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IN 2025: MOODY'S RATINGS

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## Bhagwat sparks Cong, BJP row

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

A fresh round of war of words began between the BJP and Congress as the Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat saying that his remark that India got "true independence" after the Ram temple consecration amounts to treason and is an insult to every Indian.

Rahul said his party was fighting the "BJP, RSS and the Indian state itself", triggering a row with the ruling BJP alleging that everything the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha does or says is in the direction of breaking India and dividing the society.

Rahul's criticism of RSS as well as BJP drew a sharp response from the BJP president JP Nadda and his cabinet colleagues including Nirmala Sitharaman who asked what for the Congress and Rahul Gandhi carry a copy of the Constitution when the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha is using such a language. Nadda alleged that it is not a secret that Rahul Gandhi and his ecosystem have close links with urban Naxals and the deep state who want to "defame, demean and discredit" India.

"Mohan Bhagwat has the audacity to say this publicly. In any other country, he would be arrested and tried. That is a fact," Rahul Gandhi said at the inauguration of the Indira Gandhi Bhawan. "To say that India did not get independence in 1947 is an insult to every Indian. And it is time to stop listening to this nonsense that these people think they can keep parroting out and shouting," he said.

Rahul said every party worker is fighting this battle of ideologies under difficult circumstances where institutions have been captured by the BJP and the RSS and investigative agencies are being used against opposition leaders.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also condemned Bhagwat's remarks and warned that "it would become difficult for him to move around in the country if he continues to make such statements". The leader of



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi during the inauguration of the new All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters 'Indira Bhawan', in New Delhi

opposition in the Lok Sabha also hit out at the Election Commission and alleged that there is a "serious problem" with the country's election system.

"It is the duty of the EC to ensure transparency in elections. If there is an increase of one crore in (the number of) voters in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha in Maharashtra, it is the duty and sacred responsibility of the EC to show us exactly why this has happened. There is a serious problem with our election system," Rahul said.

Nadda who is also Union Health Minister in Narendra Modi cabinet said Congress' ugly truth now stands exposed by their own leader. Everything he has done or said has been in the direction of breaking India and dividing our society, Nadda alleged.

Sitharaman said the LoP, who was sworn in by taking oath on the Constitution, is now saying

## Meta apologises over Zuckerberg comment

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Amidst the raging controversy over comments by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the social media giant on Wednesday tendered apology. Meta India vice president Shivnath Thukral apologised for Zuckerberg's remarks and said it was an "inadvertent error".

BJP leader Nishikant Dubey said he treated the matter of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's remarks on Indian elections as "closed" after the official of the social networking platform tendered the apology. Zuckerberg, in a podcast, had claimed that the incumbent government in India lost power in the 2024 elections due to its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had debunked Zuckerberg's remarks as misinformation, and made it clear that Meta must uphold facts and credibility. "A Meta India official has finally apologised for the mistake. This is a victory of the common citizens of India," Dubey, who chairs the Parliamentary Committee on Information

Technology, said in a social media post. Dubey had on Tuesday said that the panel will summon the firm following its chairman's comments that India's ruling dispensation lost the Lok Sabha election last year.

On Wednesday, Dubey said people elected Narendra Modi as prime minister for the third consecutive term which was a testimony to his strong leadership. "Now the responsibility of our committee ends on this issue. We treat this issue closed. However, we will continue to hold these social platforms to account in the future on other issues," Dubey added.

Earlier, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had called out the remarks made by Zuckerberg on the Joe Rogan podcast. "Zuckerberg's claim that most incumbent governments, including India in 2024 elections, lost post-COVID is factually incorrect," Vaishnaw had said in a social media post.

"As the world's largest democracy, India conducted the 2024 elections with over 640 million voters. People of India reaffirmed their trust in NDA led by PM Narendra Modi's leadership," said Vaishnaw, who is Minister for Information and Broadcasting as well as IT.



## Noida parking dispute ends in gun violence

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/NOIDA**

On late Monday night at Radha Sky Gardens, a residential complex in Greater Noida, a parking dispute took a violent turn, resulting in a resident opening fire.

The altercation, which had been building for days, finally escalated when Gaurav Sisodia, a resident of the society, fired six shots from his licensed firearm. Fortunately, none of the security guards, who were the targets of the gunfire, were injured, managing to escape the scene unharmed. The confrontation began when Sisodia, reportedly intoxicated, engaged in a heated verbal and physical altercation with the security personnel.

Tensions between Sisodia and the guards had been rising, with multiple reports indicating that minor disagreements had flared up into serious conflicts. The dispute finally reached its peak on Monday night when Sisodia, feeling provoked, brandished his gun and fired it.

## GRAP IV implemented

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Centre on Wednesday re-imposed Stage-IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) after air quality deteriorated. GRAP Stage IV curbs include a ban on all construction activities, the entry of non-essential polluting trucks into Delhi, and mandatory shifting of school classes, except for classes 10 and 12, to hybrid mode. Non-essential diesel trucks are prohibited from

**WEATHER**

AQI 386  
MAX 18.1°C(-1.8)  
MIN 6°C(-1.4)

**MARKETS**

SENSEX 76,724.08 ↑ +0.29%

77,000  
76,900  
76,800  
76,700  
76,600  
76,500  
76,400

12:00 pm 3:00 pm

Prev close 76,499.63

1 US\$ = 86.40 INR



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi during the commissioning ceremony of three Indian Navy warships INS Surat, INS Nilgiri and INS Vaghsheer, at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai

## Modi commissions three naval warships

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Stressing the importance of enhancing and modernising India's military capabilities in the 21st century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Wednesday that "be it land, water, air, the deep sea or infinite space," India was safeguarding its interests well. Speaking at a ceremony after commissioning three frontline naval combatants INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vaghsheer on the occasion of Army Day, the Prime Minister said that as part of its continuous reforms in the defence sector, India had

established the Chief of Defence Staff and was progressing towards the implementation of theatre commands to make the armed forces more efficient. Averring that "India is today recognized as a reliable and responsible partner globally, especially in the Global South," the Prime Minister said that "India operates with a spirit of development, not expansionism," and the country had always supported an open, secure, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific Region. He said that India considered the entire region as its responsibility.

Modi said that when it came to the development of coastal nations, India introduced the mantra of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region) and advanced with this vision. "During India's leadership during its G20 presidency, we promoted the mantra of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. We also implemented India's vision of 'One Earth, One Health' during the global fight against COVID-19, underscoring India's belief in treating the world as one family and its commitment to inclusive development."

## Kejriwal files nomination, has ₹4.2 Crore in assets



AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal file his nomination for Delhi Assembly polls

**RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI**

According to Kejriwal's affidavit submitted to the Election Commission (EC), Kejriwal has a total of Rs 3,46,849 in movable assets, including Rs 50,000 in cash-in-hand. His wife, Sunita Kejriwal, has movable assets worth Rs 1,00,89,655, including Rs 42,000 in cash-in-hand. His immovable assets are worth Rs 1.7 Crore. The affidavit also revealed that Kejriwal owns no house or car.

According to the affidavit, Kejriwal's income for the financial year 2023-24 was Rs 7.21 Lakh. Sunita Kejriwal's total assets are worth Rs 2.5 Crore, with over Rs 1 Crore in movable assets, including 320 grams of gold worth Rs 25 Lakh and one kilogram of silver worth Rs 92,000, and Rs 1.5 Crore in immovable assets.

## India to take legal action against Ex-RAW Officer over Pannum plot

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

A high-powered enquiry committee set up by the Government has recommended legal action against former RAW officer Vikash Yadav, who was named by FBI for engaging persons, caught for attempt to murder Khalistani separatist and designated terrorist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in New York in 2023. However the official statement did not name him. The statement issued by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said after a long enquiry, the committee has recommended legal action against "an individual, whose earlier criminal links and antecedents also came to notice during the enquiry".

The probe was ordered after the US alleged there was an attempt to kill Khalistani separatist Pannun by Indian agents in New York in 2023. US already arrested Nikhil Gupta and facing charges for attempts to murder Pannun, who has dual citizenship of America and Canada. Pannun's outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) is banned by MHA.

The MHA said on receipt of information provided by US authorities regarding activities of some organised criminal groups, terrorist organisations, drug peddlers, etc., who undermined the security interests of both India and the US, a high-powered enquiry committee was set up by the government of India in November 2023. The committee conducted its own investigations, and also pursued leads provided by the US side and it received full cooperation from US authorities and the two sides also exchanged visits.

It further examined a number of officials from different agencies and also scrutinised relevant documents in this connection. "After a long enquiry, the Committee has submitted its



report to the Government and recommended legal action against an individual, whose earlier criminal links and antecedents also came to notice during the enquiry," the statement said. The committee has recommended that the legal action must be completed expeditiously.

"The Committee has further recommended functional improvements in systems and procedures as also initiation of steps that could strengthen India's response capability, ensure systematic controls and coordinated action in dealing with matters like this," the statement said. While announcing the constitution of the high-powered committee in November 2023, the External Affairs Ministry had said it will look into all relevant aspects of the matter (security concerns raised by the US).

Earlier, the US said it had stopped a plot to kill a Sikh separatist and warned India about concerns about New Delhi's involvement. The US said it was treating the plot with utmost seriousness and raised the issue with the Indian government "at the senior-most levels". In December 2023, Yadav was arrested by Delhi Police in a case of kidnapping and extortion lodged against him. He is currently on bail in this case.

## Helmet fuels power cut in UP pump

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ HAPUR**

A petrol pump in Hapur's Partapur Road faced an unusual disruption when a lineman, angered by the denial of fuel for not wearing a helmet, cut off the pump's power supply. The incident led to a 20-minute shutdown, causing chaos and heated exchanges. The situation intensified after a video of the altercation went viral on social media.

In compliance with government directives, two-wheeler riders without helmets are not allowed to purchase fuel at petrol pumps. This rule was being enforced at the petrol pump on Partapur Road.

According to Golu, a pump employee, the lineman from the local power station arrived at the pump to refuel his vehicle without a helmet.

Upon being informed about the rule, the lineman became irate and demanded fuel, which was denied. In retaliation, he reportedly cut off the pump's power



supply, halting operations and creating disarray among staff and customers. Pump employees rushed to the nearby transformer to confront the lineman about the disconnection. They emphasized that the pump had no outstanding electricity dues, questioning the rationale behind the disruption. After heated discussions, the power supply was restored.

The incident gained traction after a video of the event went viral, sparking widespread criticism. Authorities are now facing scrutiny over the lineman's actions and the lack of accountability in such cases.

Arvind Kushwaha, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), stated, "We have not

received any formal complaint about the disruption of supply at the petrol pump. If a complaint is filed, necessary action will be taken. The matter is currently not under official scrutiny." Superintending Engineer S.K. Agrawal added, "Such actions are unacceptable. No establishment's power supply can be cut arbitrarily. We will investigate the matter thoroughly and take appropriate action."

This is not the first time power supply disruptions have occurred without due process. In a previous instance, several officials, including a superintending engineer, were suspended for cutting off power to an industrial unit.

The incident underscores the challenges in enforcing government directives and the potential abuse of authority by officials. With the viral video drawing attention, public pressure on authorities to act decisively has increased. Residents and pump operators now await swift and transparent action to prevent such incidents in the future.

## India Women Break ODI Record with 435 Runs, Sweep

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/RAJKOT**

Indian women's cricket team on Wednesday scripted history by scoring highest ever total of 435 runs in the third and last one day international (ODI) match against Ireland in Rajkot. It was defeated by a whopping 304 runs and Indian team notched up its biggest ever ODI win and completed a three-nil clean sweep. Indian skipper Smriti Mandhana scored a century in just 70 balls thereby setting the stage for the massive total.

Incidentally, it was highest total by an Indian team - men's or women's - in ODIs. India men's highest ODI total is 418/5 made against the West Indies in Indore in 2011. The result of the match was a mere formality once India set



Ireland a massive target of 436, and Ireland could only garner 131 before getting bundled out in 31.4 overs. India put the first step forward towards a crushing victory through record-breaking Mandhana (135,

80b, 12x4, 7x6) and her opening partner Pratika Rawal (154, 129b, 20x4, 1x6), reaching 435/5. Mandhana and Rawal added a whopping 233 runs for the first wicket in just 26.4 overs and there was no looking back.

Then spinners Tanuja Kanwar (2/31) and Deepthi Sharma (3/27) took over, sharing five wickets among them to decimate the Irish line-up, which was well short on experience.

Orla Prendergast (36) and Sarah Forbes (41) added 64 runs for a fluent third wicket stand that helped Ireland to recover from a shaky 24 for two to reach 88 without further damage. But once Prendergast was cleaned up by Kanwar, India were all over the tourists like a bad rash, claiming the remaining seven wickets for just 33 runs.

It also helped India eclipse their previous largest margin of victory (by runs) - 249 registered against the same opposition in 2017 at Potchefstroom, South Africa.



# Cabinet approves implementation of 'Gareeb Kalyan Mission'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The State Cabinet here on Wednesday approved the implementation of the 'Gareeb Kalyan Mission' to eradicate poverty in the state by 2028. The mission aims to uplift economically disadvantaged sections and ensure their income meets a minimum level. The Mission will be jointly implemented by the Panchayat & Rural Development and Urban Administration & Development Departments, with support from other departments.

The Gareeb Kalyan Mission focuses on three key components: improving the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MDPI), strengthening livelihoods, and empowering

existing organizations. The MDPI priorities include ensuring women's and children's nutrition, reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health, promoting secondary education and school attendance, providing proper cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, family resources, and financial inclusion through bank accounts.

The Garib Kalyan Mission-2028 aims to lead the people of the state toward self-reliance and prosperity by enhancing the implementation of government schemes through empowerment of the local community. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav had announced 'Garib Kalyan Mission-2028' on Independence Day in 2024.

The Cabinet approved the installation of solar rooftop plants in government buildings under the 'PM Suryaghar Free Electricity Scheme.' The initiative, launched by the Central Government, will be executed in mission mode by 2025-26. M.P. Urja Vikas Nigam Limited will implement the scheme using the RESCO or CAPEX method through district-level tenders for buildings with a capacity of 20 kilowatts or more. The PM Suryaghar Free Electricity Scheme includes installing solar rooftops in both the domestic sector and government buildings.

The installation and operation of solar rooftop plants in all the government buildings under the 'PM Suryaghar Free Electricity Scheme' will

be monitored by a 'State Level Coordination Committee' and 'District Level Committee.' The departments and district collectors will prepare action plans for installing solar power plants on their respective buildings and present them to the State Level Coordination Committee. Efficient implementation of the scheme is expected to position the state as a national leader in solar energy. The Cabinet approved the project of Rs 1565 crore with 1200 First Response Vehicles (FRV) for the operation of the second phase of the Integrated Police Call Center and Control Room System (Dial-100) service from April 2025 to September 2030 (5 years 06 months). The Cabinet has extended

the 'Mukhyamantri Machhua Samridhi Yojana' for 2024-25 and 2025-26, approving a state share of Rs 100 crore. The scheme includes initiatives such as fish seed production, fish and prawn farming in rural ponds, fish farmer training, Kisan Credit Card interest subsidies, the establishment of smart fish parlours, development of integrated information system, and conservation of the state fish, Mahseer etc. The Cabinet has approved the creation of total 932 new posts for the establishment of police band in districts of Madhya Pradesh. This includes the posts of 10 Inspector Band, 38 Sub Inspector Band, 72 Assistant Sub Inspector Band, 170 Head Constable Band and 642 Constable Band.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and Union Minister for Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a roadshow in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

## Berasia police arrest robber, solve Jan 12 lensman heist case

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Berasia police have arrested the mastermind and gang involved in robbing a photographer near a petrol pump on Narsingharh Road, the main accused wanted to start business from the robbed valuables.

The crime reported on January 12, when Ajay Kushwaha, a photographer from Lateri, was robbed near a petrol pump on Narsingharh Road while on his way to a photoshoot. The robbers made off with his bike, mobile phone, and camera. The police quickly traced the call made to Ajay by the main accused, Aniket, which led them to unravel the entire conspiracy.

According to Superintendent of Police, Pramod Kumar Sinha, Aniket, along with his girlfriend Janaki Sen, devised the plan after Aniket expressed his

**The crime was reported on January 12, when Ajay Kushwaha, a photographer from Lateri, was robbed near a petrol pump on Narsingharh Road while on his way to a photoshoot**

desire to start a videography business. Lacking funds and support from his family, Aniket and Janaki seized an opportunity after seeing an advertisement for Ajay's services. Janaki contacted Ajay on January 9, pretending to be interested in a photoshoot for a birthday party. Along with four accomplices Khalid Khan, Anil Kushwaha, Bunty Dhakad, and Rajesh Raja the couple executed the robbery. Bunty's mortgaged car was used in the crime, which was later seized by the police. It was revealed that Bunty had lent

money on interest and used his car as collateral for the loan, which was then employed during the robbery. The police arrested all six accused, and the stolen items, including the camera, were recovered. The investigation was led by Police Station In-charge Arun Sharma's team, which successfully tracked down the culprits through meticulous investigation and evidence. The case highlights a bizarre crime driven by greed and a desire to start a business, leading to the arrest of the entire group.

## Chief Minister announces Municipal Corporation status for Vidisha Municipality

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to provide permanent housing for every poor person. Nearly 4 crore permanent houses have been provided so far across the country. In Madhya Pradesh, 16 lakh beneficiaries were identified in the initial survey, and 8.5 lakh new houses have been allocated. A new survey will ensure no poor person is left without housing, reaffirming the government's commitment to fulfilling the resolution of 'Har Gareeb ko pucca makan' (permanent house for every poor) in the state. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav symbolically conducted Griha Pravesh for the beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and distributed certificates to Lakhpati Didis during the

'Allocation of New Target under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana' programme in Vidisha on Wednesday. He also performed Bhoomi Pujan and dedicated development projects worth Rs 177 crore 53 lakh for the region. The event was attended by Union Minister for Rural Development, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Prahlad Singh Patel, and Vidisha district's Minister in charge, Lakhn Patel. Yadav emphasized that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the sole focus is on continuous development. He stated that the state budget will double in the next four years, ensuring growth in every sector. Every poor individual will have access to basic facilities, including concrete housing. Special missions are being implemented for the welfare of the poor, women, youth, and farmers,

with the ultimate goal of ensuring the well-being of all. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav highlighted the significant expansion of irrigation in the state, attributing it to major river-linking projects like Ken-Betwa and Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal (PKC), along with other irrigation initiatives. The irrigated area has grown from 7 lakh hectares in 2003 to over 48 lakh hectares. Assuring farmers that every field will receive water for irrigation, he expressed confidence that Madhya Pradesh will soon surpass Punjab and Haryana in agricultural production. Yadav stated that the Vidisha region is poised for rapid development. A major capital project combining Bhopal, Vidisha, Raisen, and Sehore is being planned, with a master plan to be prepared soon. He announced the upgrade of Vidisha Nagar Palika to a Municipal

Corporation and the expansion of facilities through the integration of Vidisha Medical College and the District Hospital. Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan congratulated Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav for Madhya Pradesh's achievements in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Janman Awas Yojana, completing projects in record time. He noted that the first road under the Pradhan Mantri Janman Yojana was also built in the state. Currently, 8 lakh 21 thousand 190 houses are being allocated to Madhya Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural), with a similar number to be provided in April-May. The Minister handed over the approval letter for the houses to Chief Minister Dr. Yadav. Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan stated that a new sur-

vey for housing is underway to include poor individuals who were previously missed with the option for self-surveys now available. Eligibility criteria for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana have been relaxed, allowing beneficiaries with two-wheelers, annual incomes up to ₹15,000, irrigated land up to 2.5 acres, or non-irrigated land up to 5 acres to qualify. Under the fourth phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, villages with a population of 500 (based on the 2011 census) and tribal villages with a population of 250 will now be eligible. He informed that Rs 384 crore was previously given to the state under schemes like greenhouse, poly house, agricultural equipment, drip, etc. to farmers, now Rs 435 crore more will be given. Furthermore, Rs 312 crore 74 lakh has been allocated under the NRLM scheme to support Lakhpati Didis.



A scene from the dance drama 'Mrityunjay Karna' staged at Rang Sri Little Ballet Troupe Theater in Bhopal on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

## NDVSU will for the first time administer oath to graduates

PNS ■ JABALPUR

For the first time since its inception in 2009, Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University (NDVSU) will administer an oath to the graduating class of the Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (BVSc & AH) courses. The oath-taking will take place at a glittering ceremony scheduled for January 17, which will mark the entry of 212 graduates into the honourable professions.

The ceremony will be conducted at the Auditorium of the College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry in Jabalpur, which will host students from all three colleges affiliated with NDVSU.

The graduating class includes 74 students each from Jabalpur and Mhow, and 64 students from Rewa, who will solemnly take the Veterinarian's Oath. This significant step symbolises their dedication to animal welfare, public health, and ethical veterinary practices. State Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Lakhn Patel, will be the chief guest at the ceremony, which

**The oath-taking will take place at a glittering ceremony scheduled for January 17**

will be attended by luminaries and academicians from the veterinary field. Ashok Rohani, MLA (Jabalpur Cantt), and Dr Umesh Chandra Sharma, President of the Veterinary Council of India (VCI), will be present as special guests.

The programme has been organised under the guidance and leadership of Dr Mandeep Sharma, Vice Chancellor of NDVSU, who is also the patron of this pioneering event.

His dedication and vision have played a pivotal role in conceptualising and implementing this momentous initiative. The families of the students, faculty members, and other invitees will witness this landmark event, celebrating the achievements of the students and their entry into the veterinary profession.

## Signature leadership programme held

PNS ■ INDORE

Medi-Caps University, Indore, successfully conducted its transformative Signature Leadership Program. Aagaaz 2025, from January 9-11 at the Statue of Unity, where all Deans and HODs, participated in impactful training sessions led by renowned outboard trainer Mr. Rakesh Jain. There are very few universities in India that design such unique programs for their leaders, and Medicaps University Indore is one of them under the visionary leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) DK Patnaik.

This leadership program focused on the theme of "Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication", equipping participants with essential skills to navigate today's complex challenges in education management and institutional growth. Medi-Caps University, a pioneer in leadership training, continues its journey of excellence with programs like Aagaaz 2025 and the upcoming Shikhar for emerging leaders, fostering a future-ready university for the benefit of society.

## Workshop held on electromagnetic field emissions from mobile towers

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

AIIMS Bhopal, in collaboration with the Office of the Department of Telecommunications MP LSA (Licensed Service Areas), organized an awareness workshop on electromagnetic field (EMF) emissions from mobile towers to dispel myths and misconceptions regarding their effects on human health and the environment. EMF emissions from mobile towers have been extensively studied worldwide, with scientific research indicating that exposure levels from regulated mobile towers are well within safe limits.

The workshop aimed to provide accurate information about government regulations, scientific data, and safety norms concerning EMF emissions. During the workshop, from the Department of Telecommunications, Director General (Compliance) Shri Manoj Verma, Assistant Director General (Compliance) Shri Rahul Sahu, Assistant Divisional Engineer Shri Shubham Yadav, and Assistant Director Shri Sachin Sharma provided detailed information about the minimal

**The workshop aimed to provide accurate information about government regulations, scientific data**

impact and safety measures related to EMF emissions from mobile towers. Prof Singh highlighted the importance of such awareness initiatives, saying, "Public concerns regarding EMF emissions need to be addressed with scientific clarity. This workshop plays a pivotal role in educating the community about the negligible risks posed by mobile tower emissions when regulatory guidelines are followed." The workshop saw the presence of Deputy Director (Administration) Colonel (Dr.) Ajit Kumar, Superintendent Engineer Colonel Chiranjeev Das, Deputy Medical Superintendent Dr. (Major) Mayank Dikshit, along with various faculty members, students, nursing staff, and other employees.

## College student dies after throat slit by kite string

PNS ■ INDORE

A 22-year-old college student tragically lost his life after his throat was slit by a kite string on Makar Sankranti. The incident occurred on Tuesday evening around 5 PM at the Futi Kothi Bridge in Chandan Nagar. The victim, identified as Himanshu Solanki, was a first-year student at Bherul Patidar College in Mhow. He was on his way to collect an LPG cylinder with his relative, Vinod, when a kite string struck his neck. Vinod also sustained injuries near his eye. Himanshu was rushed to a nearby hospital and later transferred to MY Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Dwarakapuri Police Station TI Ashish Sapre confirmed that Himanshu had been residing in the Annapurna area of Sudama Nagar for the past year. His father, Sanjay, works in a bank in Manawar, while

**In protest, the family staged a demonstration outside the Dwarakapuri police station, demanding that the police explicitly state in their report that a Chinese string was used**

his mother is employed at an Anganwadi, and his younger brother is in 11th grade. Police investigations revealed that the string involved in the incident was not the banned Chinese kite string but a normal string. However, Himanshu's family has strongly refuted the police's findings, alleging that the string was indeed the sharp and durable Chinese variety. In protest, the family staged a demonstration outside the Dwarakapuri police station, demanding that the police explicitly state in their report that a Chinese string was used. They refused to conduct Himanshu's last rites until their demand was met, chant-

ing slogans like "Jai Bhim" and calling for accountability from the police and administration. Himanshu's uncle, Sachin Kochle, accused the police of coercing the family into deleting photographic evidence of the string. He claimed the police initially agreed to mention the use of a Chinese string but later altered the report to indicate a "plain string." ACP Shivendu Dubey stated that the police are continuing their investigation into the type of string used in the incident. A case of unintentional murder has been registered, and further inquiries are underway.

## BJP leader nabbed in rape case

Bhopal: A BJP leader from Sidhi district in Madhya Pradesh was arrested on Tuesday on charges of raping a woman leader and extorting money, police said. The BJP immediately expelled him from the party after he was arrested. The FIR stated that the victim, also a BJP leader, was allegedly raped under the pretext of giving her a party ticket. The accused allegedly filmed the video of the incident and used it to extort money. The accused, Ajitpal Singh Chouhan, also threatened to kill the woman's husband and forced her father-in-law to give money by showing him the obscene video, the FIR stated. Chouhan was booked on January 13 under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) sections 64 (1) (rape), 308 (5) (extortion by putting someone in fear of death or grievous hurt), 296 (obscene act) and 351 (3) (criminal intimidation).



A young couple enjoys skydiving during an ongoing festival to promote adventure tourism in the state, organised by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

## The power of public dialogue in social change

PNS ■ GWALIOR

Public dialogue is a powerful motivator for social change and development. This was the focus of the lecture given by CEO of Gwalior Zilla Panchayat Vivek Kumar IAS during a Meet-the-Public program held at the International Center of Media Excellence. Vivek Kumar said that the most important point in the job

of an IAS officer is that he gets lots of ideas during interactions with the public. He continued that most of the times the ideas provided by the public are positive and sometimes inspirational too, which prove useful for administrative reforms. Kumar also said that it is important for officers to meet the public on a regular basis because public communication is a powerful motivator for social change and development. Earlier, Kumar was felicitated by

citizens at (ICOME) for his commendable work in the administrative service. Center Director and prominent social worker Dr. Keshav Pandey in his welcome speech highlighted the commendable administrative works of Kumar. Pandey gave detailed information about the Yojnata App which was the brainchild of Kumar. The programme was conducted by Mahesh Mudgal and Rajendra Mudgal expressed the vote of thanks.

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# JP Hospital becomes the first in State to have MRI facility

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla on Wednesday announced plans to equip district hospitals across Madhya Pradesh with modern facilities, offering advanced MRI services at reduced costs and free treatment for Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries. Shukla said that the government's goal is to provide high-quality healthcare services to citizens within their own districts. To achieve this, health infrastructure is being strengthened, and the necessary medical equipment is being arranged.

Investigation Service Centre at Jai Prakash Hospital in the state capital. This hospital is the first district hospital in the state to offer MRI services. Shukla reiterated his government's commitment to strengthening and expanding healthcare services across the state. He announced that MRI investigation services will soon be launched in Ujjain, Indore, Gwalior, and Jabalpur. The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted that the new MRI services are available at 30 percent less than the CGHS rate. These MRI services will be completely free for beneficiaries registered under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana. Shukla praised the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for improving health services in the country. Shukla added that improve-

ments in the health sector in the state are being carried out with future challenges in mind. He said the work on the Cath Lab and heart treatment facilities will be completed by March 2025. Advanced services like angiography, angioplasty, heart transplants, and bypass surgery will be available at JP Hospital through Cath Lab and CTVS services. A 100-bed cardiac treatment unit will be set up. He instructed officials to ensure no delay in the construction work and that the quality of all services should be maintained. Minister of State for Public Health Narendra Shivaji Patel also spoke about the improvements in health services. Patel mentioned the opening of medical colleges and the recruitment of more than 46,000 medical assistant positions. These efforts aim to pro-

vide excellent health security to all citizens. MLA Bhagwandas Sabnani, Mayor Malti Rai, Municipal Corporation Bhopal President Kishan Suryavanshi, Chief Medical and Health Officer Bhopal Prabhakar Tiwari, and Civil Surgeon Rakesh Srivastava were present at the event. The Bhopal MRI Centre has been set up at a cost of Rs 10 crore 50 lakh. This includes building construction, equipment, and technical upgrades. A 1.5 Tesla UMR 580 machine has been installed, ensuring fast, accurate scanning. The centre provides advanced imaging and energy efficiency. It has a scanning capacity of 80 patients per day, offering quality service with minimal waiting time and accurate reporting. Advanced MRI facilities will be

made available to patients at up to 30 percent less than CGHS rates. This facility will also be provided free of charge to Ayushman Bharat Yojana beneficiaries. MRI Abdomen (Plain) (CGHS rate Rs 2,125) is available at Rs 1,423, MRI Brain (Plain) (CGHS rate Rs 1,998) at Rs 1,338, MRI Shoulder (Plain) (CGHS rate Rs 2,000) at Rs 1,339. MRI Knee (Contrast) (CGHS rate Rs 4,500) will be done at Rs 3,014. MRI angiography (contrast) (CGHS rate Rs 4,950) is available at Rs 3,315 in the hospital. For the diagnosis of serious diseases, whole-body MRI (oncological workup) (CGHS rate Rs 5,100) will be available at Rs 3,415. Services like MRI back (lumbar spine) (CGHS rate Rs 2,125) are also being provided.



Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Health and Medical Education Rajendra Shukla and Minister of State Narendra Shivaji Patel during inauguration of MRI facility center at JP hospital in Bhopal on Wednesday. Pioneer photo



Traders campaign during an election of Sarafa Association, at Sarafa Chowk in Bhopal on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

## Agrawal, Soni victorious in Sarafa elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Culminating the day-long election process, Naresh Agrawal was elected the new president of the Bhopal Sarafa Association on Thursday, while Rajesh Soni won the race for vice president of the traders' body. Other elected members of the association include Akhilesh Mittal as Secretary, Sachin Jain as Joint Secretary, and Amit Bindal as Treasurer. By 4 PM, 222 out of 231 members had cast their votes. Nine voters could not vote. The results were announced after 6:15 PM. Two panels, 'Yuva Panel' and 'Aapki Apni Panel', contested the elections. The five office-bearers elected are from both panels. This time, key election issues included parking, secu-

urity, high-mast lighting, and public convenience complexes at the Sarafa Bazaar. Notably, the Yuva Panel was fielded by the outgoing executive of the organisation. Earlier in the day, voting was conducted for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, and 12 executive members at Gopal Dharamshala in Chowk Bazaar. A total of 231 traders from the Sarafa Bazaar in the old city were eligible to vote in the elections. Of these, 222 cast their votes. Each voter cast 16 votes, which included selecting five office-bearers and 11 executive members. The association is one of the oldest and most prestigious trade organisations in the city.

## Employees seek old pension, warn of stir

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Seeking reinstatement of the old pension scheme, promotions and a 48 point charter of demands, an amalgam of 32 employee organisations is set to launch a state-wide protest in Madhya Pradesh starting Thursday. The Madhya Pradesh Officer-Employee Joint Front will hand-over memorandums, addressed to the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary, to District Collectors throughout the state. According to MP Dwivedi, President of the Front, coordinators have been appointed in all divisions to make the protest effective. These coordinators will hold media briefings at their respective divisional headquarters on 2nd February to explain the need for the protest. The convenors of the Front,

Mahendra Sharma and SB Singh, stated that a four-phase protest plan has been announced. The government's stance will be reviewed after each of these phases. If the demands are not met with a positive response, a strike could be considered. The protest involves several prominent organisations, including the Madhya Pradesh Gazetted Officers' Association, Livestock Area Officers' and Employees' Association, and the Class-three Government Employees' Association, among others. Protest leaders warned that any further neglect of their demands would be met with employees taking to the streets and causing vehicular disruptions in all 55 districts of the state, including Bhopal. Employee unions had also protested over their demands before the Assembly elections in 2023.

## Sanskrit varsity to produce 10 short films

PNS ■ UJJAIN

In a first, the Maharishi Panini Sanskrit Evam Vedic Vishwavidyalaya in Ujjain will produce ten short films based on the lives of renowned grammar masters such as Panini, Katyayana, Patanjali, Nagesh Bhatt, Vyadi, Bhattoji Dixit, Kaiyat, Hemchand Shuri, Varadarajacharya, and Jayaditya. Auditions for the production took place on January 13 and 14 to find suitable talent. Artists of all ages and backgrounds came from various regions nationwide, bringing with them enthusiasm and excitement to the process. The short films are part of the Ashtadashi project led by the Central Sanskrit University in New Delhi, with Sanskrit as the primary language. Akhilesh Kumar Dwivedi, the principal director and head of the Grammar Department, says the project aims to familiarise students and the wider public with the fundamental aspects of Sanskrit grammar, besides honouring the personalities and contributions of the masters from the ancient lineage of grammar science. Co-director Munish Mishra noted that filming will take place in several locations across the country, including Ujjain, showcasing the ancient Indian knowledge tradition and the Gurukul education system. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Vijay Kumar CG, and Registrar, Prof Dilip Soni, have expressed their delight and support for the initiative. Upendra Bhargava, head of the Department of Astrology, and Dinesh Choubey from the Sanskrit Education Training Centre, attended the auditions.

## CM greets on Army Day

Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, while congratulating and wishing on "Army Day" on 15 January, said that Army Day reminds us of the valour, gallantry, sacrifice and martyrdom of the brave soldiers of the country. Yadav, while paying homage to the brave soldiers, said that the

countrymen are proud of their Army and the courage of the soldiers. Chief Minister Yadav said that today is the day to be proud of the brave tales of the Indian Army and their devotion to duty. The countrymen are proud of the selfless service and dedication of our soldiers to protect the motherland.

## BBA student critically injured by air gun pellet fired by uncle

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 21-year-old BBA third-year student, Adiba, was critically injured by a pellet fired from a foreign air gun in the Berasia area of the state capital. The incident occurred around 5:30 PM when Adiba went to the terrace to bring clothes. A nearby resident, identified as her uncle Shabu, was attempting to shoot a pigeon with an air gun when he missed, and the pellet struck Adiba in the chest. The pellet passed through her body, exiting from the back. Injured Adiba managed to call for help, and her family rushed her to a private hospital in Bhopal. She underwent surgery and is

## Injured Adiba managed to call for help, and her family rushed her to a private hospital in Bhopal

now stable, though her condition was initially critical. Doctors said the pellet hit just below her heart, and had it been slightly higher, the outcome could have been fatal. Witnesses found one or two dead pigeons nearby, suggesting the shooter had been targeting pigeons. Police launched an investigation, and Adiba named her uncle, Shabu, as the person responsible, though she did not see him directly fire the shot. On Wednesday, the police

registered a case of attempted murder and began searching for Shabu. It is yet to be determined if the shooting was intentional or an accident. Adiba, the second of two sisters, had been living in Bhopal for her studies. After the incident, she expressed her fear, saying she initially thought she wouldn't survive. Fortunately, her condition has now improved after surgery. The police are continuing their investigation into the incident.

## Shahdol is a land of immense potential: CM

Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that Shahdol is a land of immense possibilities in the industrial sector. Regional Industry Conclave is going to be held at University Institute of Technology Shahdol on January 16 to promote regional industries with cooperation and collaboration. In this, policy dialogue and innovations will be shared with industrialists and investors. More than 4 thousand participants and more than 2 thousand industrialists will participate in the conclave. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav will dedicate and perform Bhoomi Pujan of 28 industrial units in the conclave. An investment of Rs 570 crore will be made and 2600 jobs will be created in

these units. In the conclave an investment of Rs 18 thousand crore is likely for 1600 megawatt thermal plant by Torrent Power. During conclave, Yadav will hold one-to-one discussions with the leading industrialists of the country. There will also be 3 sectoral sessions with investors. In the opening session of the conclave, Chief Secretary Anurag Jain will shed light on the industry outlook of Madhya Pradesh and a film will be screened on the achievements of the Industry Department in one year. Presentations will be presented by Principal Secretary, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion and MSME Raghvendra Kumar Singh on investment opportu-

nities in the state, Additional Chief Secretary New and Renewable Energy Manu Shrivastava on opportunities in the renewable energy sector, Additional Chief Secretary Science and Technology Sanjay Dubey on opportunities in IT, ITES and ESDM, Principal Secretary Mineral Resources Umakant Umrao on opportunities in the mining and mineral sector and Principal Secretary Tourism Sheo Shekhar Shukla on opportunities in the tourism sector. Leading industrialists will share their experiences in the conclave. Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla and MSME Minister Chaitanya Kumar Kashyap will also address the conclave.



Police contingents during rehearsals ahead of the Republic Day celebration at Lal parade ground in Bhopal on Wednesday.

## Man kills daughter days before her marriage

Gwalior: A 20-year-old girl was allegedly shot dead by her father on Tuesday evening, just four days before her wedding, in a shocking case of honor killing. The incident was reported in Gola Ka Mandir area and was reportedly fueled by the victim's desire to marry someone of her own choice rather than the partner chosen by her family. The victim, identified as Tanu Gurjar, had openly opposed her family's arranged marriage plan and expressed her wish to marry a man of her choice. She had posted a video on social media earlier that day, which reportedly enraged her father, Mahesh Gurjar. The police, acting on the video, had reached the scene to ensure her safety. According to reports, Tanu had requested to be taken to a One-Stop Centre—a government-run facility for women facing violence—for

protection. However, her father insisted on speaking to her privately, claiming he could convince her to comply with the family's decision. Tragically, during this interaction, Mahesh Gurjar, armed with a country-made firearm, shot Tanu at close range, hitting her in the chest. Her cousin, Rahul, allegedly acted as an accomplice and fired additional shots, fatally striking her forehead, neck, and face. Tanu collapsed and died on the spot. The incident has sparked outrage, with questions being raised about the role of law enforcement in preventing such crimes. The police have arrested both the accused, Mahesh Gurjar and Rahul, and an investigation is underway. This chilling case highlights the persistence of honor-related violence in some parts of the country, underscoring the need for stronger measures to protect women's rights and safety.

## City youngsters falling prey to online frauds

ANKUSH SINGH ■ BHOPAL

Despite all its positive impacts, the digital revolution has also triggered a massive rise in white-collar crime involving educated young people who are perhaps sniffing around your digital footprint as you read this story. Over the last few months several city youngsters have been hit by these financial swindlers who use extensive measures to cover their tracks and evade arrest. An employee at a private firm in the city, Kamlesh Kumar, fell victim to a stock market scam. Kumar, who occasionally invests in the stock market, received a WhatsApp message offering guaranteed big-ticket returns. Tempted by the promise, he transferred Rs 10,000 to the suggested third-party app. Within hours, his app balance shot up to Rs 16,000. However, when he attempted to withdraw

the money, the app demanded more funds. After refusing, the app stopped functioning. "I realised too late that it was a scam," Kumar said. Homemaker Ritu Bhardwaj shares her ordeal, which began when a friend recommended an app that promised daily returns of 2% on small investments. Bhardwaj initially invested Rs 2,000 and received returns for a few days. She then saw financial products priced up to Rs 1 lakh, offering 8-10% daily returns. Many of her friends invested Rs 30,000 to Rs 50,000. The app eventually shut down, leaving the investors empty-handed. "I only lost Rs 2,000, but my friends lost their life savings," Bhardwaj said. A college student, Sarita Malviya, says she fell for a phishing scam when she received a call claiming she had won a free annual phone recharge plan. The caller instructed her to transfer Rs 1,000 to claim the prize. Without verifying the

authenticity, Malviya made the payment via UPI. "The number became unreachable, and I realised I had been scammed," she said. In another case, a man who wished to remain anonymous received a call while napping on a Sunday. The caller convinced him to share a one-time password (OTP), claiming it was for a legitimate purpose. The man later discovered that Rs 5,000 had been withdrawn from his account to pay an electricity bill in Gujarat. He reported the incident to the police. Experts say many victims avoid reporting cybercrimes due to the fear of social embarrassment. Swarmed by a rise in cyber frauds, authorities are running a massive awareness campaign to educate people on the modus operandi of these thugs. The government of India expects victims to report online frauds on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal or a dedicated helpline by dialling 1930.

## Office of The Chief Engineer M.P.P.W.D Bridge Construction Zone Bhopal (M.P.) Tender Notice

NIT No-20/C.E.(Bridge Zone)/2024-25 Date 10.01.2025

Online Tender for mentioned below are being invited. The Tender have been uploaded on the mptenders. system of Public Works Department on the Portal [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) Tender details are as below :-

S. No.	Tender No.	District	Nature of work	Name of work	Call No.	Cost of Project (Rs. In lack)	(EMD Fee/Tender Fee) All Tender Document & Other Document Submission
1	2025 PWDRB_394853_1	Rajgarh	Bridge Work	Balance Work of Construction of Submersible Bridge Across Kaili Sindh River on Limboda Kundaliya Road District Rajgarh.	Third	797.67	Online Only
<b>Total</b>						<b>797.67</b>	

The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The last date & time for purchase of Document on line is **Dated 31/01/2025 up to (17:30)** Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website only, and not in newspaper.

Chief Engineer  
P.W.D Bridge Construction Zone  
Bhopal

G-21657/24



# President Murmu, PM Modi extend wishes on 77th Army Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday greeted the Indian Army personnel, veterans and their families on the Army Day. "The nation remembers with gratitude, the countless sacrifices you have made in service of the motherland," President Murmu said in a social media post. The Army Day is observed on January 15 to commemorate the occasion when General K M Cariappa, who later became Field Marshal, took charge as the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, replacing his British predecessor in 1949. "On Army Day, I extend my

greetings to the Indian Army personnel, veterans and their families. Your unwavering commitment to safeguarding sovereignty of the nation and ensuring national security is an inspiration for all," President Murmu said. She said the humanitarian work done by the Army during crises and disasters is a testament to their kindness and compassion. "May your extraordinary valour and courage continue to inspire generations to come!" she added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his message lauded the Indian Army for its determination, professionalism and dedication, and underlined his government's commitment to the welfare of armed forces and

their families. In social media posts, he said, "Today, on Army Day, we salute the unwavering courage of the Indian Army, which stands as the sentinel of our nation's security. We also remember the sacrifices made by the bravehearts who ensure the safety of crores of Indians every day." The Indian Army, he said, epitomises determination, professionalism and dedication. In addition to safeguarding our borders, it has made a mark in providing humanitarian help during natural disasters, he added. He said, "Our government is committed to the welfare of the armed forces and their families. Over the years, we have introduced several reforms and focused on modernisation.



This will continue in the times to come."

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan extended his greetings and best wishes to all ranks of the Indian Army on the occasion of the 77th Army Day. In his message, the CDS

said, the day is a celebration of the unwavering dedication, courage, indomitable spirit and professionalism that define the Indian Army, an institution that continues to stand as the bedrock of India's security and unity. General Chauhan stated that the

Indian Army's legacy is built on its credible ability to adapt to challenges, uphold sovereignty and serve the nation selflessly. "The relentless efforts of the personnel of Indian Army in maintaining a high state of readiness, excelling in operational domains and ensuring safety and well-being of our citizens, under all circumstances are commendable," he underscored. Highlighting the changing dynamics of warfare and the growing use of technology, CDS said modern warfare is evolving rapidly, driven by advancements in technology, and shifting geo-political dynamics. Conflicts are increasingly expanding into new domains, including Cyber, Space and

Cognitive arenas. He further said, "New age technologies and concepts such as Automation powered by Artificial Intelligence and Data Centric Architecture, Celerity Centric Warfare bolstered by Stealth and Hypersonic technologies, and Robotics driven by Autonomous Vehicles are transforming how future wars will be fought." Stressing that no wars in the future would be fought like the last one, and the very raison-d'être for any Army is to win wars, General Chauhan said Indian Army will need to adapt and equip technologically and continually upgrade its Tactics, Techniques and Procedures to remain ahead of the adversaries.

Empowering men with higher technical acumen with infusion of improved Information and Communications Technology is the need of the hour, he added. The CDS concluded his message by paying homage and expressing his gratitude to the brave hearts, who made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives in the Line of Duty. "As we mark this special day, every soldier must resolve to uphold the glorious traditions of the Army, while embracing the challenges of the future with determination and pride. May the Army continue to bring greater success and glory to our motherland and contribute indefatigably towards Nation Building," he said.

## DG level border talks between India and Bangladesh expected to be held February 16 onwards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The twice postponed Director General (DG) level border talks between India and Bangladesh are now expected to be held here from February 16 with the issue of fencing and rise in infiltration attempts post the regime change in that country being a major subject of discussion, official sources said Wednesday. A delegation of the Border Guard Bangladesh is scheduled to hold discussions with their counterparts Border Security Force (BSF) between February 16 and 19 as part of the 55th edition of these bi-annual talks. This will be the first top-level discussion between the two forces post the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, 2024. The engagements of the two sides are being worked upon, sources said. The dates for these talks were twice postponed last year, they said. The issues related to objections raised by Bangladesh over the construction of "agreed upon" single-row fence at about 92



identified patches covering about 95.8 km of the overall 4,096 km international border between the two neighbours is expected to be taken up during this meeting with "prominence", the sources said. Obstruction to the work of fence construction on this border was underlined last week after India followed by Bangladesh summoned the High Commissioners of the either country in their national capitals. Bangladesh expressed "deep concern" over the "activities" of

the BSF vis-a-vis fence erection and border killings when they called Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma in Dhaka over the weekend. The next day, India made it clear to the acting Bangladesh High Commissioner Nural Islam in Delhi that all laid down protocols were being followed while constructing the fence as it conveyed its expectation that "all earlier understandings will be implemented by Bangladesh and that there will be a cooperative approach to combating cross-border

crimes." The Indian side, during the border talks, is expected to put across the instances of spiked up infiltration attempts by Bangladeshis nationals across this front post August last year as these instances are linked to human trafficking and cross-border smuggling. According to the data, as many as 1,956 Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended by BSF troops between August and December last year. This five-month period accounted for more than 50 per cent of the interdictions of Bangladeshi nationals on this front as the entire year saw 3,474 such apprehensions. During 2023, 4,342 Bangladeshi nationals were caught by the BSF along this front. The DG-level border talks were held annually between 1975 and 1992 but made bi-annual in 1993 with either side alternatively travelling to the national capitals of New Delhi and Dhaka. The last edition was held in Dhaka in March when the Indian delegation travelled to that country.

## BJP slams Sharad Pawar for his remarks on Shah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday slammed NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar for his "tadipaar" remark on Amit Shah and asked the veteran leader to stop spreading "wrong information" about the Union home minister. This came a day after Pawar attacked Shah for his comments that the BJP's victory in the Maharashtra assembly polls ended "the politics of betrayal and treachery started by him (Pawar) in 1978". Bemoaning the lack of communication among current political leaders, Pawar also asked the Union home minister to maintain the decorum of the post he holds. In an apparent reference to Shah being externed in 2010 from Gujarat for two years in connection with the Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case, the NCP (SP) chief had told a press conference in Marathi in Mumbai, "This country has seen many excellent home ministers, but none of them was a 'tadipaar' from his own state (externed)." Shah was acquitted of all the



charges in 2014. Hitting back at Pawar, BJP national general secretary Vinod Tawde said in a statement, "NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar has called Amit Shah a 'tadipaar' home minister. Do you know why he was externed from the state?" Shah was externed from Gujarat by a court in the state not because he committed "any robbery or theft", but in connection with a case of alleged

"So, if someone makes a political comment, it should be accepted with sportsman's spirit instead of spreading wrong information," the BJP leader said. Both Tawde and Shah described Pawar as a "betrayer" in an apparent reference to his walking out of the Vasantdada Patil-led government in 1978 with 40 MLAs and becoming the chief minister of Maharashtra. "During your (Sharad Pawar) term, there were talks that people associated with (gangster) Dawood (Ibrahim) travelled in your helicopter. Dawood was running Mumbai when you were the chief minister," Tawde charged. The BJP leader asked Pawar if he would have made "such remarks" against V D Savarkar if he had been appointed a minister in the Union government. "Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani were in jail (during the Emergency) and later they became prime minister and the home minister of the country, respectively. Will you say such things about them also?" he added.

## Sonia Gandhi inaugurates Cong's new Kotla Road headquarters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi inaugurated the party's new headquarters located at 9A, Kotla Road here on Wednesday, marking a key moment in the history of the grand old party which has operated from the 24, Akbar Road premises for the last 47 years. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and K C Venugopal, among other senior party leaders, were present on the occasion. The event saw party leaders hoist the party flag at the new headquarters and the singing of Vande Matram and the

national anthem. Sonia Gandhi then inaugurated the building, asking Kharge to join her in cutting the ribbon at the entry of the building. The new state-of-the-art AICC headquarters -- Indira Gandhi Bhawan -- symbolises the Congress party's continuing mission to uphold the vision of its stalwarts, the party had earlier said. "It is time for us to move ahead with the times and embrace the new," AICC general secretary, organisation, Venugopal had said. The construction of Indira Gandhi Bhawan was started during Sonia Gandhi's tenure as Congress chief. "Situated at 9A, Kotla Road, New Delhi, the Indira Gandhi



Bhawan is designed to meet the evolving needs of the party and its leaders, featuring modern facilities to support administrative, organi-

sational, and strategic activities. "This iconic building reflects the Congress party's forward-looking vision while paying

homage to its extraordinary past, which has shaped the political and social fabric of India," he had said. Sources have said the party will not vacate its present 24, Akbar Road office, which has been its headquarters since 1978 after the Congress (I) was formed, and it will continue to house some of its cells. The construction of the new AICC headquarters was delayed by several years owing to "paucity of funds" ever since the Congress lost its government at the Centre. The BJP has also not vacated its old party headquarters at 11, Ashoka Road, even after shifting to its new headquarters at Deendayal Upadhyay Marg. Congress old-timers and

romantics agree that modern amenities and a larger area are the need of the hour but the emotional connect and unfolding of history associated with the 24, Akbar Road address will always stay strong. The Akbar Road bungalow once housed Sir Reginald Maxwell, who was a member of Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's executive council. It was also home to a teen Aung San Suu Kyi in 1961 when her mother was appointed ambassador to India. The Congress has been its mainstay though. More than just an office for the party, the premises set in expansive lawns was witness to the tenure of seven Congress presidents.

## Pradhan announces third edition of KTS to be held from February 15



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday announced the third edition of cultural-exchange programme Kashi Tamil Sangamam will be held from February 15 to February 24. "The programme aims to celebrate, reaffirm and rediscover the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi -- two of the country's most important and ancient seats of learning. The 10-day initiative will begin from February 15," Pradhan said at a Press conference in the national Capital. The first month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam was held in 2022 to revive the living bonds between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu. The second edition was organised from December 17 to December 30 in 2023. "A total of 1,000 participants from Tamil Nadu, split in five groups of equal numbers, will be taking part in the event. They will be from different walks of life, including students, teachers, farmers, artisans, professionals and small entrepreneurs, besides women and researchers. Further, a batch of 200 Tamil students from all the central universities will also be part of this event and get to undertake local visits to Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya," said IIT-Madras Director V Kamakoti. A highlight of the third edition is that the event will coincide with the Maha Kumbh Mela, which is being held from January 13 to February 26. The delegates will have the opportunity for "Shahi Snan" or a holy dip during the Maha Kumbh Mela and a visit to the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The main theme of this edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam will

highlight the significant contributions of Sage Agasthyar to the Siddha System of Medicine (Bharatiya Chikitsa), classical Tamil literature and the cultural unity of the country. Pradhan encouraged people of Tamil Nadu to participate in Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 wholeheartedly. An exhibition on the different facets of Sage Agasthyar and his contributions to world of Health, Philosophy, Science, Linguistics, Literature, Polity, Culture, Art, particularly to Tamil and Tamil Nadu, etc. and Seminars, workshops, book release, etc. will be organised at Kashi during KTS 3. Kashi Tamil Sangamam is being organized by the Union Ministry of Education in collaboration with other ministries including Culture, Textiles, Railways, Tourism, Food Processing, I&B etc. and the Uttar Pradesh Government. The programme aims to provide an opportunity for scholars, students, philosophers, traders, artisans, artists and people from other walks of life from the two regions to come together, share their knowledge, culture and best practices and learn from each other's experience. It also aims to make the youth aware and experience cultural oneness. The endeavour is in sync with NEP 2020's emphasis on integrating the wealth of Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge. IIT Madras and BHU are the two implementing agencies for the programme. KTS 2.0 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Varanasi in December 2023, with the first-ever real-time, app-based translation of a part of the Prime Minister's speech in Tamil for the benefit of visiting Tamil delegates.

## Election rules row: SC seeks Centre, EC reply on Ramesh's plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought responses from the Centre and the Election Commission on Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh's plea against the recent amendments, including no public access to CCTV, to the 1961 election rules. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar took note of the submissions of senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Ramesh, and issued notices on the plea. The bench said it would hear the plea in the week commencing March 17. Singhvi said amendments to the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules were made "very cleverly" and barred any access to CCTV footage claiming it would reveal the identity of the voter. He said voting choices were never revealed and the CCTV footage could not reveal votes. Senior lawyers urged the bench to ask the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Centre to file their responses before the next date of hearing else they would come and say "reply is needed



to be filed" on that day. "They will file the responses," the CJI said. The Congress leader filed the writ petition in December challenging the recent amendments to the 1961 rules and expressed "hope" that the apex court would help "restore the fast eroding" integrity of the electoral process. The Government has tweaked an election rule to prevent public inspection of certain electronic documents such as CCTV camera and webcasting footage besides video recordings of candidates to prevent their misuse. Ramesh said the ECI, a con-

stitutional body charged with the conduct of free and fair elections, couldn't be allowed to unilaterally, and without public consultation, amend such a vital law in such a brazen manner. "This is especially true when that amendment does away with public access to essential information that makes the electoral process more transparent and accountable," he said. Based on ECI's recommendation, the Union Law Ministry in December amended Rule 93(2)(a) of the 1961 rules, to restrict the type of "papers" or documents open to public inspection.

## NSUI holds protest march against Bhagwat's 'true independence' remark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress's student wing on Wednesday staged a protest march, demanding a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and action against its chief, Mohan Bhagwat. Protesters of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), who plan to march to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's residence, said Bhagwat's recent remarks that India got true independence after the consecration of Ram mandir in 2024 was "anti-national". The march, led by NSUI national president Varun Choudhary, began from the organisation's headquarters in New Delhi. On Wednesday, Bhagwat said the date Ram temple was inaugurated in Ayodhya should be celebrated as "Pratishtha Dvadashi" -- the "true independence" day of the country that faced "enemy attacks for several centuries". He was speaking at an event in Indore where he presented the 'National Devi Ahilya Award' to Champat Rai, general secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust -- which was tasked



with the construction and management of the temple in Ayodhya. The Congress reacted sharply to Bhagwat's remarks, with party leader Rahul Gandhi saying it amounts to treason and is an insult to every Indian. Speaking at the inauguration of the new Congress headquarters in Delhi, Gandhi also said that the fight against the RSS and the BJP was a "civilisational war". "Do not think that we are fighting a fair fight. There is no fairness in this. If you believe that we are fighting like BJP or RSS, you have not understood what is going on. The BJP and RSS have captured every single institution

in this country and we are now fighting the BJP, the RSS and the Indian state itself," he said. Gandhi's remarks triggered another row, with the BJP hitting out at the Congress leader for saying that he is "fighting the BJP, RSS and the Indian state". BJP president JP Nadda alleged on X that it is not a secret that Gandhi and his ecosystem have close links with "urban naxals" and the "deep state" who want to "defame, demean and discredit" India. "I 'compliment' Mr. Rahul Gandhi for saying clearly what the nation knows - that he is fighting the Indian state!" he said.



# MAHAKUMBH 2025: SPECIAL COVERAGE

## 'Sanskriti ka Mahakumbh' set to begin on January 16

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
LUCKNOW/MAHAKUMBH  
NAGAR

The ongoing Mahakumbh Mela is set to witness a grand cultural extravaganza from January 16 to February 24. The event, aptly titled "Sanskriti ka Mahakumbh" (Cultural Mahakumbh), will showcase the rich tapestry of Indian culture through a series of captivating performances by renowned artists.

The main stage, Ganga Pandal, will host performances by renowned artists from across the country, including a special presentation by Shankar Mahadevan on the opening day. Cultural programs will also begin at the Yamuna and Saraswati Pandal on January 16, while the Triveni Pandal will host a blend of cultural melodies starting January 21. On January 16, Bollywood singer Shankar Mahadevan will regale audience at the Ganga Pandal, while students from Kashi's Sanskrit schools will offer their devotion through Mangalcharan at the Yamuna Pandal. The Saraswati Pandal will showcase the traditional art of Nautanki, with Padma Shri Ramdayal Sharma and his 30-member team presenting the story of Lord Krishna's friendship with Sudama.

The Ganga Pandal, with a capacity of 10,000 spectators, will be the main venue for this celebration of devotion and heritage. Located at Sector-1 Parade Ground, it will be the hub for grand performances by India's eminent artistes. In addition, Triveni, Yamuna, and Saraswati Pandal, each with



a capacity of 2,000, will host a variety of performances by renowned artists from Uttar Pradesh and across the nation.

**Main events on January 16:**  
- Prof. Ritwik Sanyal (Varanasi) - Classical/Light Classical Singing

- Vichitrnanda Sween (Bhubaneswar) - Odissi Dance  
- Kushal Das (Kolkata) - Sitar - Shankar Mahadevan (Mumbai) & Ravi Shankar (Uttar Pradesh) - Bhajans/Light Music  
- Children from Sanskrit

Schools, Varanasi - Mangalcharan (Devotional Offering)  
- Sanya Patankar (Rajasthan) - Classical Singing  
- Sahiram Pandey (Gonda) - Alha Singing (Traditional Ballads)  
- Sarita Mishra (Lucknow) - Folk Singing

- Ramprasad (Prayagraj) - Birha Singing (Traditional Folk Songs)  
- Piyusha Kailash Anuj (Delhi) - Bhajans  
- Arushi Mudgal (Delhi) - Odissi Dance  
- Amarjeet (Sonbhadra) - Tribal Folk Dance  
- Saraswati Pandal:

- Saurabh Banodha (Sonbhadra) - Bamboo Musical Instruments  
- Shweta Dubey (Varanasi) - Bhajan Singing  
- Shruti Malviya (Lucknow) - Bhajans/Folk Singing  
- Padma Shri Ramdayal Sharma (Delhi) - Krishna-Sudama Nautanki



## UP CM orders arrangement for Mauni Amavasya

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday, directed improved arrangements for the expected 8-10 crore devotees at Sangam on Mauni Amavasya, January 29. Reviewing the turnout of over 6 crore devotees at the Mahakumbh during Paus Purnima and Makar Sankranti festivals with senior officials at a high-level meeting, he stressed the need for enhanced preparations for the upcoming event. He instructed officials to

coordinate with the railways to ensure timely operation of special Mahakumbh trains, emphasizing the need for continuous operation of both regular and special trains, with increased frequency to accommodate the large number of devotees. The Chief Minister highlighted the need to enhance the mobile network in the fair area and ensure the continuous operation of buses, shuttle buses, and electric buses. He also emphasized regular toilet cleaning, barricading of ghats, and 24x7 electricity and drinking water supply in all sectors.

## UP deploys mobile labs to check food quality

**PTI ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR**

The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday announced the deployment of mobile laboratories to carry out food inspections at eateries in the Maha Kumbh Mela area here, aiming to monitor hygiene and safety standards. Assistant Food Commissioner (Grade 2) Sushil Kumar Singh emphasised the use of 'Food Safety on Wheels' to prevent the distribution of spoiled or adulterated food to the pilgrims.

"These mobile laboratories conduct on-the-spot testing of food and beverages. Regular quality checks are conducted at hotels, dhabas, and small stalls, with food safety complaints promptly addressed to ensure swift action," Singh added. In a statement, the Uttar Pradesh government said that under the leadership of chief minister Yogi Adityanath, efforts are being made to ensure clean and quality food for the millions of devotees attending the Maha Kumbh. "The fair is divided into five



zones and 25 sectors, with food safety officers in each sector regularly monitoring hygiene and safety standards," the government said. "All food safety operations are coordinated from the central office located on Sankat Mochan Marg in Sector 24. This office oversees food monitoring efforts and supervises the deployment of teams across the fair," it added. While food safety officers are stationed in every sector, while chief officers oversee every five sectors, the

government said. A maximum of 14 sectors are actively monitored in the Jhansi area, it noted. On January 13, the first day of the Maha Kumbh, around 1.75 crore devotees gathered at the Triveni Sangam. The number of devotees doubled to 3.5 crore on the second day, marked by Makar Sankranti. The Uttar Pradesh government estimates a foothold of 40 to 45 crore pilgrims and visitors over the next six weeks, until February 26, for the largest spiritual gathering on the planet.

## Vidya Kumbh: Bringing education to children of sanitation workers in Mahakumbh mela

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■**  
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

In a unique initiative, the Uttar Pradesh government has established five "Vidya Kumbh" primary schools within the sprawling Mahakumbh mela ground in Prayagraj. These schools are dedicated to providing free, high-quality education to the children of the 15,000 sanitation workers tirelessly maintaining cleanliness during the grand event.

The project, spearheaded by the state's basic education department, aims to ensure that the education of these children is not disrupted while their families work at the Mahakumbh. The schools, located in sectors 1, 2, 7, 10, and 13, are equipped with digital classrooms, playgrounds, and a host of amenities, creating a vibrant learning environment. Basic education minister Sandeep Singh hailed the effort as an example of the government's commitment to



education. "On the auspicious occasion of Maha Kumbh-2025, the Uttar Pradesh government is paving the way for a brighter future for the next generation," Singh said in a statement. The schools have enrolled over 500 students so far, with the target set at 1,000. Children

aged 6 to 14 have been surveyed and placed in classes appropriate to their age. Education is being provided free of cost, along with school uniforms, sweaters, books, and stationery under the 'Umang Kit' scheme. Director general, school education, Kanchan Verma,

said, "Through Vidya Kumbh, we are ensuring that the education of children belonging to labor families continues uninterrupted, even in the midst of this massive event."

For Sunita, a sanitation worker from Varanasi, the initiative has been life-changing. "I was worried about my daughter Rajkumari missing her studies while I worked here. Now, she's not only learning but also enjoying her time with new friends," Sunita shared with a smile.

Eight-year-old Arjun, a student at Vidya Kumbh Primary School in Sector-10, expressed his delight, saying, "I love studying here! We get to play in the big playground, and the teachers are very kind. The best part is that we also get tasty food every day." Another student, 10-year-old Meena, added, "The school gave us new books, sweaters, and even shoes. I'm happy to come here every day." The schools emphasize digital

and game-based learning, with lessons taught using audio-video content, whiteboards, and interactive activities. For nursery students, playful methods have been adopted to spark their interest in education.

Akanksha Rana, officer on special duty for the Kumbh Mela Authority, highlighted the broader vision: "We plan to establish Vidya Kumbh schools in all 25 sectors of Mahakumbh Nagar. This initiative not only ensures education but also builds a sense of community and care." The children also receive nutritious mid-day meals, with a dedicated dining area ensuring they remain healthy and energized throughout the day.

The Vidya Kumbh initiative reflects the state government's focus on inclusive development during Mahakumbh 2025, which is expected to witness millions of devotees from across the globe.

## Consumer goods brands rush to grab eyeballs as pilgrims converge for holy dip at Mahakumbh

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

From putting products on display at stalls to setting up resting camps for pilgrims, consumer goods companies have been scrambling to showcase brands at Mahakumbh as devotees throng in record numbers to take a holy dip at Sangam - the confluence of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati. Top brands, including Dettol, Dabur, Pepsico, Coca-Cola, and corporate houses such as ITC and Reliance have set up camp ashrams, lined up their products, and are distributing samples and refreshments. The unmissable signage boards make one thing clear: the companies are expecting to make their presence felt in the coming days.

The brands -- which have been facing headwinds owing to multiple factors led by rising prices and tepid sales in urban markets -- are taking the Mahakumbh as an opportunity to directly engage with the consumers -- especially the rural

population -- and communicating with them through a host of special initiatives over 45-day-long events, in which about 40 crore people are estimated to attend.

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL), the FMCG arm of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries retail empire, is offering services and product availability of its consumer products to enhance the pilgrim journey. "This will include providing essential refreshments to ensure pilgrims remain hydrated and energised during their spiritual quest. Signage and directional boards are also being installed to assist pilgrims with clear, easy-to-read signages and branding to navigate the vast expanse of the event smoothly," said RCPL Chief Operating Officer Ketan Mody.

It will also operate 'aaram sthal' (resting areas), designated comfortable rest zones to offer pilgrims a moment to relax during their



long and often arduous journeys, he added. FMCG brand Reckitt through its flagship hygiene brand Dettol will support nearly 15,000 sanitation workers by

providing training programmes and making soaps accessible to them at Kumbh. It is also deploying health and hygiene volunteers across all

25 sectors of the Kumbh, offering on-ground support and guidance to the pilgrims, under the campaign 'Dettol Banega Swasth India'. "The Maha Kumbh Mela

2025 provides a unique opportunity to embed hygiene practices into one of India's most culturally significant events. We are delighted to take ahead our long-standing partnership with the Government of Uttar Pradesh and GIWA," said Reckitt -- South Asia Executive Vice President Gaurav Jain.

Home-grown FMCG firm Dabur said it has also planned a series of consumer engaging activities to strengthen connect with people during the Kumbh Mela. "We feel direct engagement with consumers during such traditional melas that helps us strengthen our bond with consumers. They, in turn, get the opportunity to touch, feel and experience our products. This reinforces their long-standing trust in the brand Dabur," Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra said.

In rural markets, success depends highly on how a brand is positioned and promoted. The greater the strategic attention to a unique demand, the greater the

chances of the product's success in rural pockets. "Since the Kumbh Mela is deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual traditions, brands that align their messaging with these values can create a stronger connection with the audience," he said.

Moreover, standing out in a crowded environment requires creativity and innovation. "While the space may seem cluttered, it actually offers companies the opportunity to get consumers to touch, feel and experience their brands and build greater connections. This will generate sales in the days to come," he said, adding, "Most of our key power brands like Dabur Chyawanprash, Dabur Honey, Dabur Red Paste, Dabur Amla Hair Oil, Vatika, Hajmola, and Honitus will be undertaking consumer activations at the Kumbh Mela."

Beverages major Coca-Cola will pair with its portfolio of beverages with local foods and flavours. "We are committed to creating social impact through multiple

initiatives at the event that showcase the potential of repurposed packaging and raise awareness about recycling to inspire collective action," said Coca-Cola India and South West Asia Vice President Marketing Greishma Singh.

Multi-conglomerate ITC sees the Mahakumbh as a unique spiritual, economic and cultural confluence, offering unparalleled opportunities for brands to engage with consumers. It has activated its Mangaldeep agarbatti (incense sticks) and packaged food brand Bingo. "ITC's FMCG brands, including Bingo! and Mangaldeep, are leveraging this opportunity to connect with the masses through experiential initiatives at the mega event. Through its consumer connect initiative, Bingo will bring the local culture of Uttar Pradesh to life at the brand's activity booth with initiatives such as creating reels on famous local songs using traditional props and offering fusion dishes," said an ITC spokesperson.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Wildfires: A call for action

Los Angeles fires ravage city as President-elect Trump prepares for second term amid climate change controversy

As President-elect Donald Trump prepares to assume office for his second term, the United States faces devastation from the Los Angeles fires, which have claimed several lives and caused billions of dollars in damages. Trump has maintained that there is no such thing like climate change and has even withdrawn from Paris climate agreement. He has been fighting developing countries and even its own allies over climate change. The Los Angeles fires a direct consequence of climate change must come as an eye-opener to the president-elect. The city has become a focal point for devastating wildfires, which have grown in intensity and frequency over the past few decades. The wildfires of recent years, including the catastrophic ones in 2023, serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to address the underlying factors fueling these disasters and to build a more resilient future. Wildfires in Los Angeles and the broader Southern California region are driven by a confluence of factors: prolonged droughts, climate change, urban sprawl into fire-prone areas, and an accumulation of dry vegetation. The Los Angeles fires have destroyed several homes, displaced thousands of residents and led to several fatalities. The economic toll have reached billions of dollars, while the ecological damage will take decades to repair.

The increasing frequency and severity of wildfires are directly linked to climate change. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and shifting weather patterns create ideal conditions for fires to ignite and spread rapidly. These fires underscore the necessity of global and local actions to mitigate climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to renewable energy sources. One of the significant contributors to wildfire vulnerability is urban sprawl into wildland-urban interface areas. Accumulated dry vegetation acts as fuel for wildfires. The Los Angeles fires are a wake-up call for governments across the world. Addressing the wildfire crisis requires a multi-faceted approach that includes tackling climate change, revising urban development policies, investing in emergency preparedness and fostering community engagement. Los Angeles, like many other regions around the world, must learn to adapt to a man-made reality where wildfires are a persistent threat. By applying the lessons learned from past disasters, the city can build a safer, more resilient future for its residents and ecosystems. But for that to happen the decisions must be taken at the highest level and the world leaders must bury the hatchet and come to an agreement that something concrete needs to be done to mitigate the climate disaster. It is a universal problem affecting all of us so a unified action alone can curb this menace. The Los Angeles fires might prompt Donald Trump to consider the importance of taking action for the greater good, rather than focusing solely on appeasing his supporters.

### PICTALK



A woman makes 'rangoli' during 'Pongal' festival celebrations, in Chikkamagaluru

# Women breaking the glass ceiling

Women are all set to break the barriers at the highest level as the Vatican and Canada brace up for the top post for a lady



KALYANI SHANKAR

Two dramatic announcements were made last week that could significantly advance women's empowerment worldwide. The first was a historic decision from the Vatican, which saw Pope Francis appoint Sister Simona Brambilla as the prefect for the first time.

This 59-year-old Consolata Missionary, previously the second-in-command of the order department, has created history. Her position corrects the gender imbalance to a certain extent. Sister Brambilla's appointment is seen as a progressive step forward. This position, long considered a male domain, is now open to women for the first time. She will oversee all religious orders within the Catholic Church, a significant step forward since no woman has held this prestigious position before. Thus, the contribution by women to the Church is at last acknowledged and an essential precedent for further empowerment of women. Incidentally, a significant Vatican summit brought Catholic leaders worldwide not long ago.

It addressed the importance of enhancing women's leadership roles, among other issues—important representatives from over 100 countries, including Cardinals and Bishops. It also considered a proposal concerning women deacons. Again, Pope Francis granted the women in the Church the right to vote for the first time two years ago, in line with his commitment to advancing women within the Church in decision-making roles. It also promoted gender equality within the Church and women's participation at the highest levels. The Pope had also set up two Vatican Commissions on the potential ordination of women as deacons. The second dramatic announcement was the resignation of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and, subsequently, the race to become Prime Minister. It has all the potential to elect a woman Prime Minister. After a decade in power marked by both successes and challenges, Trudeau's resignation had been dramatic. Ten years ago Trudeau began with great promise but ended amid mounting difficulties



at home and abroad. He faced challenges such as inflation, housing issues, and immigration, which weakened the Liberal Party. After Trudeau's resignation, senior leaders in the Liberal Party, including Anita Anand, the current transport minister, were preparing to replace him. Anand, a senior party member, was born in rural Nova Scotia and moved to Ontario in 1985. She was first elected as the MP for Oakville in 2019 and has held various significant roles, including Minister of Public Services and Procurement, President of the Treasury Board, and Minister of National Defence. Anand missed the chance of making history as Canada's first female Prime Minister of colour and Indian descent. It would have potentially marked a significant shift in women's empowerment in Canadian politics. However, she withdrew from the race on Sunday to return to her academic career, disappointing her supporters. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne are potential contenders to succeed Trudeau. Canada has a



IF CANADA ELECTS A WOMAN, IT WOULD CORRECT THE GENDER IMBALANCE DESPITE WOMEN HOLDING ESSENTIAL PORTFOLIOS LIKE DEFENCE AND FINANCE

record 103 female MPs, including 22 elected in the 2021 federal election. Other frontrunners include former central banker Mark Carney, whose recent resignation prompted Trudeau's exit. Candidates must declare their intent and pay a \$350,000 entry fee by January 23. So far, Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc and Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly have withdrawn from the race to focus on their duties, with Anita also recently bowing out. The challenges Trudeau's successor will face, including repairing strained international relations and managing domestic policy issues, underscore the urgent need for a leader with a clear vision and strong leadership skills. Indians are interested in Canada because of the large Indian diaspora. Recently, tensions between India and Canada have escalated after Prime Minister Trudeau accused India of involvement in the shooting of a Khalistani terrorist in Surrey in June 2023. In retaliation, India stopped issuing new visas to Canadians and asked Canada to reduce its diplomatic presence. In contrast to Trudeau, India hopes for a pro-

India Prime Minister. If Canada elects a woman, it would correct the gender imbalance despite women holding essential portfolios like Defence and Finance. The election of a woman as the next Prime Minister could mark a significant milestone in Canadian politics, furthering the cause of women's empowerment and challenging traditional gender roles in leadership. Trudeau's successor will inherit a lot of problems. There are tensions between the US and India. One of the critical tasks will be to repair strains in foreign policy issues. There is also a lot of backlog in the immigration. On the domestic side, Canada's Liberal Party faced internal problems, which led to Trudeau's exit. The election results will be available on March 8. In the meantime, the election landscape is becoming more transparent, as leaders like Anita Anand have already withdrawn from the race. It is also interesting to note that Vice President Kamala Harris won in the 2020 polls. The US has yet to elect a woman president.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BORDER FENCING DISPUTE

Madam — Apropos to the article "India summons Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner." The escalation of tensions along the India-Bangladesh border is yet another reflection of the low point in bilateral ties between two neighbouring countries. Bangladesh's concern over India's efforts to fence the international boundary to stem smuggling and other transnational crimes is misplaced, especially since there have been several attempts by smugglers and traffickers from the Bangladeshi side to transgress the border.

But India is well within its rights to construct fencing in porous sections of the border to prevent transnational crimes in the wake of stray incidents of violence, including firing reported from along the border, especially in West Bengal. The key aim of fencing the India-Bangladesh border is cracking down on smuggling and streamlining the legitimate movement of goods and people. However, there are mechanisms in place to address these issues, and if necessary, these can be revisited to make them work more effectively. Meanwhile, it would be foolish to undo all the achievements of the past and create another point of dispute in a relationship that is already weighed down because of the new political dynamics in Dhaka. More than addressing the immediate irritants on the border, the two sides need to take further steps to arrest the slide in the overall relationship and prevent new areas of divergence.

N Sadasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

### CEASEFIRE IN SIGHT

Madam — An encouraging piece of news has emerged once again from Gaza. Hamas has recently agreed to release some of the Israeli citizens it has been holding hostage. Discussions between Hamas and Israeli officials had been ongoing for several days regarding this matter. On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a sudden attack

### BCCI disallows spouse travel with team



The step taken by the BCCI to improve the performance of the Indian cricket team is both positive and visionary. After facing consecutive defeats, the BCCI has decided to prohibit players from taking their families along on foreign tours to ensure discipline and main-

tain focus. This decision is a significant step toward enhancing the team's mental and physical health. When all team members unite and focus solely on the game, their performance is bound to improve.

Spending time with family is important, but during tournaments, undivided attention on the game is essential. This decision will not only strengthen players' mindsets but also fortify team spirit. It will create a healthy competitive environment, motivating players to deliver their best. Additionally, spending more time with team management and coaching staff will refine their strategies and skills. This decision, taken with players' long-term careers and national pride in mind, will instill professional discipline and inspire them to stay goal-oriented. In the long run, this will prove beneficial for Indian cricket.

R K Jain | Barwani

### INDIA ENGAGES WITH AFGHANISTAN

Madam — India's ties with Afghanistan have been strong for a long time. However, over the last four years, the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan has slightly strained these relations. The recent meeting between India's foreign secretary and Afghanistan's acting foreign minister in Dubai might help strengthen the bond once again. It is essential for India to maintain close relations with Afghanistan, regardless of who is in power. Currently, both Afghanistan and the Taliban are at odds with Pakistan, especially after Pakistan's recent attack on the Afghanistan border, which has further strained their relations. Geopolitically, this situation benefits India, as Pakistan's focus on its border with Afghanistan reduces its capacity to infiltrate India with terrorists. Strengthening ties with the Taliban-led Afghanistan and extending support could help India reduce its security concerns.

Priya Thakur | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The timeless value of soft skills in the fast-paced world

In a world that often uses wealth and appearances as markers of success, the true essence of human interaction—soft skills—frequently takes a backseat

We are often judged by factors that may not be relevant in the long run. Wealth, physical features, the name of the school or college we attended, flashy clothes, and many more, are the parameters used to measure our success. We forget that soft skills are equally, if not more, important. I waited patiently for my turn in the check-in queue at the airport during a recent visit to Mumbai.



The young lady behind the counter handed the boarding pass to the passenger and guided her to walk some distance to get a wheelchair. The older lady cryptically remarked that the wheelchair was expected to come to her instead of the other way around. The counter girl looked clueless. Later in the evening, I walked over to the express check-in counter at the hotel. I waited patiently as the gentleman bent down to retrieve something before completing my formalities. Another counter lady walked by looking at me. Since the man did not resurface even after a lapse of time, I looked at the gentleman behind the adjoining table, who offered

to assist me, explaining that the computer system at the other counter was not working. None from the crowd at the reception had bothered to assist me. The private company I worked for won laurels year after year as the best employer. I wondered about the criteria for the evaluation, more so since I saw many of the executives quitting the company and dissatisfied with the working conditions. The HR employees responsible for implementing all the right words in the rulebook failed to decipher the basic principles of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. All three companies are reputed names in the private sector.

They recruit people with the best credentials from the best business schools or the best in the hospitality industry. One would expect them to understand soft skills, unlike those working in the government sector. I was witness to and on the receiving end of a raid by an enforcement agency while working in a private company. The officials barged into the office accompanied by uniformed policemen. Orders were rudely barked at me not to touch the telephone. My mobile phone was snatched from my hands. The officials remained in the office for more than 24 hours during which I, and the other team members, were not allowed to contact our families. We were made to feel like criminals for no reason. I was recently stopped by a traffic policeman after I had crossed a legitimate green traffic signal. I was perplexed. Another policeman sauntered over to ask me the reasons for my arguing with the other official. He rudely reprimanded me when I showed my ignorance of the matter. The

policeman had stopped me apparently for crossing the red signal. Fortunately for me, there were cameras at the crossing, which proved my innocence. We face a similar lack of soft skills in our personal lives. Decades earlier, my wife and I were not given a table for lunch at a famous restaurant in Delhi. We were a newly wedded young couple and were probably not dressed the same way as their regular clientele. An attractive personality, a good education and a good job are enough for parents to settle marriages of daughters to strangers, not knowing if the young man will treat the girl well. There are countless examples. I was taught to be a good human being. The children of today are more intelligent and smart. All that we need to do is to teach them to be a better person each succeeding day. Soft skills will follow.



SANJAY CHANDRA

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)





## FIRST COLUMN THE POWER OF POSITIVE SELF-TALK

It comes handy when the pursuit of happiness is interrupted by challenges



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

All of us have a deep desire to be in a state of happiness forever. But it's quite difficult to find someone who is truly blessed, to remain always happy. Isn't it? The fact is that for most of us, the happy times are often broken by periodic sorrow or disappointment. It has been observed that a prerequisite for happiness is success in all our endeavours. Therefore, all of us go to great lengths to ensure that we succeed in everything we do. But unfortunately here too, things don't go the way we want them to.



train a thought to work in our favour? Is it possible? Yeah! It is. The only thing that we need to do is to make our thoughts as pure and positive as those of the Almighty Supreme who transforms this world from one of sorrow and misery to one of peace and happiness with just a seed of powerful thought. A simple way to begin this process of transformation is to use asseveration. An asseveration is a resolute statement that we make to ourselves.

All of us use it intentionally or unintentionally throughout our day. When we wake up with a positive thought like "I feel great", that is a positive asseveration. On the other day if we drag ourselves out of bed in the morning and whimper: "Ohh I feel drowsy", that is a negative asseveration. We must understand that both these statements help us to maintain the emotional state that we are in. Majority of the people across the world do not give much importance to self-talk, i.e. the things that we say to ourselves. It is indeed a very important part of our lives because it deeply affects our conscious and subconscious minds. Remember! We listen to everything we say to ourselves consciously or subconsciously. Because our asseveration works so well to create and maintain our state of mind, we can use it cleverly to change our state of mind to our best advantage.

There is no doubt that it takes a lot of effort and time, but with persistence, asseverations can become a strong tool to make our outlook and life healthier and happier. We can either create or maintain a powerful state of mind with positive asseverations or use them to counter our negative self-talk. Let's say you are running for a half marathon. Despite all the preparations, you tend to lose rhythm and get into some snag. All of a sudden your confidence sags and you catch yourself thinking "I can't do this. I shouldn't have registered for a half marathon. My capacity is too low. I am too weak as compared to others." All this negative thinking, if allowed to persist, will guarantee that you fail. You can make up some positive asseverations to counter this thinking. Like, you might think, "I feel confident, I can do this, Slow and Steady wins the Race." If you repeat this several times, you will soon start feeling better & achieve your desired goal. While using this self-motivation technique of asseveration, we become more conscious of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and start feeling better about ourselves. The only thing that we need to remember is "Never to give up", because however slow the results may seem to be coming, these techniques give us greater control of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour, putting us in charge of our lives. (The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

# The communication crossroads of 2025



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

With disinformation on the rise and the human connection often overshadowed by algorithms, the question looms: Are we fostering understanding, or fueling division?



In 2025, the world is navigating a labyrinth of communication complexities. From geopolitical tensions to the pervasive influence of technology, communication strategies are at the centre of global stability—or instability.

As the tools of interaction evolve, so too do the challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities they present. Are we prepared for what lies ahead, or are we hurtling toward a crisis of our own making? The challenges of communication in 2025 are markedly different from those a decade ago. Geopolitical dynamics have shifted, with nations leveraging digital platforms as both tools of diplomacy and instruments of disinformation. The lines between statecraft and cyber influence are blurred, creating a volatile ecosystem where words carry as much weight as weapons. The rise of artificial intelligence and algorithm-driven content has exacerbated these challenges. While these tools offer unprecedented efficiency, they also prioritize engagement metrics over truth. The result is an overabundance of sensationalist, clickbait content that often prioritises superficiality over substance. In this cacophony, nuanced perspectives and deeply researched narratives are drowned out, leaving the global audience vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation. The role of media as the "fourth estate" has never been more critical—or more scrutinized. In an era of hyper-connectivity, the media's ability to shape public perception and influence geopolitical outcomes is unparalleled. But with great power comes great responsibility. Shouldn't media foster positive and conscious impact? Shouldn't it hold itself accountable for the narratives it propagates? Unfortunately, the race for clicks and views often overshadows these ideals. The prevalence of sensationalist headlines, shallow analysis, and polarised reporting erodes trust in media institutions. This calls for a renewed focus on media literacy—not just for consumers but for creators as well.



OVERHYPED NARRATIVES INFLATE MINOR ISSUES INTO CRISES, OVERSTRETCHED RESOURCES DILUTE THE QUALITY OF CONTENT, AND OVERIMAGINED SOLUTIONS PROMISE MORE THAN THEY CAN DELIVER. TOGETHER, THESE TENDENCIES CREATE A COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT RIFE WITH MISTRUST AND MIS-UNDERSTANDING

Journalists, editors, and content creators must be sensitised to the implications of their work, while audiences must be equipped to critically evaluate the information they consume. In dissecting modern communication challenges, one troubling trend emerges: superficial solutions to complex problems. Whether it's a rushed headline, an oversimplified tweet, or a reductive policy announcement, brevity often comes at the cost of depth.

While the demand for digestible content is understandable, it risks trivialising critical issues and fostering a culture of intellectual complacency. To counter this, there is an urgent need for robust communication evaluation strategies. Independent evaluators should assess the quality, accuracy, and impact of information disseminated by platforms, news outlets, and governments. This would not only enhance accountability but also restore faith in the integrity of communication. The phenomenon of the "3Os"—overhyped, overstretched, and overimagined—poses a significant threat to effective communication in 2025.

Overhyped narratives inflate minor issues into crises, overstretched resources dilute the quality of content, and overimagined solutions promise more than they can deliver. Together, these tendencies create a communication environment rife with mistrust and misunderstanding. In geopolitics, this can have disastrous consequences. Overhyped tensions can escalate conflicts, overstretched diplomacy can falter under scrutiny, and overimagined strategies can fail to address the realities on the ground. To mitigate these risks, communication must be grounded in authenticity, clarity, and purpose. Despite these challenges,

there is hope. The rapid evolution of communication technologies offers opportunities for better synergy and collaboration. Tools like multilingual AI models, real-time translation software, and immersive virtual platforms can bridge cultural and linguistic divides, fostering a greater understanding of geopolitics. However, these tools must be wielded with care. Over-reliance on algorithms and automation can lead to a loss of human connection and empathy. The human element in communication—context, emotion, and nuance—remains irreplaceable. To ensure these tools are used effectively, their deployment must be guided by ethical frameworks and human oversight. When it comes to India, the nation stands as a dynamic force in efficient geopolitics and communication, blending tradition with innovation. With its rich heritage of diverse narratives and its growing role as a voice for the Global South, India's communication outreach is uniquely positioned to bridge cultural and ideological divides.

The country's influence has expanded far beyond its borders, particularly through its active participation in multilateral forums like the G20, BRICS, and the United Nations. India's emphasis on South-South cooperation and its role as a leader in digital innovation makes it a fertile ground for reshaping global communication paradigms. By championing inclusive narratives and fostering dialogue on issues critical to the Global South—such as climate justice, sustainable development, equitable access to technology, and strengthening the education system—India leverages its communication landscape to promote solidarity and shared growth among developing nations. As a

communication powerhouse, India's strategies offer a template for balancing tradition and innovation, providing hope for a more connected and empathetic world. Looking ahead, the most profound paradigm shift in communication lies in its potential to resolve, rather than exacerbate, conflicts. In a world marked by division, the ability to convey messages of reconciliation, empathy, and cooperation is invaluable. Governments, media, and technology companies must prioritise communication strategies that unite rather than divide. For instance, collaborative storytelling initiatives could bring together voices from conflicting regions to share common experiences. Platforms could amplify narratives of peacebuilding and resilience, while governments could invest in cultural diplomacy to foster mutual understanding. The communication landscape of 2025 is a double-edged sword. While challenges like misinformation, and superficiality loom large, the potential for positive transformation is equally significant.

To navigate this precarious moment, we must prioritize media literacy, accountability, and ethical use of technology. We must move away from shallow, divisive narratives and embrace depth, authenticity, and empathy. The question is not whether we have the tools to create meaningful change, it is whether we have the will to use them wisely. In an age of unprecedented connectivity, the power of communication lies not in the tools themselves but in how we choose to wield them. The future depends on our ability to communicate with clarity, conscience, and care.

(The writer is a former civil servant; Views are personal. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad)

## California's wildfire tragedy: A wake-up call for India's forest fire management

The Los Angeles disaster underscores the growing wildfire risks in India due to climate change and human activity

For the past week, firefighters in Los Angeles have been locked in a desperate battle against devastating wildfires, which have claimed numerous lives and forced the evacuation of over 200,000 residents. Driven by powerful Santa Ana winds and prolonged drought conditions, these fires have scorched hundreds of square kilometers, wreaking havoc in densely populated areas like Pacific Palisades and Altadena. This disaster has left homes, places of worship, and critical infrastructure in ruins, forcing many into shelters and leaving thousands without electricity. The financial toll of these fires is staggering, estimated between \$135 billion and \$150 billion, making this one of the most economically destructive



SATENDRA

wildfires in US history. Beyond the immediate destruction, the long-term effects are profound: soil degradation, harm to water systems, loss of wildlife, and deteriorating air quality. Moreover, the vast carbon emissions from these fires will intensify global climate change,

further exacerbating the environmental crisis. This catastrophe serves as a stark warning for India. According to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, climate change will likely worsen drought conditions and elevate temperatures in forested areas of South Asia, including India, thereby increasing the risk of wildfires. To address these emerging challenges, India must overhaul its forest fire management strategies, drawing on lessons from global experiences like California's recent tragedy. India's forest cover is already under significant pressure from human activities and changing climatic conditions. The Forest Survey of India (FSI) reveals that 36 per cent of Indian forests are classified as highly, very highly, or



extremely vulnerable to fires. Regions such as the Northeast, Garhwal Himalayas, and Central India are particularly at risk. Alarming, over 90 per cent of forest fires in the country are attributed to human actions, ranging from negligence to deliberate acts. California's wildfire crisis underscores the urgent need to rethink existing forest fire management strategies to address the evolving challenges posed by changing climatic and socio-economic conditions. With its rich biodiversity and diverse forest ecosystems, India stands to gain valuable insights from such disasters. Developing a comprehensive strategy that prioritises effective early warning systems, robust governance, institu-

tional collaboration, and increased investment in research and development is crucial to safeguarding India's forests. A national action plan aligned with international frameworks like the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction would significantly enhance India's

ability to manage forest fire risks. Understanding the dynamics of disasters is essential to mitigating these risks. Conducting vulnerability assessments at both meso- and micro-levels can help identify high-risk zones. Investment in research and development, in collaboration with national and international organisations, can advance technologies for fire detection, prediction, and suppression. Enhancing governance in forest fire management is equally critical. Updated policy frameworks should integrate forest fire management into disaster management plans at both national and state levels. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and field manuals must be revised and

streamlined to support effective detection, reporting, and management of forest fires. Establishing a dedicated National Institute of Forest Fire Management could strengthen training programmes for forest officials, community members, and other stakeholders, while fostering better coordination among forest departments, disaster management agencies, and local communities. Building resilience is paramount. Leveraging advanced technologies like drones, artificial intelligence, and satellite monitoring systems can significantly improve early detection and suppression efforts. Creating a national Air Operation Wing to handle aerial firefighting operations would enable rapid responses

to fires. Capacity-building initiatives, such as training sessions and mock drills, would equip forest personnel and local communities with essential firefighting skills and SOPs. Collaboration with international research institutions to develop innovative solutions—such as replacing non-native tree species with indigenous, fire-resistant varieties and creating eco-friendly fire suppression methods—can further strengthen forest resilience and sustainability. Establishing a national forest fire knowledge network would facilitate the sharing of best practices, research findings, and innovative approaches. (The writer is former executive director of the National Institute of Disaster Management; views are personal)



# Authorities take impeached Prez Yoon to detention centre

PTI ■ SEOUL

South Korea's impeached President, Yoon Suk Yeol, was sent to a detention centre near Seoul on Wednesday night, after being questioned by anti-corruption officials who took him into custody over his imposition of martial law last month.

Yoon was detained in a major law enforcement operation at the presidential compound earlier in the day. Yoon defiantly insisted that the country's anti-corruption agency, which led the raid with police, didn't have the authority to investigate his actions, but said he complied to prevent violence.

Yoon, the country's first sitting president to be apprehended, now faces the prospect of a lengthy prison term over potential rebellion charges.

In a video message recorded shortly before he was escorted to the headquarters of the anti-corruption agency, Yoon lamented the "rule of law has completely collapsed in this country".

Yoon had been holed up in the Hannam-dong residence in the capital, Seoul, for weeks while vowing to "fight to the end" the efforts to oust him. He has justified his declara-

tion of martial law December 3 as a legitimate act of governance against an "anti-state" opposition employing its legislative majority to thwart his agenda.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials said Yoon was brought into custody about five hours after investigators arrived at the presidential compound and about three hours after they successfully entered the residence, in their second attempt to detain him over his imposition of martial law.

A series of black SUVs, some equipped with sirens, were seen leaving the presidential compound with police escorts.

Yoon was later seen stepping out of a vehicle after arriving at the agency's office in the nearby city of Gwacheon.

Hundreds of Yoon's conservative supporters rallied near the anti-corruption agency's office as he underwent questioning, shouting slogans and holding signs that read: "We will fight alongside President Yoon Suk Yeol."

Also on Wednesday, an unidentified man was in life-threatening condition after an apparent self-immolation near the site, according to the Gyeonggi provincial fire



Investigators from the state anti-corruption agency and police officers make their way to the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol to execute a warrant to detain Yoon in Seoul, South Korea on Wednesday. AP/PTI

department.

After he was questioned for more than 10 hours, a vehicle carrying Yoon arrived at a detention center in Uiwang, near Seoul, escorted by police and presidential security vehicles.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**  
Yoon could be held in custody for weeks, possibly even months or longer. The anti-corruption agency,

which is leading a joint investigation with the police and the military over whether Yoon's martial law declaration amounted to an attempted rebellion, has 48 hours to request a court order for his formal arrest.

If it fails to do so, Yoon will be released. If Yoon is formally arrested, investigators can extend his detention to 20 days before transferring the case to public prosecutors for

indictment.

If prosecutors indict Yoon on rebellion and abuse of power charges, which are the allegations examined by investigators, he could possibly remain under arrest until the initial court ruling, which is typically made within six months, said Park Sung-bae, an attorney specialising in criminal law.

Under South Korean law, the leader of a rebellion can face

the death penalty or life imprisonment, if convicted. "If the first court hands down a prison sentence, the detention simply continues," Park said. "If they sentence him to life imprisonment, for example, he continues serving that sentence straight through."

Yoon's defence minister, police chief and several top military commanders already had been arrested over their roles in the enforcement of martial law.

The detention warrant for Yoon, issued by the Seoul Western District Court, said there were substantial reasons to suspect that he committed crimes as a "ringleader of a rebellion".

The anti-corruption agency told reporters that Yoon, during several hours of questioning through Wednesday evening, exercised his right to remain silent.

Yoon's presidential powers were suspended when parliament impeached him on December 14. The impeachment case now rests with the Constitutional Court, which could formally remove Yoon from office or reject the case and reinstate him.

In a separate message posted on his Facebook account after he was detained, Yoon said that "martial law is not a

crime", saying his declaration was necessary to raise awareness about an opposition that was exercising "legislative dictatorship by blocking laws and budgets" and "paralysing" state affairs. He denied the rebellion accusations, describing his impeachment as "fraud".

As they began the detention operation in the early morning, the anti-corruption investigators and police officers engaged in an hours-long standoff at the compound's gate with presidential security forces, but otherwise encountered no meaningful resistance.

Police officers were seen using wire cutters to remove the barbed wire placed by the presidential security service on the perimeter of the compound to block their entry. Some police officers used ladders to climb over rows of buses blocking the compound's entrance, and then the investigators began moving up the hilly compound. The investigators and police later arrived in front of a metal gate with a gold presidential mark that's near Yoon's residential building. Some officers were seen entering a security door on the side of the metal gate, joined by one of Yoon's

lawyers and his chief of staff, before Yoon was driven out.

South Korea's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, issued a statement early Wednesday urging law enforcement and the presidential security service to ensure there were no "physical clashes".

Following Yoon's detention, Choi met with diplomats from the Group of Seven nations, including the United States, Japan, the UK and Germany, as well as the representative of the European Union, to reassure them that the government was functioning with stability. Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which drove the legislative campaign to impeach Yoon, said that Yoon's detention was the "first step toward restoring constitutional order, democracy, and realising the rule of law".

Lawmakers from Yoon's People Power Party condemned the detention as unlawful. The National Police Agency met with field commanders in Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi province in recent days to plan their efforts to detain Yoon, and the size of those forces fuelled speculation that more than 1,000 officers could be deployed.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,**  
**EASTERN CIRCLE-II, CHANDIKHOLE**  
Email ID: - [seec2chandikhole@gmail.com](mailto:seec2chandikhole@gmail.com)  
"e" Procurement Notice No. ACE, EC-II, 05 of 2024-25 (On-line)

1.	Name of Work	: Work list attached in the Technical Bid Document.
2.	Total No. of package	: 15 nos. individual package.
3.	Tender Cost of Packages varies from	: Rs.206.19 Lakhs to Rs.787.60 Lakhs
4.	Cost of Bid Document	: Rs.10,000/- (On-line Payment)
5.	Bid Security varies from	: Rs.2,06,200/- to Rs.7,87,600/-
6.	Class of Contractor	: "A" Class & "Special" Class for SI. No.1&2 and "B" & "A" Class for SI.No.3 to SI.No.15 of Work list attached in the Bid Document
7.	Period of completion	: 12 (Twelve) Calendar months for packages SI. No.1&2 & 06 (Six) Calendar Months for packages for SI. No.3 to 15

8. Other details are as follows.

Procurement Officer	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
Additional Chief Engineer, Eastern Circle-II, Chandikhole	From 16/01/2025 at 10 AM To 30/01/2025 up to 5.00 PM	31/01/2025 at 11.30 AM

9. e-mail id : [seec2chandikhole@gmail.com](mailto:seec2chandikhole@gmail.com)  
10. Further detailed conditions can be seen from the Govt. website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)  
11. Any corrigendum/addendum/cancellation of tender to the above notice if any can be seen from the above website.

OIPR-32322/11/0010/2425

Additional Chief Engineer Eastern Circle-II, Chandikhole

## Dire fire warning for LA area pushed back as winds ease

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

Easing winds delivered a brief but much-needed reprieve to firefighters Tuesday as they battled two massive blazes burning in the Los Angeles area, and the National Weather Service pushed back its unusually dire warning of critical fire weather until early the following day.

Forecasters said the winds were below danger levels in the evening, but they were expected to strengthen overnight with potentially fire-fuelling gusts. Red flag warnings remained in effect from Central California to the Mexican border until late



Trucks drive through a neighborhood destroyed by the Eaton Fire, Tuesday, in Altadena, Calif. AP/PTI

afternoon Wednesday. Winds increased Tuesday but

not to the near-hurricane-force levels that were predicted to

happen earlier in the day. Still the danger was not over, officials said. "Key message: We are not out of the woods yet," the National Weather Service in Los Angeles said in a post on social media. "The winds underperformed today, but one more enhancement could happen tonight-tomorrow."

This round of Santa Ana winds was not expected to be as mighty as last week, but they could carry fire-sparking embers for miles and stoke new outbreaks in a region where at least 25 people have already been killed. Firefighters have made more progress on the Palisades Fire, the largest and

most stubborn blaze. CalFire Operations Section Chief Christian Litz said he took a helicopter ride around the perimeter and saw no active flames, though it was far from over.

Nearly 90,000 households lost electricity as utilities shut off power to prevent their lines from sparking new blazes. Weary and anxious residents were told to be ready to flee at a moment's notice. They remained vigilant, keeping an eye on the skies and on each other: Police announced roughly 50 arrests, for looting, flying drones in fire zones, violating curfew and other crimes.

S. No.	Account Name	Client ID	No. of Ac.	Bal. Outstanding as on 14/01/2025	Weight (grams)
<b>ASHOK VIHAR - DELHI</b>					
1	Laxmi W/o Piri Swami	599165	003	6,97,016.81	161.69
2	Mahendra Kumar	376077	003	8,20,720.60	155.23
3	Sanjay	4153268	001	2,11,639.53	41.85
4	Shila	4205940	002	3,31,694.58	81.09
5	Sunita Joseph	4562406	002	1,95,665.88	38.98
6	Vinayak Aggarwal	4664042	001	7,14,833.70	127.83
7	Sunil	4715057	002	1,96,826.14	41.07
8	Charu Soni	4720204	001	128,600.82	22.53
9	Charu	4765767	001	71,033.94	14.13
10	Prem Ranjan Kumar	4768892	001	65,331.19	12.09
11	Sugandhi	4798608	001	1,12,749.20	26.38
12	Surender Kumar	4803888	001	51,862.70	9.73
13	Sita Devi	4893599	001	73,592.90	13.72
14	Sunita Aggarwal	7093234	002	7,36,476.86	135.06
15	Ravi Verma	7164844	001	73,434.00	13.09
<b>GREATER KALASH - II</b>					
16	Trilochan Singh	3735533	001	1,09,232.94	22.05
17	Akash Gupta	4627248	001	45,165.10	9.20
18	Anresh Devi	4640175	001	1,10,852.36	24.00
19	Manju Sharma	4736669	001	2,15,678.98	54.15
20	Raju	4780502	001	1,06,589.22	22.22
21	Baljeet Kaur	4901130	001	1,07,579.26	23.24
22	Nisha Anil Badgujar	4911020	001	49,450.00	9.05
<b>KAROL BAGH</b>					
23	Bijender Mehra	4102974	001	2,95,089.94	56.35
24	Heera Lal	4350732	001	3,50,252.64	13.98
25	Sunita Pandey	4357369	001	5,00,571.66	65.96
26	Chaya	4566069	002	97,904.30	23.05
27	Sahil Anand	4566101	001	7,85,357.17	137.04
28	Gurmeet Singh	4696040	001	2,11,537.76	41.12
29	Muran	4897373	001	1,39,122.52	28.61
30	Rajmohan	4907406	001	1,54,278.98	30.36
31	Md Sabir Uddin	4908884	001	1,47,202.64	26.15
32	Suresh	4910790	001	1,40,971.17	25.22
33	Gaurav Parmar	4912818	001	2,10,333.75	38.71
34	Sohan Lal	4918837	002	7,57,050.40	140.29
35	Nishant	7989359	001	5,20,933.38	106.26
36	Anil Kumar	7985261	001	98,973.84	19.92
37	Zareen Fatma	7988143	002	7,52,270.04	148.95
38	Ashish Gupta	7989994	001	88,711.90	20.53
39	Shri Ram Singh	7992819	001	4,02,034.60	75.42
40	Himanshu Raj	7993240	004	10,23,550.37	207.66
41	Nitin Sonkar	7994298	001	3,50,772.86	61.32
42	Nisha	8100365	001	74,819.16	13.92
43	Phoolwati	8102126	001	1,95,575.56	38.76
<b>OKHLA</b>					
44	Bharat Bharat	4198910	003	4,33,536.16	97.99
45	Nabin Kumar Shaw	4235743	003	1,78,295.74	36.39
46	Ramveer Baghel	4364983	001	1,60,914.10	31.33
47	Raju Raju	4476108	001	97,656.25	20.79
48	Raj Kumar	4424645	002	93,203.84	19.15
49	Mukesh Kumar	4819770	001	87,878.90	17.65
50	Mohammad Alam Khan	4851907	002	6,24,610.30	116.40
51	Nisha	4841978	001	2,04,593.26	44.40
52	Copal Krishan Rampal	4910043	006	21,82,835.82	440.52
53	Nikhil Singh	4910651	003	1,42,400.84	115.92
54	Vaishnavi Bharat	4926346	001	6,42,956.64	114.60
55	Vivek Kumar	4930591	001	1,03,754.12	20.27
56	Nitu Kumari	4930657	001	1,07,397.56	27.57
57	Kamlesh Bishwal	7348086	001	1,22,776.12	26.47
58	Sonu Parihar	7428381	003	5,73,180.63	482.66
59	Manoj Kumar Wadhwa	7961310	001	27,612.41	102.67
60	Sonal Sharma	7972342	001	6,09,081.88	124.62
61	Sushil Bharat	7981219	001	3,95,379.48	131.00
62	Hansal	7993740	004	10,23,550.37	207.66
63	Manish Kumar	7998034	001	3,73,555.40	73.33
64	Garima	7998836	001	1,30,853.90	29.90
<b>MAYUR VIHAR - NEW DELHI</b>					
65	Vipin Kumar	4421735	001	4,34,448.75	9.84
66	Juhi Lal	4519531	002	2,43,369.62	51.31
67	Ravi Pal	4528993	002	1,13,420.23	42.33
68	Laxmi	4554009	001	44,117.00	9.55
69	Kalpna Verma	4562483	001	6,94,489.36	129.90
70	Vineeta	4562967	002	3,27,359.23	136.50
71	Pardeep Sharma	4865343	002	3,85,941.74	83.05
72	Gurmeet Kaur	4904784	001	2,10,799.10	37.90
73	Ram Chandar	7626042	001	1,25,324.44	24.99
74	Abdul Khalique	7637605	001	8,25,179.20	148.12
75	Shahana	7637732	001	3,91,803.32	148.80
76	Alina Khalique	7798225	001	7,09,024.09	61.00
77	Sanjay Gupta	7857965	001	4,62,205.76	99.82
78	Mostafa Baburi	7864766	001	6,29,130.03	146.80

79	Manglesh	7989827	001	3,34,329.91	105.85
80	Bablu	7995239	001	10,24,954.07	205.90
81	Sushant Patil	7997911	001	3,18,306.38	58.61
82	Shahrukh	7999917	001	76,357.84	15.10
<b>DILSHAD GARDEN</b>					
83	Mohd Akhlaq Akhlaq	4396304	001	3,51,647.49	69.93
84	Babu Shahi	4405333	001	1,06,326.74	19.36
85	Asha	4453641	004	3,55,877.86	71.80
86	Sonvir Singh	4455740	001	1,94,125.03	33.80
87	Zakir Hussain	4555781	002	82,285.88	15.32
88	Muskan	4569950	001	27,464.98	5.27
89	Sawan Kumar	4615120	001	3,76,484.12	72.40
90	Charanjeet Singh	4617154	001	37,971.96	6.77
91	Jai Bhagwan	4627312	001	12,05,352.38	232.56
92	Suman Lata	4630663	001	3,01,348.68	57.33
93	Mantu Parwat	4632917	001	2,81,385.22	62.91
94	Babali	4639722	001	8,25,620.14	144.63
95	Salman	4721069	001	1,11,722.19	22.81
96	Hari Om	4755011	001	3,91,855.10	79.71
97	Purushottam	4763612	001	1,91,699.01	42.32
98	Sabbu	4787339	003	17,66,124.96	322.09
99	Rimpy Sabharwal	4797604	004	7,39,424.36	139.95
100	Kavinder Singh	4797637	001	75,700.36	14.96
101	Ritika	4829857	001	2,06,172.12	37.68
102	Bhoomi	4869472	001	11,60,621.14	21.40
103	Suman	4894270	001	1,80,940.69	33.74
104	Rishabh Singhal	4895398	001	1,49,455.32	27.03
105	Suman Kumar	4903698	001	79,485.68	14.00
106	Tejpal Singh	4905672	002	2,19,399.47	46.78
107	Mitansh Kumar	4907258	001	25,528.54	5.62
108	Tamanna	4917520	001	1,49,541.41	31.75
109	Deepak Yadav	4917520	001	56,312.15	13.02
110	Viki Singh	4919763	001	30,317.24	6.69
111	Hasratul Parvin	4920585	001	27,508.14	5.61
112	Aameen	4923223	001	1,97,701.57	37.39
113	Sanjeev Kumar	4927286	001	1,89,047.33	33.48







# India's fiscal conditions to constrain credit strength in 2025: Moody's ratings

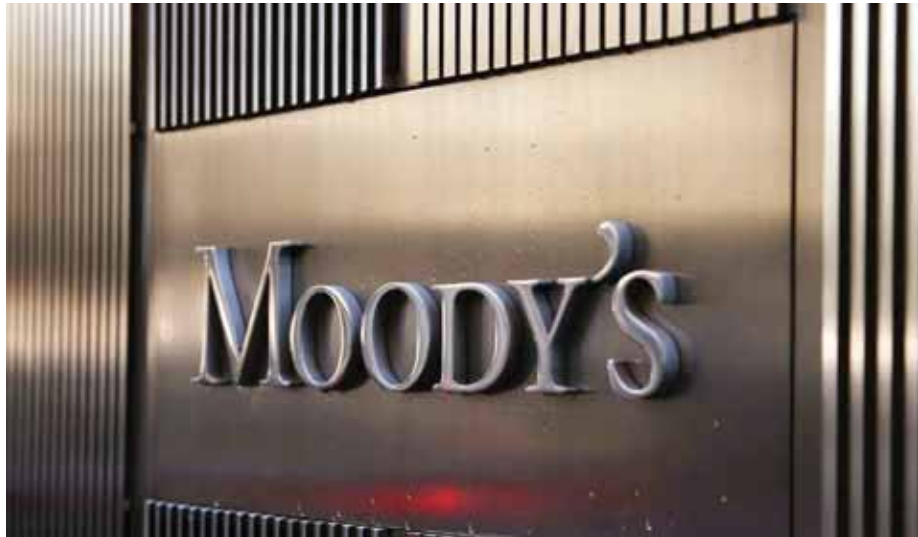
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fiscal conditions will continue to constrain its credit strength in 2025, although tension in US-China relations could benefit the Indian economy, Moody's Ratings said on Wednesday.

In its report on Asia Pacific Sovereigns, Moody's Ratings said growth and inflation are levelling out, with strong domestic demand bolstered by modest easing in global and regional financial conditions.

But proposed trade restrictions by the US would weaken economic output across the region.

"India's fiscal conditions will continue to constrain its credit strength in 2025. We expect only gradual fiscal consolidation, and debt to remain significantly higher



than the Baa-rated peer median of around 57 per cent," Moody's said. "Despite gains in revenue in recent years, we also expect

debt affordability to remain much weaker than rated peers," it added. It said politics and social unrest pose significant

economic and fiscal risks. In APAC, geopolitical risks will persist in 2025, flowing from tensions in the US-China relationship and around

regional hotspots.

Moody's assesses a low likelihood of military conflict in the Taiwan Strait or Korean Peninsula, and tensions will remain elevated, particularly driven by US-China relations.

"These tensions are shaping trade and investment flows, which may be further diverted away from China as the US tightens investment in strategic sectors, further weakening China's economy and dampening regional growth. However, this shift could benefit India and Southeast Asian economies," Moody's said.

A range of geopolitical and domestic political risks persist, it said, adding after elections in key economies, governments may need to make choices whether to fulfill pledges or to focus on fiscal consolidation.

# India to achieve 20 per cent ethanol blending target in two months, says Nitin Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will achieve its target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in the next two months, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday.

The practice of blending ethanol with petrol began in 2001 as a pilot project. "We will achieve this target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in the next two months."

Use of E20 (petrol with 20 per cent ethanol) will help in reducing pollution," Gadkari said while speaking at an event.

The road transport and highways minister said Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki, and Hyundai Motors have started manufacturing vehicles that run on 100 per cent bio-ethanol.

Gadkari said pollution is a serious problem in the country as 42 Indian cities are among 50 most-



polluted cities in the world. "We import fossil fuels worth Rs 22 lakh crore, which is also causing pollution," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the higher 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol in 2023. In the first phase, 15 cities were covered.

Use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help India -

the world's third largest oil consumer - bring down its reliance on overseas shipments. India is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs.

Use of E20 leads to an estimated reduction of carbon monoxide emissions by about 50 per cent in two-wheelers and about 30 per cent in four-wheelers compared to E0 (neat petrol).

# Vedanta Resources raises USD 1.1 Billion through dual tranche bond issuance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mining mogul Anil Agarwal's Vedanta Resources has raised USD 1.1 billion through a new bond offering to prepay existing liabilities, the company said in a Singapore exchange filing.

Vedanta Resources Finance II plc, a wholly owned subsidiary of Vedanta Resources, raised USD 1.1 billion through a new dual tranche issuance in international debt capital markets.

Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL) has raised USD 3.1 billion in USD bonds since September 2024.

As per the exchange filing, the latest bond issuance consists of two tranches - a USD 550 million tranche of 5.5 years tenor at a 9.475 per cent interest rate and a USD 550 million tranche of 8.25 years tenor at a 9.850 per cent interest rate.

Both tranches garnered strong investor demand with the bonds receiving final orders of USD 3.4 billion from over 135 accounts, representing an oversubscription of 3.1x, the company said.

"The net proceeds from the offering of the Bonds will be used to prepay Vedanta's outstanding bonds (including any accrued interest thereto), pay any related transaction costs in connection thereto and to service other debts," it said. Marquee investors from the United States, EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) and Asia were amongst the major investors.

Bonds are expected to be rated 'B' by S&P Global and 'B2' by Moody's Ratings. Moody's recently upgraded VRL corporate family rating (CFR) to B1 from B2 on the back of recent moves.

The final bonds allocation included 61 per cent from Asia, 30 per cent from EMEA, and 9 per cent from the US for the 5.5-Year Tranche and 54 per cent from Asia, 30 per cent from EMEA, and 16 per cent from the US for the 8.25-Year Tranche.

# Markets log gain for second day, Sensex climbs over 200 points



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty advanced for the second straight session on Wednesday, buoyed by buying in bellwether stock Reliance Industries, Zomato and Kotak Bank amid a largely firm trend in global markets.

However, elevated crude oil prices in the international markets and buying by foreign investors weighed on market sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE index climbed 224.45 points or 0.29 per cent to close at 76,724.08. During the day, it jumped 491.42 points or 0.64 per cent to 76,991.05.

As many as 2,150 stocks advanced while 1,806 declined and 108 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty advanced 37.15 points or 0.16 per cent to 23,213.20.

"The domestic market continues to be volatile on account of elevated US bond yields, strengthening dollar, and increasing FII outflows. Global markets are cautious

ahead of the US December CPI inflation data, which is anticipated to be in the elevated range in the short term, limiting the US Fed's ability to cut rates.

"Also, a rise in oil prices and dollar appreciation is likely to affect domestic inflation in the near future," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the Sensex blue-chip pack, Zomato jumped over 4 per cent. NTPC, Power Grid, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries and Adani Ports were the other big gainers.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.34 per cent, and the midcap index went up by 0.11 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, utilities jumped 2.45 per cent, power (1.75 per cent), realty (1.58 per cent), services (0.98 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.74 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.62 per cent).

# Exports contract one per cent in December, trade deficit narrows to USD 22 Billion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's exports in December 2024 contracted for the second month in a row by about one per cent year-on-year to USD 38.01 billion due to global uncertainties, while the trade deficit narrowed to USD 21.94 billion.

According to the commerce ministry data, imports rose by about 5 per cent year-on-year to USD 59.95 billion in December. Cumulatively, during April-December this fiscal, exports recorded a growth of 1.6 per cent to USD 321.71 billion and imports by 5.15 per cent to USD 532.48 billion. Trade deficit, the difference between imports and exports, during April-December widened to USD 210.77 billion from USD 189.74



billion during the same period previous fiscal. Briefing the media on the latest data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that India's

exports are doing better than other countries both in goods and services. "This shows resiliency of our exports. In all the three quarters of this this

fiscal also, we have done better. We are doing much better in non-petroleum exports," he told reporters here. The ministry has recently held a meeting with

commercial wings of Indian Missions in 20 countries to deliberate on issues impacting exports and ways to resolve them. These 20 countries account for about 60 per cent of India's exports. In December last year, Barthwa said sectors which have registered healthy growth in exports included electronics, engineering and pharmaceuticals.

When asked about the revision of gold and silver import data for November 2024, the secretary said a committee has been set up to create a robust mechanism for publishing consistent data.

The government revised gold import data for November 2024, bringing down numbers by USD 5 billion to USD 9.84 billion.

# Bank of Maharashtra Q3 profit rises 36 per cent to ₹1,406 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Wednesday posted a 36 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 1,406 crore in the third quarter ended December 2024 with rising interest income.

The Pune-based lender had posted a net profit of Rs 1,036 crore in the October-December period a year ago. Total income increased to Rs 7,112 crore during the quarter under review against Rs 5,851 crore in the same period previous year, BoM said in a regulatory filing.

The bank earned an interest income of Rs 6,325 crore during the quarter compared to Rs 5,171 crore a year ago.



The bank was able to reduce gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) to 1.80 per cent of the gross loans by the end of December 2024 from 2.04 per cent in the year-ago period. Similarly, net NPAs or bad loans came down to 0.2 per cent from 0.22 per cent at the end of the third quarter of the previous fiscal.

The Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) as of December 31, 2024, is 98.28 per cent.

The bank has raised Rs 3,500 crore through Qualified Institutional Placements on October 5, 2024.

The bank has issued and allotted 61,01,81,311 equity shares of Rs 10 each at a premium of 47.36 per share. Accordingly, the shareholding of the Government of India in the bank has been reduced to 79.60 per cent as of December 31, 2024.

During three quarters, the bank reported a net profit of Rs 4,027 crore compared to Rs 2,837 crore in the nine-month period of the previous year.

Total income also increased to Rs 7,112 crore from Rs 5,851 crore in the nine-month period of the last financial year.

# Rupee extends gains, settles 13 paise higher at 86.40 against US Dollar



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee extended its recovery for the second straight session and settled with a gain of 13 paise at 86.53 against the dollar.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee gained for the second consecutive session on weak US dollar and soft US 10-year treasury yields. A pullback in the domestic equities and overnight decline in crude oil prices also favoured the rupee. However, FII outflows capped sharp gains.

Analysts attributed the weakening dollar to lower-than-expected producer price index, as per the latest data released in the US.

Going ahead, Choudhary said the US inflation is expected to remain elevated and it may lead to a recovery in the US dollar, which is likely to put pressure on the rupee.

On Tuesday, the rupee rebounded from its lowest-ever level and settled with a gain of 17 paise at 86.53 against the dollar.

Analysts attributed the weakening dollar to lower-than-expected producer price index, as per the latest data released in the US.

Going ahead, Choudhary said the US inflation is expected to remain elevated and it may lead to a recovery in the US dollar, which is likely to put pressure on the rupee.

# ITA submits white paper on Darjeeling tea industry to West Bengal government

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Leading producers body Indian Tea Association (ITA) on Tuesday said it has submitted a white paper on the Darjeeling tea industry to the West Bengal government highlighting the challenges and opportunities.

A team of ITA officials met Labour Minister Moloy Ghatak on Tuesday evening and submitted the white



paper, the association said in a statement.

The paper attempts to provide an in-depth analysis of the current state of the Darjeeling tea industry. It also highlighted key issues like production challenges and market dynamics.

According to ITA, the paper also suggested recommendations aimed at reviving the industry and ensuring long-term viability.

ITA said that the Darjeeling tea industry is not just an economic asset, but a cultural heritage which needs immediate attention and strategic intervention by the central and state governments by way of financial assistance.

The Darjeeling tea industry faces problems of climate change, low productivity due to very old bushes and less profitability making operations enviable.

# Government should target ₹11 lakh crore in FY26, give relief to taxpayers in lower bracket in Budget: ICRA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government should target a capital spending of Rs 11 lakh crore in the Budget for the next fiscal while giving inflation-adjusted relief on personal income tax to boost consumer spending, rating agency ICRA said on Wednesday.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said last year's record budgeted capital expenditure of Rs 11.11 lakh crore is likely to fall short by about Rs 1.4 lakh crore and the next year's target should be fixed at the last year's level with a focus on keeping borrowing within reasonable limits.

Further, Nayar said capex numbers are trailing the run rate required to get to the



Budget target in the current fiscal.

Between April and November 2024, capex spending stood at Rs 5.13 lakh crore, 46 per cent of the Budget estimates of Rs

11.11 lakh crore.

"We are looking at a large shortfall in the current fiscal. For next year, we are hoping that we will get fiscal space to prioritise capex..." For FY26,

based on the revenue numbers...A fiscal deficit of 4.5 per cent of GDP will be quite reasonably achieved. That would allow us Rs 11 trillion of capex, a growth of

11-12 per cent over the number that we think is feasible for FY25," Nayar told PTI in an interview.

She said putting in a larger capex number may not be "prudent" as a larger borrowing and fiscal deficit would push up yields.

She said the Budget for 2025-26 should put a "realistic capex number" upfront and if, during the course of the year, it looks like it will be over-achieved, then the government could take the supplementary demands for grants route to up the target.

To shield the economy from the impact of Covid, the government has been spending heavily on infrastructure and building capital assets. It earmarked Rs 4.39 lakh crore capex in 2020-

21, which increased to Rs 5.54 lakh crore in 2021-22. In 2022-23, capex spending was hiked to Rs 7.5 lakh crore and in 2023-24, it reached Rs 10 lakh crore.

On being asked if the government would continue with the investment push in FY26 as well, Nayar said the capex push creates positivity in the economy and a virtuous cycle that trickles down to other parts of the economy as well.

"I would think that capex would be low in FY25 and the fiscal space available should be prioritised for capex. Our forecast suggests that every 10 basis points of additional fiscal deficit would get us another Rs 35,000 crore of capital expenditure. Probably better to start with a realistic

capex number, a fiscal deficit that would come down in line with medium-term forecast that will give a reasonable borrowing figure for markets to absorb," Nayar said.

ICRA forecasts a fiscal deficit, which is the difference between government expenditure and revenues, at 4.8 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal and 4.5 per cent in FY26.

Nayar also said that GDP growth has bottomed out in the September quarter and going forward, it is expected to recover. The ratings agency projects GDP growth of 6.5 per cent for both the current and next fiscal years.

She said rural consumption is expected to be steady, while urban consumption would be uneven. Once food inflation

starts to recede, urban consumption may begin to see a bit of an uptick, she said. On her expectations from the Budget, Nayar said some tinkering with income tax slabs and rates would give a "mood upliftment" for urban taxpayers. That is what the budget can bring in without too much revenue loss.

"Inflation does eat away disposable income. It is not an unfair ask (tax relief). While some modest concessions could be given in terms of tax relief, we need to make sure that we are not losing out too many people from the I-T net," she said, adding that two things will be important - one, not to have too much revenue loss, and second, not to lose too many taxpayers from the tax net.



# Juventus the draw specialists, AC Milan the comeback kings

PTI ■ MILAN

Juventus is earning a reputation as draw specialists, AC Milan as the comeback kings.

Juventus was held 1-1 at Atalanta on Tuesday for its seventh draw in its past eight league matches and its 13th out of 20 Serie A games this season. It remains unbeaten in Serie A, however. Milan fought back to win 2-1 at nearby Como.

Atalanta moved level on points with second-placed Inter Milan, which has played two matches less, and four points behind Serie A leader Napoli.

Milan was three points below fifth-placed Juventus. They face each other in Turin on Saturday and Milan is likely to be without key player Christian Pulisic after the United States international limped off on the stroke of halftime at Como.

Juventus took the lead in Bergamo in the 54th minute following great play by Weston McKennie. The United States midfielder ran onto a long ball and then



played a perfectly-weighted pass for Pierre Kalulu to fire past Marco Carnesecchi at the near post.

Kalulu had come incredibly close to scoring moments earlier when his header bounced off the inside of the far post and rolled across the line before Carnesecchi managed to claw it away. Television replays showed that only a few millimeters were still on the line, with about 98% of the ball having gone over.

Mateo Retegui made his comeback in the 65th minute after several weeks out with injury and the league's top scorer headed Atalanta level 13 minutes later with his 13th league goal of the season.

Historic Hernández goal A historic Theo Hernández goal saw Milan earn a comeback victory for the third time in four matches under Sérgio Conceição, who got his first Serie A win as coach.

Conceição, who replaced the fired Paulo Fonseca at the end of last year, had got his reign off to the perfect start as he steered Milan to the Italian Super Cup

trophy with two comeback wins after just over a week at the helm.

That was followed by a disappointing 1-1 draw against relegation-threatened Cagliari on Saturday, however.

Milan again went behind on Tuesday, when Como's new signing Assane Diao — on the teenager's first start — ran down the right flank and cut inside before firing into the near bottom corner.

Hernández had perhaps been at fault for backing off Diao too much but he atoned for that error with a fine equalizer in the 71st minute. It was his 30th goal in Serie A, overtaking Paolo Maldini as the Milan defender with the most goals in the Italian league.

Milan turned the match around completely five minutes later when Rafael Leão ran onto Tammy Abraham's through ball and dinked it over Como goalkeeper Jean Bittel.

Leão and Hernández are two of Milan's key players but they have both had a difficult first half of the season as they often clashed with Fonseca.

# Sindhu can reach an even higher level with more speed and power: New coach Irwansyah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indonesian coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama aims to not just tweak PV Sindhu's technique and fine-tune her skills but also reignite the fire within her, believing that, with added speed and power, she can regain her lost glory and surpass her previous achievements.

Irwansyah, who has been recently roped in by Badminton Association of India (BAI) to train women's singles players, was courted when Sindhu overcame rustiness to reach the second round of the India Open Super 750 tournament, defeating world No. 24 Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei 21-14, 22-20 on Tuesday.

"Every player has been through something like this. What I've learned, I want to pass on to her. I'll try my best. I believe she can still do it. She can come back and reach an even higher level than before. I do believe in it. That's the reason I'm here," Irwansyah, a former long-term head coach of the Indonesian men's singles team, told PTI.

"My plan is to make her more of an attacking player. She has all the right qualities, so I just want to build on that and push her further. I want to change her game to be more aggressive — more speed and power."

It has been a challenging two years for Sindhu, who broke a title drought by winning the Syed Modi Super 300 crown last December. After clinching the 2022 Singapore Open and Commonwealth Games titles, she faced a setback with a stress fracture. Although she recovered and reached the final at the 2023 Spain Masters, a knee injury in October hampered her progress. She returned to action in February, reaching the final of the Malaysia Masters Super 500, but was unable to secure a title.



"I want to help her enjoy herself more on the court. It's important that she enjoys it because when she enjoys it, she'll become more confident. That's the main focus right now — working hard to get her to believe in herself again," Irwansyah said. "After everything, the last two years have been tough — injuries, maybe... It's really about confidence. I'm doing my best to help her believe in what she has. She has a lot of potential."

Sindhu might be in the final phase of her career but Irwansyah emphasised it is about discipline and success has nothing to do with age. "It's not about age. What's important is how she manages discipline, what she eats, how she rests, and doing the right training. And with the whole team in place — strength and conditioning coach, nutrition, physio, and me — it will happen."

Sindhu, who achieved remarkable success, including a silver medal at the Rio Olympics under Pulela Gopichand, later partnered with Korea's Kim Ji Hyun to win the 2019 World Championships and claimed another silver at the Tokyo Olympics with coach Park Tae-Sang.

## Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No. 802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V. Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400069  
Bhopal Branch: Office No. 1, Plot No. 200, 1st Floor, Jyoti Cineplex, M.P. Nagar, Zone-1 Bhopal-462001 (M.P.)



### POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix IV (for immovable property)

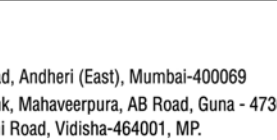
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of AHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

S. No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) (Name of the Branch)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1	(Loan Code No. 00610000315 / Bhopal Branch) Late. Kamlesh Kumar Mogia (Rrepresented Through The Legal heir) (Borrower) Prem Bai (Co-Borrower)	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Plot No. 75, Khasra No. 194 and 196/2, Village Khejda Baramad, Ward No.74, Patwari Halka No. 21, Tehsil Huzur, Dist Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) <b>Boundaries:</b> East - Plot No A-6, West- Plot No. 05, North-Road, South-Plot No. 22	09-10-2024 & ₹ 8,62,424/-	13-01-2025

Place : Madhya Pradesh  
Date : 16-01-2025  
Authorised Officer  
Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

## Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No.802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V.Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400069  
Guna Branch : P.H. No. 75, Building 1st Floor, In front of Hero Showroom, Near ICICI Bank, Mahaveerpura, AB Road, Guna - 473001 (Madhya Pradesh)  
Vidisha Branch : 1st Floor, Gaurav Business Square, Opposite Adani Wilmar Plant, Sanchi Road, Vidisha-464001, MP.



### E-AUCTION – SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of immovable Properties under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" with no known encumbrances Particulars of which are given below:-

S. N.	Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property	Reserve Price (RP)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (10% of RP)	Nature of possession
1.	(Loan Code No. 05800001003 / Guna Branch) Babulal Ahirwar (Borrower), Rabudi Bai (Co-Borrower)	10-12-2021 & ₹ 12,02,820/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, As Per House Tax Register H.No. C-22 Gram Khatoli, Ward No.11 & New 12 Harijan Mohalla (Aka) Dist. Guna Teh. Chachoda-Binaganj Guna, Madhya Pradesh - 473115. <b>Boundaries:</b> East- House of Ramdayal Ahirwar, West- House of Babulal, North-Common Way, South - House of Kanhaiya Lal	Rs. 12,52,800/-	Rs. 1,25,280/-	Physical
2.	(Loan Code No. 07600000854/ Vidisha Branch) Tofan Singh (Borrower), Ramshri Ahirwar (Co-Borrower)	15-11-2021 & ₹ 4,63,747/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Part of K H No 710 Ward No 15 Namedev Colony Harijan New Basti Near Pachma Road, Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, 464221, <b>Boundaries:</b> East- Land of Raj Bhai, West- Land of Phul Bai, North-Shaitan, South- Road	Rs. 5,54,400/-	Rs. 55,440/-	Physical

- Last Date of Submission of DD of Earnest Money Deposit along with KYC, Tender Form and accepted Terms and conditions (Tender Documents) is 30-01-2025 within 5:00 PM at the Branch Office address mentioned herein above or uploaded on <https://bankeauctions.com>. Tenders documents received beyond last date will be considered as invalid tender and shall accordingly be rejected. No interest shall be paid on the EMD.
- Date of Opening of the Bid/ Offer (Auction Date) for Property is 31-01-2025 on <https://bankeauctions.com> at 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM.
- AHFL is not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the property as mentioned above. The Property shall be auctioned on "As is Where is Basis", "As is What is Basis" and "Whatever there is Basis".
- The Demand Draft Should be made in favor of 'Aadhar Housing Finance Limited' Only.
- Auction/bidding shall be only through "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website <https://bankeauctions.com>. Bidders are advised to go through the website for detailed terms before taking part in the e-auction sale proceedings.
- The intending bidders should register their names at portal M/S C 1 INDIA PVT LTD through the link <https://bankeauctions.com/registration/> and get their User ID and password free of cost. Prospective bidder may avail online training on E- auction from the service provider M/S C 1 INDIA PVT LTD through the website <https://bankeauctions.com>
- For further details contact Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited, Lokendra Rathore, (Contact : 997783890) OR the service provider M/S C 1 INDIA PVT LTD, Mr. Prabhakaran, Mobile No: +91-74182-81709, E-mail: [tn@c1india.com](mailto:tn@c1india.com) & [support@bankeauctions.com](mailto:support@bankeauctions.com), Phone No. +917291981124 /25 /26 As on date, there is no order restraining and/or court injunction AHFL/the authorized Officer of AHFL from selling, alienating and/or disposing of the above immovable properties/secured assets.
- For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL), secured creditor's website i.e. [www.aadharhousing.com](http://www.aadharhousing.com).
- The Bid incremental amount for auction is Rs. 10,000/-.

Place : Madhya Pradesh  
Date : 16-01-2025  
(Authorised Officer)  
For Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

# Christian Pulisic limps out of AC Milan match sparking new injury fears

PTI ■ MILAN

There are renewed injury concerns for Christian Pulisic after the United States international limped out of AC Milan's match at Como on Tuesday.

Pulisic was forced off the pitch on the stroke of halftime, leaving Milan with 10 men for the final moments of the first period. He was replaced by Alejandro Jiménez for the second half. The 26-year-old Pulisic went down after being caught on the ankle by Como defender Marc-Oliver Kempf. He immediately waved the medical staff over and appeared to be pointing to his left thigh.

His availability is unknown for Milan's match at Juventus on Saturday. Pulisic had only just returned from injury — marking his comeback in the Italian Super Cup, which Milan won. He had been out for nearly a month after tearing a muscle in his right calf and then sustaining a minor ankle issue.

### Change of Name

My name Nitesh was written in my previous passport. I have added surname (Tarani) in my name. Now my new & correct name known as NITESH TARANI S/O TARACHAND TARANI. Resident H. No. 31, Narayan Dham Colony Ward no. 03, Bairagarh Bhopal (M.P.)

### Change of Name

My old name was Anas S/O Sirajul Haque Ansari. Written in my old passport. I have added Surname (Seraj) in my name and Md. in my father's name. Now My new & correct name known as Anas Seraj S/O Md. Sirajul Haque Ansari. Address H.No. 425, Flat no. 1B, Nafees Apartment, Tollwali Masjid road, Budhwara, Bhopal (M.P.)

### नाम परिवर्तन

हम प्रकाश सिंगारे (Prakash Singare) एवं सेवन्ती सिंगारे (Sevanti Singare), सर्वसाधारण को सूचित करते हैं कि हमारे पुत्र आशीष सिंगारे (Ashish Singare) के सभी शासकीय अधेशासकीय एवं शैक्षणिक दस्तावेजों में दर्ज हैं किन्तु त्रुटि से आधार और कुछ अन्य दस्तावेजों में उसका नाम अंकित सिंगारे (Ankit Singare) अंकित हो गया है जो कि गलत है। इस प्रकार के उपरान्त हमारे पुत्र को समस्त शासकीय अधेशासकीय प्रपत्रों एवं अन्य सभी दस्तावेजों में आशीष सिंगारे (Ashish Singare) के नाम से जाना पहचाना लिखा पढ़ा एवं पुकारा जाए।  
गलत नाम: अंकित सिंगारे (Ankit Singare) आत्मज प्रकाश सिंगारे  
सही नाम: आशीष सिंगारे (Ashish Singare) आत्मज प्रकाश सिंगारे  
निवास: - 78 अम्बे नगर आई टी आई के सामने सुखलिक्षा, इंदौर, विजय नगर, इंदौर मध्य प्रदेश 452010

## CAN FIN HOMES LTD. (CIN:L65110KA1987PLC008699)

15-B, First Floor, Victory Estate, Ratlam Kothi, Indore, Mob.: 76250 79136, E-mail: [indore@canfinhomes.com](mailto:indore@canfinhomes.com)  
**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd in exercise of the powers conferred under sec 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with rule 8 of security interest (Enforcement) rules, 2002 issued demand notice calling upon the date of final payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices. The borrowers as well as the Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below against each borrowers in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the following properties and any dealings with these properties will be subject to the charge of Can Fin Homes Ltd. for the amounts mentioned against each property herein below, which is payable with further interest and other expenses thereon until payment in full.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrowers/ Property Owners/	Description of Mortgaged Properties all that piece and parcel of	Demand Notice Date Possession Date	Outstanding Amount (Rs.)
1.	Mr. Deepak Tripathi S/o Mr. Dayashankar Tripathi & Mrs. Anuradha Tripathi W/o Deepak Tripathi	Plot No.87, Flat No.106, Meerashri Apartment, Mishra Nagar, Annapurna Road, Indore (M.P.) 452001 with Ad-measuring area: 400 Sq. ft., Bounded: East: Flat No. 105, West: Colony Road, North: Rest Part of Plot No. 87, South: Flat No. 101	06.11.2024 10.01.2025	10,98,085/- + Interest & Other Exp.
2.	Mr. Deepak Tripathi S/o Mr. Dayashankar Tripathi & Mrs. Anuradha Tripathi W/o Deepak Tripathi	House on North Part of Plot No. 455/S-4 of IDA Scheme No. 97 - Part 4, Indore (M.P.) 452001, with Plot Ad-measuring Area: 484 Sq. ft. & construction thereon, Bounded: East: Plot No. 454 Scheme No. 97 Part-4, West: Open Land, North: Plot No. 442 Scheme No. 97 Part-4, South: Rest Part of Same Plot	06.11.2024 10.01.2025	14,31,831/- + Interest & Other Exp.

Place : Indore, Date : 15.01.2025  
Authorised Officer, Can Fin Homes Ltd., Indore

## Bank of Baroda E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Regional Office Gwalior (M.P.) - 474001, Mob. No. 78801-53122  
E-mail: [recovery.rgw@bankofbaroda.com](mailto:recovery.rgw@bankofbaroda.com) | Web : [www.bankofbaroda.com](http://www.bankofbaroda.com)

### "APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)]

### SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" for recovery of below mentioned account(s). The details of Borrower /s/Guarantor/s/Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/E-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below.

Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors/ Mortgagee	Description of the immovable property with known encumbrances, if any	Reserve Price EMD Bid Increase Amount	Date & Time of E-Auction	Demand Notice Date Possession Date
Branch : Bank of Baroda, City Center Gwalior, Ph.: 72477-16423, Email: <a href="mailto:vjccgw@bankofbaroda.com">vjccgw@bankofbaroda.com</a>				
Borrower 1 - Mr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma Borrower 2 - Mrs. Neetu Sharma Borrower 3 - Mrs. Geeta Sharma Add: House No. H-11 Jagrati Nagar, Laxmi Ganj, Lashkar Gwalior	Owner : Mrs. Geeta Devi w/o Rambil House No. H-11, Rambil House No. 1909, Ward No 37, Jagrati Nagar Lashkar Gwalior (M.P.) - 474001, Total Plot area: 157.44 Sq. mt. Boundaries: North: Raastaa Farsh Nigam, East: Road Nigam, South: House Smt. Shakuntala Agrawal, West: House of Mr. Mahavir Agrawal	Rs. 45,00,000/- Rs. 4,50,000/- Rs. 10000/-	06.02.2025 Time : 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	13.12.2023 02.05.2024 Rs. 19,19,100/- + Interest & charges

Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors/ Mortgagee	Description of the immovable property with known encumbrances, if any	Reserve Price EMD Bid Increase Amount	Date & Time of E-Auction	Demand Notice Date Possession Date
Branch : Bank of Baroda, First Floor, J.K. Plaza, East Ka Tazia Chauraha, Lashkar, Gwalior, Ph.: 72477-70065, Email: <a href="mailto:gwalio@bankofbaroda.com">gwalio@bankofbaroda.com</a>				
Borrower 1 - Gaurav Shrivastava S/o Madan Mohan Shrivastava Add: 1. Dalia Wala Mohalla, Nai Sadak Lashkar Gwalior, Add: 2.Thane ke samne wali gali, Mama ka bazar, Madhogani, Gird, Gwalior	Owner : Mr. Shri Gaurav Shrivastava and Mrs. Priyanka Shrivastava. Residential house no 112 in ward no. 5 at Chandra nagar damodar baug situated at survey No 97,151,152,153,154,155 Dist Gwalior, MP Area 669 Sq. Ft Or 62.17 Sq Mtr. Boundaries: North: House of Dinesh Chandra Goyal, East: Plot of others, South: Plot of Other, West: Common Way	Rs. 19,00,000/- Rs. 1,90,000/- Rs. 10000/-	20.02.2025 Time : 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	30.07.2024 08.11.2024 Rs. 12,02,575.53/- + Interest & charges

Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors/ Mortgagee	Description of the immovable property with known encumbrances, if any	Reserve Price EMD Bid Increase Amount	Date & Time of E-Auction	Demand Notice Date Possession Date
Branch : Bank of Baroda, Jyendraganj Lashkar, Gwalior, Ph.: 72477-16428, Email: <a href="mailto:vjgwal@bankofbaroda.co.in">vjgwal@bankofbaroda.co.in</a>				
Borrower 1 - M/s Balaji Traders Prop: Mr. Ajay Sharma S/o Mr. Santoshi Lal Sharma Add: Bhau Ka Bazar, Lashkar, Gwalior Borrower 2 - Mr. Ajay Sharma S/o Mr. Santoshi Lal Sharma. Prop: M/s Balaji Traders Add: Kashi Nares K J Gali, Sunarain Mohalla kila gate, Gwalior Guarantor 1: Mr. Santoshi Sharma S/o Matadeen Sharma Guarantor 2: Mr. Bhoopendra Sharma S/o Santoshi Lal Sharma Guarantor 3: Mr. Vijay Sharma S/o Santoshi Lal Sharma Add: Kashi Nares K J Gali, Sunarain Mohalla kila gate, Gwalior	Owner : Mr. Santoshi Sharma S/o Matadeen Sharma. Residential house no 363 (new) ward no: 6, Gwalior, area of property is 1454.3 sq.ft./135.04 sq mtr. Boundaries: North: House of Ramawtar, East: Government Road (kachha), South: House of Muralial Ramswaroop, West: House of Haku Rastogi	Rs. 3,10,000/- Rs. 10000/-	20.02.2025 Time : 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	24-06-2024 19-09-2024 Rs. 7,99,838.67/- + Interest & charges

Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors/ Mortgagee	Description of the immovable property with known encumbrances, if any	Reserve Price EMD Bid Increase Amount	Date & Time of E-Auction	Demand Notice Date Possession Date
Branch : Bank of Baroda, Jyendraganj Lashkar, Gwalior, Ph.: 72477-16428, Email: <a href="mailto:vjgwal@bankofbaroda.co.in">vjgwal@bankofbaroda.co.in</a>				
Borrower - Mr Jitendra Singh S/o Shiv Mangal Singh. Add:1 178 Gayatri Vihar Colony Gwalior Add:2 House at Plot No B-9 Kavyanjaliapuram Gram Maharajpura Gird Ward No 18, Gwalior. Add:3 Village Chakar Nagar Etawah-206125 Add:4 Hav Jitendra Singh Chauhan Army No 15141102M, 218 Medium Regiment C/O 56 APO, Delhi Cantt-110010	Owner : Manjesh Singh W/o Jitendra Singh Land and Building situated at Part of Survey No 425,426 House at Plot No B-9 Kavyanjaliapuram Gram Maharajpura Gird Ward No 18, Gwalior admeasuring 55.76 Sq Mtr. Boundaries: North: Land Other, East: Plot No B-10, South: Road Colony, West: Plot No B-8	Rs. 18,00,000/- Rs. 1,80,000/- Rs. 10000/-	06.02.2025 Time : 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM	26.12.2023 03.05.2024 Rs. 14,73,088.06/- + Interest & charges

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm> or <https://baanknet.com> prospective bidders may contact the authorized officer on Mobile- 78801-53122  
Place: Gwalior Date: 15/01/2025 Authorised officer, Bank of Baroda





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**DR. MOHAN YADAV**  
CHIEF MINISTER



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**GLOBAL INVESTORS SUMMIT**

**24 25** February 2025, Bhopal

# REGIONAL INDUSTRY CONCLAVE SHAHDOL

LAND OF UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2025 | 11:00 AM onwards  
UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, RGPV, SHAHDOL

INAUGURATION BY

**DR. MOHAN YADAV**

CHIEF MINISTER, MADHYA PRADESH

## HIGHLIGHTS

**4000+**  
Participants



One-to-One Meetings  
with Hon'ble Chief Minister



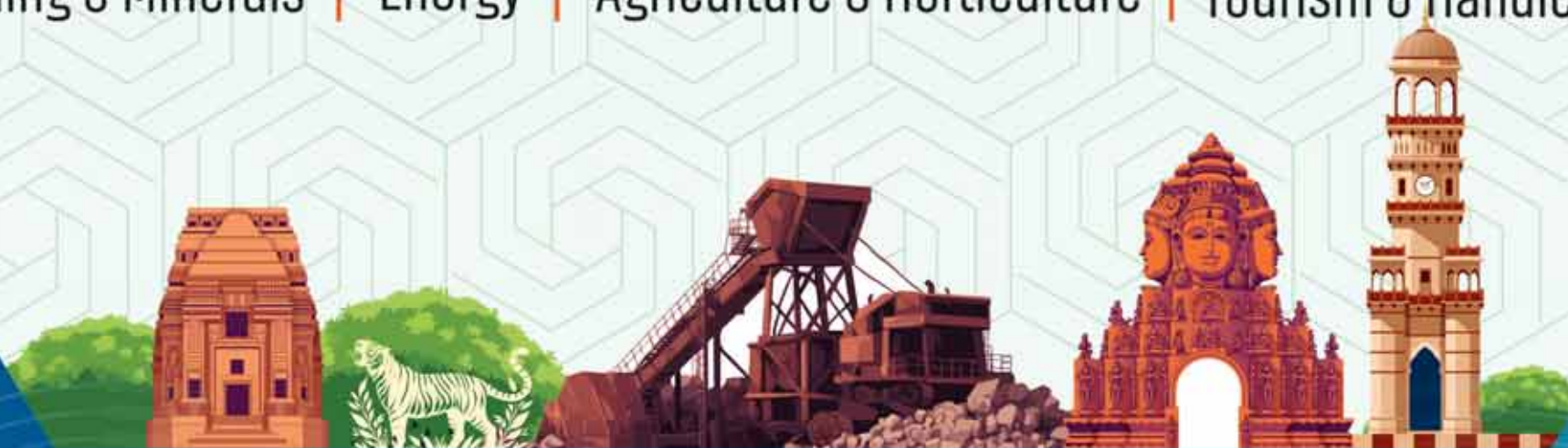
3 Sectoral  
Sessions



Exhibition

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