen understanding of the intricate relationship between humans and the natural world.

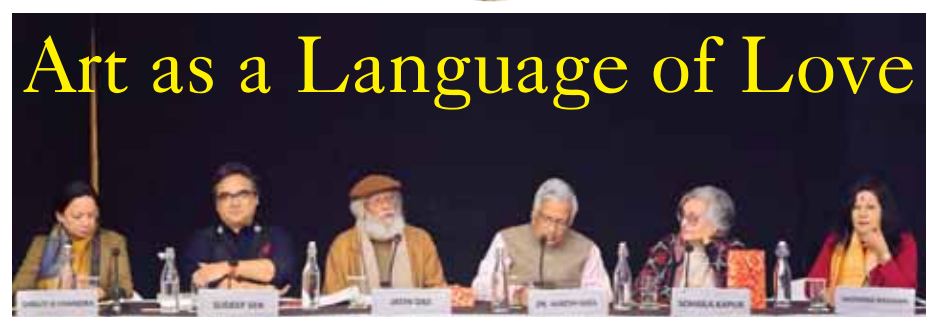
Patchineelam and Ranjana Dave connect themes of grounding and immersion, using tools, landscapes, and micro-stories to reveal the subtle interactions between people and their environments. The *Artists' Roundtable* becomes a dynamic space where materials and ideas evolve, creating a dialogue that is both intimate and thought-provoking. The exhibition does not shy away from hard truths. It juxtaposes beauty with unsettling realities, showing the scars left by mines alongside the resilience of mangroves or the

lifelessness of dead snakes beside the enduring strength of mountains. This contrast challenges visitors to confront the environmental challenges of today while appreciating the artistry that brings these narratives to life. The simplicity of the presentation allows the works to speak for themselves. The museum provides a space for these artists to explore their deep engagement with the natural world, leaving visitors with a sense of introspection and a renewed connection to the Earth. *The Elemental You* offers a thoughtful exploration of how we relate to our environment. It reminds us of the fragility of our planet and the enduring beauty found in its details. As you leave the exhibition, the reflections it inspires remain, offering a quiet yet powerful reminder of our place within the larger story of the Earth.

A collaborative project, *The Working Space*, extends the exploration further. Artists like Vijai M a i a



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



Art as a Language of Love

By TEAM VIVA

The 10th edition of *Vividh Mat: Perspectives*, presented by Devyani Jaipuria in collaboration with ASAVARI, focused on the theme *Shringara: Rang Anurag*. This edition explored *Shringara*, a concept that embodies love, beauty and the depth of the human experience. The event began with an engaging discussion led by Padmeshri Shovana Narayan, SNA awardee and Ambassador Dr Suresh Goel, former DG of ICCR. The panel also included Jatin Das, the renowned artist and sculptor, celebrated poet Sudeep Sen and actor-director Sohaila Kapur. Together, they shared their insights into *Shringara*, highlighting it as more than just an aesthetic concept, but an essential part of life. Jatin Das explained that *Shringara* is not only about visual beauty but is also the very pulse of life. He described it as a delicate balance between form and emotion, where art touches the soul. Sudeep Sen further elaborated by describing *Shringara* as "the poetry of the senses," a celebration that speaks directly to the heart, connecting art, love and life. He emphasised how *Shringara* invites us to reflect on the deepest layers of the human soul. Sohaila Kapur added to the discussion by describing *Shringara* as a means of capturing the essence of beauty through performance. She noted that it is the emotional core of art, brought to life through movement, offering an experience that connects the audience directly to the emotions conveyed. The conversation highlighted how *Shringara* is not only a visual or emotional experience but also a spiritual one, bridging cultural and philosophical perspectives. Shovana Narayan, deeply connected to classical Indian dance, shared her personal view of *Shringara*, describing it as a language that speaks directly to the heart. For her, the evening was a celebration of beauty; it was the culmination of



years of dedication, creating a space where everyone could to the rhythm of life. The event concluded with a *Baithaki Bhaav* dance performance by Madhura Phatak. The classical dance embodied *Shringara* beautifully, giving the audience an immersive experience. *Vividh Mat: Perspectives* combined intellectual discussion and artistic expression, highlighting how art connects us to humanity, bridging cultures and emotions.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

LAYERS OF MEANING



Echoes of Elegance presents a unique exploration of India's vibrant art scene through its diverse creators, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

that mirrors human relationships. It's a work that encourages reflection, inviting the viewer to interpret its layers of meaning. Similarly, *Keep ones end up*, another acrylic on canvas, uses bold strokes and vivid hues to explore themes of balance and stability in an ever-changing world. The fluidity of the painting offers a sense of movement, making it feel as if the artwork is alive. *Parody II*, a striking fiberglass piece, challenges the viewer's perception with its playful yet thought-provoking commentary on modern life. The use of fiberglass in this piece gives it a dynamic quality, blurring the line between reality and illusion. It's a work that not only entertains but also encourages a deeper contemplation of society and its contradictions. Alongside these, the exhibition showcases a range of works by renowned artists such as Bose Krishnamachari, Dileep Sharma, Farhad Hussain, George Martin, Jyothiraj Moyampilly and Mukesh

Sharma. Each of their pieces brings forth unique perspectives on culture, identity and contemporary issues. Whether it's through abstract expressionism, surreal imagery or figurative forms, the diversity of styles on display ensures that there is something for everyone to connect with. The exhibition invites viewers to move beyond admiring art from a distance, encouraging them to understand the creative process and engage with the ideas behind each piece. *Echoes of Elegance* is a journey into the heart of Indian contemporary art. It's an opportunity to witness the talent, vision and passion of some of the country's finest artists, offering a deeper understanding of the dynamic and ever-evolving art scene.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



India pacer Varun Aaron retires from 'representative cricket'



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India pacer Varun Aaron, who was once regarded as the country's fastest bowler before injuries hampered his promising career, announced retirement from "representative cricket" on Friday after his home state Jharkhand's campaign ended in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy. The 35-year-old Aaron made the announcement on social media after Jharkhand failed to go beyond the preliminary stage of the marquee domestic one-day event. After a dazzling start, Aaron struggled with erratic form, which was made worse by injury breakdowns, and he had not represented India since 2015. "For the past 20 years, I have lived, breathed,

and thrived on the rush of bowling fast. Today, with immense gratitude, I officially announce my retirement from representative cricket," Aaron posted on his Instagram account. At just 21, Aaron burst onto the scene during the 2010-11 Vijay Hazare Trophy, showcasing his raw pace and making a mark with a blistering 153kph delivery against Gujarat in the final. His ability to consistently bowl at speeds exceeding 150kph quickly caught the attention of the Indian cricketing fraternity and he soon made his international debut in an ODI against England in Mumbai in 2011. This was followed by a Test debut at the same venue against the West Indies, again in 2011.

However, the relentless demands of bowling at high speed took a significant toll on his body. He played nine ODIs and as many Tests, taking 29 wickets across the two formats for India. Over the course of his career, he endured as many as eight back stress fractures and three foot fractures, which severely hampered his progress. Injuries had forced him to give up red-ball cricket last year. "Over the years, I've had to push both my physical and mental limits to recover from numerous career-threatening injuries, having to come back time and again, this was only possible thanks to the relentless dedication of the physios, trainers, and coaches at the National Cricket Academy. "I'd also like to thank the

BCCI, JSCA (Jharkhand State Cricket Association), Red Bull, SG Cricket, and MRF Tyres for their invaluable support during critical junctures in my career. "As I bid farewell to a pursuit that has consumed me completely, I now look forward to savouring the smaller joys in life while staying deeply connected to the game that has given me everything. "Fast Bowling has been my first love, and though I step off the field, it will always be a part of who I am," he added. Among his memorable moments in the game, he had grabbed headlines by breaking Stuart Broad's nose with a bouncer during a Test match in 2014. Broad had tried to pull the delivery but the ball took the edge and sneaked inside the grill of his helmet to hit him on the nose. Despite not making the Indian team since 2015, Aaron continued to bowl in domestic cricket. He picked 141 wickets at an average of 26.47 and an economy rate of 5.44 in 88 List A matches. He also snared 93 wickets at an economy rate of 8.53 in the 95 T20s he played. Aaron also played nine seasons of the IPL between 2011 and 2022, turning out for with Delhi Daredevils, Kings XI Punjab, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Gujarat Titans. In his final season, he won the title with Gujarat Titans in 2022.

Travis Head could open in Sri Lanka Tests, says chief selector George Bailey

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian big-hitter Travis Head could open in the two-Test series against Sri Lanka where "quick learner" Sam Konstas is also likely to get more opportunities to showcase his audacious skills, chairman of selectors George Bailey has said. Head, who wreaked havoc with the bat during the recently-concluded Border-Gavaskar series against India in the middle order, has been tested in the opener's role in the sub-continent. He had come in for an injured David Warner during the 2023 tour of India and scored 223 runs at 55.75 in five innings at the top of the order. "Trav's an option (to open). We've got a number of options and there's been a few preliminary discussions around where that may land, and that may depend on the makeup of that first XI," Bailey told cricket.Com.Au. "I think (head coach) Andrew (McDonald,) and (stand-in captain) Steve (Smith) will settle on that in due course, once we hit Sri Lanka," he added. Australia announced a 16-member squad on Thursday with several fresh faces added to the group that played India in the fifth and final Test at Sydney last week. Australia won the marquee series 3-1. Smith is leading the squad as regular captain Pat Cummins is on leave for the birth of his couple's second child. With 19-year-old Konstas turning heads with his refreshing style of batting during the Border-Gavaskar Tests, Bailey said the youngster's ability to read match situations quickly would help him excel in Sri Lanka, his maiden international tour.



"What we have seen is he's (Konstas) a quick learner. (He) absorbs a lot of information," Bailey said. "So (we're) expecting him to get to get a lot out of it. I know from his spin play in Australia, and the opportunities he's (had) in different parts of the world, we think he's got a game that's well suited, and a technique that can stand up. "But that's one of the exciting things about this tour - we will learn a bit more about his game in different conditions to what he's just faced in Australia," he added. Bailey feels that Nathan McSweeney, who is there in the Sri Lanka-bound squad, handled his exclusion from the last two BGT Tests quite well and he will remain in

the scheme of things despite the unimpressive show as an opener. The debutant had a trial by fire against Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, failing to put up a decent score in the first three games. "We still view (McSweeney) as a great Test prospect, and a long-term Test prospect. "I think at times when someone is left out of a team or squad, there's a view that they fall out of favour, or down the pecking order, but that wasn't the case with Nathan," said Bailey. "I think it shows the character... And the sort of person he is, the way he responded and spoke so well about (being dropped) publicly pretty soon after it happened."

Real Madrid walks into Spanish Super Cup final with a 3-0 win over Mallorca

PTI ■ JEDDAH

Jude Bellingham scored again to lead Real Madrid into the Spanish Super Cup final with a 3-0 win over Mallorca in Saudi Arabia on Thursday. The England midfielder, who led Madrid in scoring last season, started this campaign slowly but has netted seven goals in his last eight Spanish league games. He notched another goal in 63rd minute of the Super Cup semifinal when he finally broke down a tough Mallorca that until his goal had imposed its defensive style on the star-studded Madrid. Bellingham blasted in the third shot in a row by Madrid after Rodrygo initially hit the post and goalkeeper Dominik Greif blocked a follow-up by Kylian Mbappé. Bellingham collected the



rebound and slotted his shot from just outside the six-yard box under the on-rushing Greif and past three defenders who were trying to protect the goalmouth. Madrid tacked on two goals late in stoppage time. Mallorca's Martin Valjent scored an own goal when he inadvertently turned a pass

by Brahim Díaz into his net. Rodrygo then took Madrid's third. The match ended with a short scuffle after the final whistle before calm was restored. It started when Bellingham slapped the back of the neck of Mallorca defender Pablo Maffeo, who had had an intense duel with

Vinicius Júnior during the game. Barcelona awaits Madrid in Sunday's final. Madrid lost Aurélien Tchouaméni, a midfielder playing as a central defender, in the 54th after he took a hard knock to the head during a collision with a Mallorca player. Youth player Raúl Asencio replaced him. Madrid was competing as last season's Spanish league champion, while Mallorca was invited as the runner-up in the Copa del Rey. Former Madrid striker Karim Benzema, who now plays in the Saudi Arabian league, was in attendance. The minor trophy has become a major cash maker for the federation and competing clubs since the federation struck a deal in 2019 to hold it in the Middle Eastern kingdom.



₹ 2491 करोड़ लागत की **सैंधवा एवं निवाली माइक्रो उद्घहन सिंचाई परियोजनाओं का शिलान्यास**

विकास कार्यों का भूमिपूजन एवं लोकार्पण

मुख्यमंत्री डॉ. मोहन यादव द्वारा

11 जनवरी, 2025 | अपराह्न 12:30 बजे
सैंधवा मंडी प्रांगण, जिला बड़वानी

"प्रदेश में सिंचाई रकबे में ऐतिहासिक वृद्धि हुई है। 2003 में यह लगभग 3 लाख हेक्टेयर था, जो अब बढ़कर 50 लाख हेक्टेयर हो गया है। वर्ष 2028-29 तक 1 करोड़ हेक्टेयर करने का लक्ष्य है।"

- डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री

सैंधवा माइक्रो उद्घहन सिंचाई परियोजना

- ₹ 1402.74 करोड़ लागत की परियोजना से बड़वानी जिले के 98 गांवों के 44 हजार हेक्टेयर से अधिक क्षेत्र को मिलेगी सिंचाई सुविधा
- 53 हजार किसान परिवार होंगे लाभान्वित
- उच्च स्तरीय तकनीक स्काडा और ओएमएस के उपयोग से किसान स्प्रिंकलर एवं ड्रिप पद्धति के माध्यम से कम जल का उपयोग कर ले सकेंगे अधिक सिंचाई का लाभ

निवाली माइक्रो उद्घहन सिंचाई परियोजना

- ₹ 1088.24 करोड़ लागत की परियोजना से बड़वानी जिले के 87 गांवों को मिलेगा लाभ
- 33 हजार हेक्टेयर से अधिक क्षेत्र में सिंचाई की सुविधा
- दाबयुक्त प्रणाली होने से भूमि समतल किए बिना किसान स्प्रिंकलर/ड्रिप के माध्यम से ले सकेंगे सिंचाई का लाभ