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## FREEFALL OF FREEBIES

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday launched the first part of its 'Sankalp Patra' for the upcoming Delhi assembly elections, surpassing all 'freebies' expectations with the announcement of six poll promises, including Rs 21,000 for pregnant women, Rs 2,500 under the 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana', LPG cylinders at Rs 500, and Rs 3,000 pension for senior citizens aged over 70 years. However, shortly after the announcement, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal sharply reacted to the BJP's manifesto, calling it a 'Kejriwal Patra' instead of 'Sankalp Patra'. He accused the BJP of 'copying' his party for announcing several 'retris' (freebies) in its 'Sankalp Patra', stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi won't approve of the 'freebies' promised by the BJP. "The BJP has repeatedly said that Kejriwal gives away free handouts, but today the BJP's national president announced that they too will provide free handouts to the people of Delhi," Kejriwal said. "I want to tell them that they should acknowledge that Prime Minister Modi was wrong when he said the things he did about us. They should also accept that free handouts are not wrong—they are a gift from God and good for the country. He should come forward and assure that he consents to these (BJP) promises. He should tell us that I was right in providing free handouts," Kejriwal added. Releasing the first part of the manifesto, BJP President Nadda said that women's empowerment has been a priority area for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He added that BJP-ruled states, including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Haryana, are already providing financial aid to women. The second promise of the BJP is to provide LPG cylinders for Rs 500 to women from poor families and one free cylinder each on the occasions of



BJP National President JP Nadda along with Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva and others leaders during addresses the media during the launch of 'BJP Sankalp Patra Part-I' for Delhi Assembly elections, in New Delhi. Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

### AAP promises, BJP dismisses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In another move to target youth voters, former Chief Minister and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, seeking re-election in the assembly polls, announced a major guarantee providing free bus travel to all school and college students in Delhi. Additionally, Kejriwal proposed a 50 percent concession on metro fares for students, urging the Central government to collaborate with the Delhi government in sharing the cost of this initiative. Terming it an irresponsible move, Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit slammed Kejriwal's proposal, saying that the AAP promises what it cannot deliver financially and would eventually accuse the national authorities of obstruction. In his letter to Prime Minister



Narendra Modi, the AAP convenor said, "Delhi's students rely on the Delhi Metro for commuting to schools and colleges to a large extent. To reduce the financial burden on them, I propose a 50 percent concession to students in Delhi Metro. Delhi Metro is a joint venture between the Central and Delhi governments. The expenditure on this scheme will have to be borne by both." Kejriwal's request to Prime Minister

Modi came on the day ahead of the release of the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' manifesto for the Delhi elections 2025. Notably, Delhi Metro is operated in collaboration between the Delhi and Central governments. The announcement, however, cannot be implemented immediately due to the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) currently in place in Delhi. Kejriwal assured that the scheme would be a priority for his government if re-elected. "The metro fares are expensive for students. I have requested PM Modi to introduce this scheme, and we are ready to bear half the cost," Kejriwal said at the press conference, adding that the initiative could be rolled out after the elections.



### Mystery deepens in Saif Ali assault

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than 40 hours after a gruesome attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, the Mumbai police had not achieved any breakthrough in the sensational case as of late Friday evening. Meanwhile, the actor was making a rapid recovery from the grievous wounds he sustained in the knife attack by an intruder early Thursday. On Friday, Saif, 54, was moved from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to a special room at Lilavati Hospital. The police detained one suspect in connection with the attack, but released him after questioning, finding that he had no connection to the case. "The person who was brought to the Bandra police station is not related to the Saif Ali Khan case. We released him after questioning. No one has yet been arrested in connection with yesterday's incident," a senior police officer said. Meanwhile, doctors attending to Saif at Lilavati Hospital expressed satisfaction with his progress. "Saif Ali Khan is doing excellently. We made him walk, and he can walk well. There is no problem and not much pain," said Dr. Nitin Dange of Lilavati Hospital. The actor had sustained six stab wounds, including one to his spine, while grappling with an intruder who had broken into his 12th-floor apartment in the posh "Satguru Sharan" building located at the junction of 29th and 24th Roads in Bandra (W), northwest Mumbai. The knife attack occurred between 2 a.m. and 2:30 a.m. Thursday, following a failed burglary attempt by the yet-to-be-identified intruder. After his admission to Lilavati Hospital, Saif underwent surgery to remove a knife lodged in his spine and to seal a spinal fluid leakage. "The actor was brought to our hospital with six injuries, two of which were deep. We carried out a surgery near his spine and removed a 2.5-inch piece of knife from the spine," said Dr. Niraj Uttamani, Chief Operating Officer of Lilavati Hospital, on Thursday.

### Imran Khan convicted



PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani court on Friday sentenced jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to 14 and seven years in prison respectively after finding them guilty of corruption in the 190 million pounds al-Qadir Trust case. Judge Nasir Javed Rana of the anti-corruption court announced the verdict in a makeshift court set up in Adila jail where Khan is currently lodged. Khan is facing dozens of cases after he lost a trust vote in Parliament in 2022. Khan has been convicted for "corrupt practices" and "misuse of authority", while his wife has been convicted for "involvement in illegal activities". Khan, who has been jailed since August 2023, was also fined Rs 1 million and Bibi half a million rupees. Failure to pay the fine will entail an additional six months of

imprisonment for Khan and three months for Bibi. The court also ordered the confiscation of the land of Al-Qadir University set up by them. Bibi was arrested from the court after the sentencing. Supporters and leaders of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party staged a protest outside Parliament House, held placards, and chanted slogans, demanding his release. "Today's verdict has tarnished the reputation of the judiciary. In this case, neither I benefited nor the government lost. I don't want any relief and will face all cases," Khan was quoted as saying by his party. "A dictator is doing all this," he said. PTI leaders strongly denounced the verdict, terming it "unjust", "shameful", and a case of "political victimisation". PTI chairman Gohar Khan said, "The behaviour of the court has been unjust. Khan sahib has not benefitted from a single rupee from this matter." PTI lawyer Faisal Chaudhry termed the decision "political use of the National Accountability Bureau". Another party leader, Shibli Faraz, argued that Khan and Bibi were not beneficiaries of the alleged transactions. He contended that they were being punished for founding the Al-Qadir University, which aimed to promote the teachings of the Prophet. "Those who looted the country walk free, while sincere leaders face jail," said Faraz, while reaffirming to challenge the verdict. Khan can appeal against the judgment in the High Court and if needed in the Supreme Court.



### Israel-Hamas limp towards normalcy

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's security Cabinet on Friday recommended approval of a ceasefire deal after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed an agreement had been reached that would pause the 15-month war with Hamas in Gaza and release dozens of hostages held by militants there. Mediators Qatar and the US announced the ceasefire on Wednesday, but the deal hung in limbo for more than a day as Netanyahu insisted there were last-minute snags he blamed on Hamas. The militants maintained they were "committed" to the deal, while residents of Gaza and families of the hostages anxiously waited to see if it would materialise. The deal now goes to the full Cabinet of ministers for final sign-off. It is expected to 'OK' the ceasefire, which could start as soon as Sunday, even though it has drawn fierce resistance from Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners. Their objections could destabilise his government, however. Hamas triggered the war with its October 7, 2023, cross-border attack into Israel that killed some 1,200 people and left some 250 others captive.

### Bharat on Auto Mobility

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has emerged as a major automobile hub in the world and number of cars sold in the country annually surpasses the population of many countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Friday. Underlining this, he also said future of mobility belongs to India that saw an unprecedented sale of 2.5 crore vehicles a year, and attracted USD 36 billion foreign direct investment in just four years. Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, the prime minister also emphasised that India stands as an outstanding destination for every investor looking to shape one's future in



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi. PTI

chain of the mobility ecosystem — from automobile manufacturers to components, electronics parts, tyre and energy storage makers, and automotive software firms and material recyclers — under a single umbrella. Modi said the automotive industry was driven by innovation and technology and stressed that the future belongs to the East, Asia, and India. "India is an excellent destination for every investor looking to see their future in mobility," he said while reassuring everyone that the government is fully supportive and encouraged everyone to continue advancing with the mantra of 'Make in India, Make for the World'.

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Har Pal Aapke Saath

# PM to distribute property cards under Swamitva Yojana

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute over 15 lakh 63 thousand property cards to beneficiaries in Madhya Pradesh through an e-distribution programme under the Pradhan Mantri Swamitva Yojana on January 18. He will also be engaged in a virtual dialogue with the scheme's beneficiaries. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will attend the state-level programme in Seoni, while Union Ministers, State Ministers, MPs, and MLAs will attend programmes at district headquarters.

The Swamitva Yojana, launched on July 7, 2020, aims to provide legal records of property rights to residents of rural areas in Madhya Pradesh, covering land inhabited before September 25, 2018.

Beneficiaries can use these records to secure loans, mortgage, or sell their properties. Out of an estimated 45.60 lakh private properties in rural areas, 39.63 lakh properties have been surveyed, achieving 88 percent of the target. So far, 24 lakh private rights records have been distributed in the rights records distribution programme. Prime Minister Modi will distribute rights records (e-property cards) to more than 15.63 lakh beneficiaries on January 18. The state-level programme will be telecast live. There will be a training-cum-orientation session for the participants in the districts, which will include topics related to Panchayat Raj institutions and the use of Swamitva Yojana and Meri Panchayat App. Yadav will participate in the

state-level programme to be held in Seoni district. Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia Guna, Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar Tikamgarh, Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development Savitri Thakur Dhar, Speaker Legislative Assembly Narendra Singh Tomar Morena, Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda Dewas, Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla Rewa, Tribal Affairs, Public Asset Management, Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah Ratlam, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Prahlad Singh Patel Mandla, Transport, School Education Minister Uday Pratap Singh Balaghat, Public Health

Engineering Minister Sampatiya Uike Umaria, Water Resources Minister Tulsiram Silawat Indore, Farmer Welfare and Agriculture Development Minister Andal Singh Kanshana Datia, Women and Child Development Minister Nirmala Bhuria Jhabua, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Govind Singh Rajput Narsinghpur, Sports and Youth Welfare, Cooperation Minister Vishwas Sarang Shajapur, Social Justice and Disabled Welfare, Horticulture and Food Processing Minister Narayan Singh Kushwaha Niwari, Scheduled Caste Welfare Minister Nagar Singh Chauhan Agar-Malwa, Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar Shivpuri, New and Renewable Energy Minister Rakesh Shukla Sheopor, Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises Minister Chaitanya Kashyap Rajgarh, Higher Education, AYUSH, Technical Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar Panna, Minister of State for Culture, Tourism, Religious Trust and Religious Affairs (Independent Charge) Dharmendra Bhav Singh Lodhi Khandwa, Minister of State for Cottage and Village Industries (Independent Charge) Dilip Jaiswal Sidhi, Minister of State for Skill Development and Employment (Independent Charge) Gautam Tetwal Ujjain, Minister of State for Animal Husbandry and Dairy (Independent Charge) Lakhan Patel Vidisha, Fisherman Welfare and Fisheries Development Minister (Independent Charge) Narayan Singh Pawar will attend the programme in Raisen.



Security personnel stand guard after Enforcement Directorate officials conducted a raid at the residence of renowned oncologist Dr Shyam Agrawal, at Indrapuri locality in Bhopal on Friday. Dr Shyam Agrawal is said to be associated with former RTO constable Saurabh Sharma, an accused in a money laundering case. Pioneer photo

## Two elderly people die due to cold weather in Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Two elderly individuals in Madhya Pradesh lost their lives due to the extreme cold weather gripping the state. Both, suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure, succumbed to brain hemorrhages on Thursday night in Datia. They were admitted to the district hospital for treatment, but their conditions worsened due to the cold, confirmed Dr. DS Tomar, the RMO. The cold wave has tightened its grip on the state, with dense fog covering several districts, including Bhopal and Indore, on Friday. Cold winds intensified the chill, leading to a significant drop in temperatures. Eighteen districts experienced a cold day, with Raisen being the

coldest, recording a maximum temperature of 18.8 degrees Celsius. Other major cities recorded day temperatures of 19 degrees Celsius in Bhopal, 21.2 in Indore, 20.3 in Gwalior, 20.5 in Ujjain, and 20.8 in Jabalpur. The Meteorological Department predicts that fog will persist in the Gwalior-Chambal region over the next two days, while cloudy conditions are expected in Bhopal, Indore, and Ujjain. The cold wave is likely to intensify further from January 19 to 20. A "cold day" is classified by the department as one where the minimum temperature drops to 10 degrees Celsius or below, and the maximum temperature falls by 4.5 to 6.4 degrees Celsius below normal. In a tragic incident related to

the severe cold, a couple in Singrauli district attempted to stay warm by burning coal in their room, resulting in carbon monoxide poisoning. Laxman Prasad Kushwaha was found dead, while his wife Maya remains in critical condition. Their son discovered them unconscious on Friday morning after breaking open the door. The severe weather also disrupted air travel, with an Air India Express flight from Kolkata to Indore delayed by 18 hours. The flight, initially scheduled to arrive on Thursday night, was diverted to Ahmedabad due to fog and eventually canceled, leading to protests from passengers at Ahmedabad Airport. In Gwalior, dense fog contributed to a road accident

that claimed the life of 25-year-old farmer Satyabhan Singh Gurjar. He suffered fatal head injuries after being hit by a Bolero vehicle while riding his bike. In another accident in Ghuraiya market near Baretha toll, a Swift car lost control in heavy fog, collided with a divider, and caught fire. Four youths in the car were rescued by police officers on the scene. The Meteorological Department has issued warnings of shallow to moderate fog and cold days in several districts, including Bhopal, Rajgarh, and dense fog in Gwalior, Datia, Bhind, Morena, and other regions. Residents are advised to exercise caution as the cold wave continues to impact daily life and travel across the state.

## Leading the way: Madhya Pradesh excels in forest and wildlife conservation

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that the forests and wildlife of Madhya Pradesh, rich in natural resources, are a vital part of the state's identity. The government is dedicated to their conservation and promotion. The state could have maintained stable forest cover while implementing innovative approaches to wildlife management. Due to effective and sincere efforts, Yadav highlighted the Forest Department's crucial role in rural development and also noted significant changes in forest management over the past two decades. The demand for forest produce has surpassed its availability, increasing biological pressure on resources. With population growth, strict measures are being taken to prevent illegal felling, and private afforestation is being encouraged along-

side departmental plantations to bridge the demand-supply gap. To raise awareness about forests and wildlife, approximately 2 lakh people are engaged annually through programmes like Van Mahotsav, Anubhooti, and Wildlife and Conservation Week. Yadav stated that the 'Buffer-Safar' scheme has introduced new activities for tourists, enabling them to enjoy ecotourism in the buffer zones of the state's Tiger Reserves. Tourists can explore natural sites, forests, and wildlife, which helps reduce tourism pressure on core areas. Additionally, over 15,000 forest committees have been established in the state, and efforts are underway to make their operations more dynamic. Eco-tourism is expected to boost tourism in the state while promoting conservation. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that efforts have been made to

enhance the participation of villagers in forest management by making it more practical and transparent while strengthening the joint forest management system with a legal framework. Madhya Pradesh is the first state in India to transfer net income from forest produce directly to primary forest produce committees. This initiative safeguards the interests of forest dwellers and prevents exploitation by middlemen, ensuring fair benefits for the community. Chief Minister stated that part of the net income from forest produce is being utilized to develop infrastructure. Madhya Pradesh is among leading states to fix a support price for forest produce, ensuring that forest dwellers receive fair compensation. Additionally, forest dwellers are now involved in processing forest produce, enabling them to earn based on

the quality of their collection. This initiative not only ensures better income but also generates additional employment opportunities through processing activities. The Chief Minister informed that Madhya Pradesh's forest cover has increased by 1,063 square kilometers, and the state leads in implementing the Nagar-Van Yojana, with 39 Nagar-Vans approved this year. Cultural forests are being developed in Ujjain, Chitrakoot, Khajuraho, and Bhopal. The auction of forest produce has transitioned to an e-system in all timber depots. Under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, the Forest Department has planted approximately 6.16 crore saplings. Additionally, against the target of collecting 16.09 lakh standard bags of tendu leaves, 16.68 lakh bags were collected, with Rs 667.20 crore distributed as remuneration to tendu leaf collectors.



Models walk the ramp in a fashion show at 'Pari Bazaar' a heritage festival season-5, organised by The Begums of Bhopal Ladies Club, at historical Gauhar Mahal in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

## NDVSU holds first-ever oath ceremony for vet graduates

PNS ■ JABALPUR

For the first time since its inception in 2009, Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University (NDVSU) on Friday administered an oath to the graduating class of the Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (B.V.Sc & A.H.) degree programme. The oath ceremony, held at the College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry in Jabalpur, was attended by a total of 212 students, including 74 from Jabalpur and Mhow campuses, and 64 from the Rewa campus. The taking of the oath marks the formal induction of the students into the veterinary profession. The milestone symbolizes their dedication to animal welfare, public health, and ethical veterinary practices. The event was chaired by Lakhan Patel, State Minister of Animal Husbandry and Dairy

of Madhya Pradesh, as the chief guest. Honourable guests included Shri Jabalpur parliamentarian Ashish Dubey and MLA Ashok Rohani, who were prominent among those attending the event. Dr Umesh Chandra Sharma, President of the Indian Veterinary Council (VCI), attended as a special guest. The programme was organised under the leadership of Dr Mandeep Sharma, Vice-Chancellor of NDVSU, who played a key role in the success of the event. The ceremony began with a Saraswati Vandana, followed by speeches from the distin-

guished guests. Minister Patel encouraged students to become self-reliant, while the Deans of the three affiliated colleges presented their annual reports. The top students in the B.V.Sc & A.H. degree, Deepti Kushwaha, Nivedita Dwivedi, and Tina Agarwal, were awarded provisional degrees by the guests. The university also launched the Livestock Almanac and distributed books and manuals to students. The event also featured a campus recruitment drive, organised by the university's placement cell in collaboration with Dr Asit Jain. Five organisations provided employment opportunities for students. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr SS Tomar, Registrar, and recognition of the core committee's contributions.

Thief who fled from police custody, nabbed

**Bhopal:** The cunning thief who escaped from the custody of Kohefiza police on January 9 has been apprehended. The accused, identified as Jayant Lodhi from Vidisha, had previously managed to flee during a medical checkup at JP Hospital by slipping off his handcuffs and evading the police. Sub-Inspector Sanjeev Dhakad revealed that Lodhi had been arrested in connection with the theft of 400 grams of silver in the Kohefiza area. After his initial arrest, he was taken to JP Hospital for a routine medical checkup, where he escaped custody. A case of escape was subsequently registered at Habibganj police station. Since his escape, the Kohefiza police had been actively searching for Lodhi. Acting on a tip-off from an informer, they received information about a suspicious individual near the Christian cemetery.

## Aishbagh police arrest 4 habitual offenders in firing incident

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Aishbagh police have nabbed four miscreants including a minor for creating panic by firing on December 28 last year; a pistol and two sharp edged weapons were seized from the accused who are habitual criminals and have been booked for serious offences. Police said that on December 28 last year Talib Khan of Bhanpur reported that he and Nanepur of Janta Quarter, were going from Sonia Gandhi Bridge towards Bagh Farhat Afza Gate on their scooter and when they reached Patang Wali Gali, Afkar Colony, Aman and Arman, both residents of Bagh Farhat Afza, suddenly came, stopped vehicle and both of them started abusing and when they opposed Arman Khan opened fire towards him and it hit Nafees' left hand. Then Aman tried to kill with the knife hit on his neck with the intention of killing. Based on the report, a case under sections 109,126(2),296,351(2), 324(2), 3(5) BNS was registered and investigation was started. After identifying the accused

**Accused Arman Khan was arrested with the pistol used in the crime. Later, he was presented before the court Bhopal**

on the basis of the accused mentioned by the complainant and the video footage and photographs, accused in the case Aman Ali alias Bachcha, Arbaaz Khan were arrested and a sharp edged weapon from each was recovered. A minor involved in the crime was also detained. Accused Arman Khan was arrested with the pistol used in the crime. Later, he was presented before the court Bhopal. Aman Ali alias Bachcha is a habitual offender and in the past booked by Aishbagh police for over dozen crimes. Among the other accused, Arman was booked by Aishbagh and Jehangirabad police for over 10 crimes. Arbaz alias Ekka also holds past criminal record and was booked by Aishbagh police.

## NGT blames Kodo for elephant deaths

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has shared reports of its investigations into the death of 10 wild elephants at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR). The reports confirmed that the pachyderms had indeed perished due to the consumption of contaminated Kodo millets. In the report, the NGT referenced the 1933 elephant death incident in Tamil Nadu, where 14 elephants had died after consuming millets. In October-November 2024, ten elephants died after consuming large amounts of millet, which is widely grown by farmers on the fringes of the reserve. Following the deaths, several wildlife experts researched the effects of Kodo millet on animal health and submitted their findings to the government and the NGT. Sources say that the NGT has issued a raft of directives to the BTR management to ensure the safe harvesting of millet around the tiger reserve. Research suggests that Kodo crops harvested in damp conditions can be detrimental to human and animal health, as an infestation of fungus gives birth to the killer Cyclospazionic Acid (CPA), which can cause severe damage to the liver.

## AYUSH deptt of AIIMS conducts health camp at Barkheda Pathani

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The AYUSH department of AIIMS Bhopal organized a health camp at the Primary Health Centre (PHC), Barkheda Pathani. The initiative aimed to extend healthcare services to underserved rural populations. Dr. Mudda Sofia, Medical Officer from AYUSH was present and actively engaged in the event. The camp provided free AYUSH consultations, yoga counseling sessions, and complimentary medicines to the patients visiting the PHC under the Chief Minister's Sanjeevani Clinic initiative. The camp also included a special yoga session for the patients. Awareness programs were also conducted to educate the attendees about various holistic healthcare solutions. The beneficiaries included individuals from diverse age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, ranging from young adults to senior citizens. Many people who attended the camp were suffering from chronic illnesses such as hypertension, anxiety, diabetes, and arthritis. The feedback from the patients was overwhelmingly positive,

## Awareness programs were also conducted to educate the attendees about various holistic healthcare solutions

with many expressing satisfaction regarding the inclusion of traditional practices like yoga, which provided additional pathways for addressing their health concerns. AIIMS Bhopal ED Prof Ajai Singh praised the efforts of the AYUSH department in organizing the health camp. He emphasized the importance of outreach activities like these, which help extend healthcare access and improve outcomes, empowering individuals to lead healthier lives. AIIMS Bhopal remains committed to delivering high-quality healthcare services in remote areas as part of its mission. The initiative has had a positive impact on the people of Bhojpur village, encouraging them to adopt a healthier lifestyle through improved healthcare and yoga practices.



Activists of Animals With Humanity (AWH) a youth-led animal welfare organisation stage a demonstration to raise an awareness for freedoms of animals to commemorate the 17th founding Day of their organisation at Boat Club, in Bhopal on Friday.

## Khajuraho Airport tops in MP in customer satisfaction

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A recent customer satisfaction survey conducted by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has revealed the top airports in the country based on passenger satisfaction. Among these, Khajuraho Airport in Madhya Pradesh has emerged as the best airport in the state, sur-

passing all other domestic airports in MP. The survey, which covered 63 airports across the country, ranked Khajuraho Airport 8th nationwide and 1st in Madhya Pradesh. Other airports in the state, such as Gwalior, Bhopal, and Jabalpur, secured the 10th, 15th, and 22nd positions, respectively. Airport Director Santosh

Singh expressed his pride in the achievement, saying, "This accolade reflects the collective efforts of our staff and the continuous improvements made to enhance passenger services. We are committed to maintaining high standards of service and will continue working towards making Khajuraho Airport a preferred choice for travelers."

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# 335 players from MP to participate in National Games-2025

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang said that National Games-2025 are going to start in Uttarakhand from 28 January. 335 players from Madhya Pradesh are going to participate in these. 35 sports have been included in the National Games, out of which Madhya Pradesh will participate in 25 sports competitions and one demonstration sport. He said that he hopes that the players of Madhya Pradesh will give their best performance.

While talking to media persons, Sarang said that in the last National Games, the gold medal winner was given a prize money of Rs 5 lakh, silver Rs 3 lakh 20 thousand and bronze medal winner Rs 2



lakh 40 thousand. This time it will be hiked to Rs 6 lakh for the gold medal winner, Rs 4 lakh for silver and Rs 3 lakh for bronze medal winner as prize money. Last time Madhya Pradesh stood fourth. This time also, players of Madhya Pradesh will perform brilliantly in the National Games and achieve the leading rank.

Sarang told that this time, while innovating, preparations have been made to send the team in advance to adapt to the environment of Uttarakhand. Also, players will be trained through special training camps. Work has also been done on the needs of sports and facilities of the players. A team of special trainers and officers is also going with them. MP will perform in 25 sports including Kalaripayattu. The Minister told that Madhya Pradesh will perform in

being provided to improve the performance of the players. This includes physio strength and conditioning experts, nutrition, sports psychologist, physiotherapist and video analyzer. One chief de mission, two deputy chief de mission, photographer, office assistant etc. have also been included with the team.

**Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate on January 28**

Minister Sarang informed that the National Games will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 28 in Dehradun. Various sports competitions will be organized at 10 places across Uttarakhand. This 38th National Games 2025 will have 35 games including both Olympic and indigenous games. More than 10 thousand athletes are expected to participate in it.

camps for the National Games. In these camps, the benefits of sports experts, coaches and modern facilities are being availed. Players are being provided the best training and resources so that they can perform brilliantly in the competitions.

**Sports science support for players**

Minister Sarang informed that the largest contingent in the National Games is hockey (men and women), which has 32 players. Athletics has 28 players and rowing and wushu have 23 players each. Olympic players Vivek Sagar and Aishwary Pratap Singh from Madhya Pradesh will also participate in these games. Players are being provided with travel fare, general kit, official kit, modern sports equipment and excellent level infrastructure. Sports science support is also



Workers paint a railway engine kept as an exhibit for the public at Boat Club in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo



Chairman Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission Rajesh Lal Mehra along with the members presents an annual report of the commission to Governor Mangubhai Patel at Raj Bhawan in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

## 38K health cards issued to senior citizens

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Stepped-up efforts by the district health authorities have resulted in the issuance of 38,000 medical assistance cards to senior citizens under the Ayushman Bharat Vandana scheme.

The cards ensure cashless treatment up to Rs 5 lakh, with easy registration at both government and private hospitals. Benefits under the scheme are available for citizens aged 70 and above. Releasing the data, the district health office on Friday said these cards are being made at government health institutions and private hospitals affiliated with the Ayushman Bharat Nirman Scheme.

The health office has issued instructions to inform eligible beneficiaries of the Ayushman scheme about the availability of

card-making services at private hospitals.

Under the scheme, senior citizens whose Ayushman cards have already been made will need to re-register to receive an additional Rs 5 lakh top-up, which will be over and above the Rs 5 lakh treatment coverage for their family. This extra amount will be available for their individual use as cashless treatment.

Affiliated hospitals include all major government and 160 private hospitals in the district. Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO), Dr Prabhakar Tiwari, informed that senior citizens aged 70 years or above can easily get their cards made through Ayushman Mitras at hospitals using their Aadhaar card and Aadhaar-linked mobile number. The process takes only a few minutes.

## Raj Bhawan to remain open for public

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

On the instructions of Governor Mangubhai Patel, Raj Bhawan is being opened for public for three days on the occasion of Republic Day 2025. Additional Chief Secretary to Governor K.C. Gupta informed that common citizens will be able to visit Raj Bhawan in the stipulated time period from January 25 to 27.

**WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
Advised E-Tendering Tender Notice No. BPL-C-II-BINA-KTE-01-2025, Dated: 16.01.2025  
E-Tender (Single packet system) on behalf of the President of India acting through Dy Chief Engineer - II (Construction), West Central Railway, Bhopal for the following works. **Tender No.:** BPL-C-II-BINA-KTE-01-2025. **Description of work:** Jacketing of Bridge No. 1151/1 in between Ghatra-Bandakpur section in connection with Bina-KTE 3rd Line Project. **Approx cost of tender (Rs.):** 658.21 lacs, **Earnest Money (Rs.):** 4,79,100.00, **Date of opening of tender:** 07.02.2025 at 15.00 hrs., **Completion period:** 04 (Four) months including harvest & monsoon period. The complete information of above E-Tender is available in website IREPS (www.ireps.gov.in) and also placed on the notice board of the office of Dy CE/C/BPL. Tenders other than in the form of e shall not be accepted against above tenders.

**WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
E-Tendering Tender Notice No. 06/2024-25 Dated: 16.01.2025  
Dy. CE (TM), WCR, BPL, acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tender for supply of following items. Tender details and documents are uploaded on IREPS on date 15.01.2025 & 16.01.2025. For more details visit [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Any corrigendum, if required will be uploaded on website 10 days before closing date of bidding. Details are also displayed on notice board of Dy.CE(TM)BPL office, till the date of closing of instant tender. All the bidder must see the website before bidding. **Name of work:** Miscellaneous job work and various machining works involved in connection with IOH/POH of track machine at Zonal Track Machine Depot RKM.P., **Tender No.:** WCRBPLTM24W09 dated 15.01.2025, **Estimated Cost of tender:** Rs. 4869006.86/-, **EMD:** 97400/-, **Delivery/Completion period:** 12 Months, **Date of Opening:** 07.02.2025, **Name of work:** Estimate for various types of electrical work during IOH/POH/Repair of track machine. **Tender No.:** WCRBPLTM24W10 dated 16.01.2025, **Estimated Cost of tender:** Rs. 4890662.89/-, **EMD:** 97800/-, **Delivery/Completion period:** 12 Months, **Date of Opening:** 10.02.2025, **Dy.CE(TM), WCR, Bhopal**

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**REQUIREMENT**  
The Institute is looking for suitable candidates for the following posts:

- PROFESSOR 06
- ASSO. PROFESSOR 06
- ASST. PROFESSOR (All Subjects) 12
- MULTI TASK PERSON 13

Salary as per NCH Norms, New Delhi / M.P. Govt. Rules

**K.S. HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL, GWALIOR**  
Piprol, Chirwai Naka, Lashkar, Gwalior, Mob.: 98269-35303

**ESAF**  
ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK  
RECD. OFFICE: ESAF Bhawan, Mannuthy, Thrissur - 680 651, Kerala.

**GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold ornaments pledged with ESAF Small Finance Bank and not redeemed by borrowers, despite repeated reminders and notices, of our branches, are listed below. This will be auctioned as per the details given below:

**DATE OF AUCTION:** 10-02-2025 **TIME:** 2 PM TO 5 PM  
**AUCTION VENUE:** THROUGH E-AUCTION  
**AUCTION ADDRESS:** <https://egold.auctiontiger.net>  
Contact Number: 9099013705/6351896640

**BRANCHES & LOAN ACCOUNT NUMBERS**

**DHAR:** 75230002616366, 2682710, 2684936, 75240001845923, 1895567, 1903074, **MUMBAI- PANVEL:** 63240000467631, 75240001810039, 1915922, **AML:** 63240000472788, 75240001914704, **ANUPPUR:** 63230000572029, 592321, 75230002617144, 2695015, **BEGANGANJ:** 75230002615618, 75240001732225, 1737676, 1748015, 1778278, 1822316, 1879558, 1918186, 1948019, 1969267, **BETUL:** 63230000563166, 563436, 569275, 575453, 581482, 63240000460421, 75230002568465, 2571049, 2604949, 2626497, 2673007, 2689587, 2730231, 2741660, 75240001801479, 1830141, 1939296, 1939646, **BHOPAL:** 63230000559984, 560892, 561270, 562688, 565643, 579166, 63240000312181, 461999, 468806, 486152, 75230002720940, 2768029, 75240001729992, 1771481, 1774395, 1803313, 1898902, 1901248, 1966054, **BINA:** 63240000483529, 461579, 468006, 486152, 1969719, **CHHINDWARA:** 75230002725621, 2729331, 75240001704429, 1734592, 1793609, 1799688, 1807565, 1835012, 1870894, 1922588, **DEWAS:** 63240000468286, 478567, 75230002596632, 75240001956014, **DINDORI:** 75230002703553, 2709872, **GADWARA:** 75240001927009, 1957582, 1974499, **GARHAKOTA:** 75230002600196, 2651179, 2661670, 2683172, 2694087, 2720420, 2720410, 2733205, 75240001799678, **GWALIOR:** 63240000478987, 4827479, 75230002680953, 2698970, 75240001723123, 1855554, 1933867, **HARIDA:** 63240000435929, 461579, 75230002683048, 2691113, 2699928, 2735402, 75240001727735, 1742026, 1822276, 1866033, 1870914, 1946193, **HATTA:** 75240002556278, 2599286, 75240001755532, **JABALPUR:** 63240000460131, 75240001744913, 1810499, 1811667, 1873129, 1878790, 1887703, 1920862, 1920912, **MAIHAR:** 63230002573817, 63240000443684, 44822, 75230002683208, **MANDLA:** 75230002692161, 2692911, 75240001896365, 1921020, **MULTAI:** 63240000483547, **NAGOD:** 63230000560452, 561020, 588869, 63240000341395, 464834, 476511, 483597, 75230002356604, 2639743, 2640160, 2642346, 2696343, 75240001278899, 1827997, 1827997, 1828055, 1854405, 1867741, 1880745, 1903834, 1904493, 1907829, 1910781, **NAINPUR:** 75240001762908, 1774255, **NARMADAPURAM (HOSHANGABAD):** 63230001058444, 7523000260562898, 2624301, 2639663, 2703813, 2728475, 75240001120747, 1139342, 1825711, 1826279, **NARSULLAGAN:** 63240000463945, 473116, 75230002609950, 2629722, 2631077, 2651779, 2662948, 2682890, 2703923, 75240001730759, 1812855, 1839504, 1869107, 1881704, 1884998, 1902786, 1911229, 1967953, 1975607, **PANDHURNA:** 75240001765363, 1798520, **PANNA:** 63230000562898, 586763, 75240001872351, **RAJGARH:** 63240000468376, **RATLAM:** 75230002691413, **REWA:** 63230002632805, 2643954, 2705739, 75240001706475, 1748495, 1843256, 1843826, 1879519, 1894089, 1939466, **SAGAR:** 63240000474684, 75230001850472, 2330403, 2617224, 2744074, 7524000125698, 1746999, 1747687, 1758288, 1778908, 1783408, 1809672, 1815030, 1818904, **SAUSAR:** 6324000047366, 467388, 473106, 75230002563544, 2643944, 75240001263657, 1718923, 1833335, **SEONI:** 75240001876411912427, **SHAHDOL:** 63230000561810, 575873, 63240000436787, 437405, 438394, 440089, 441777, 450510, 452956, 464149, 461729, 477729, 482259, 484465, 75230002614330, 2651489, 75240001791713, 1835842, 1836340, **SIROHA:** 63240000284322, 75230002625199, 7524000178123, 1725389, 1802674, 1831019, 1870654, 1971594, 1976945, **SOHAGPUR:** 63230000560702, 75230002683748, 2723914, 75240001721866, 1767639, 1832587, 1855904, 1871803, 1875755, 1928549, 1917204, **TIKAMGARH:** 63240000435809, 75230002734812, **UJAIN:** 63240000443124, 7524000170177, 1855004, 1855714, 1909054, 1913145, **UMARIA:** 75230002631157, 75240001773017, 1789367, **VIDISHA:** 75240001819933, 1827587, 1852099, 1859426, 1881274, 1972163.

Customers who are interested to release the ornaments by paying the total due amount may do so, at the respective branches, on or two days before the date of the auction.  
Bidders who wish to participate in the auction shall produce their KYC documents. GST No. is mandatory for registered firms/companies. Bidders shall deposit a sum of Rs.50,000 as EMD before participating in the auction.  
Thrisser  
Date: 18-01-2025  
Sd/-  
Authorized Signatory

## Fracas in Seoni forest after tiger kills man

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Villagers attacked a forest department team in the Khawasa area of Seoni district in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday evening, a day after a tiger ambushed and killed an elderly man in the area.

The villagers also vandalised vehicles of the forest department, tehsildar, and Dial-100. A Forest Ranger and Deputy Ranger sustained serious injuries in the attack and are being treated at Kurai Hospital.

Kurai police station in-charge, Laxman Jharia, said that an FIR has been registered against unknown attackers for assaulting forest officials and vandalising vehicles. The administration tried to convince the villagers, but the situation remains tense.

The Balaghat-Seoni area has witnessed a steep rise in big cat

attacks in recent months. On December 22, 55-year-old farmer Sukhran Uike, who was working in the field in Sillari village, was killed in a tiger attack.

Two other tiger attack deaths were also reported from the area in October-November. Those killed in the attacks were 22-year-old Aditya Chavre and 20-year-old Krishna Kumar Bhalavi. Sources say that villagers in the area are seething over the attacks. Forest department and police teams are constantly inspecting the area and advising people to be cautious. The administration has increased security arrangements and efforts are being made to convince the villagers. Forest department sources say a heightened vigil is being maintained on big cat movement in view of the attacks. The administration says that all possible steps are being taken to protect villagers from tigers.

## Truck thief dies in mishap

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal: A youth from Bhopal, identified as Rehan alias Bittu (28), tragically died after the mini-truck he allegedly stole collided with a tree in Pathakheda, Betul. The accident occurred early Friday morning, around 3:30 am, on the Sarani-Parasia State Highway.

Police suspects that Bittu was fleeing after stealing the vehicle when the crash took place, resulting in his death on the spot. After a post-mortem, the body was handed over to his family.

The stolen vehicle, which was loaded with goods, belonged to Santosh Kumar, a resident of Bajrang Mandir Pathakheda. Kumar had parked the vehicle overnight after loading it, but it was stolen sometime thereafter. Sarani police station in-charge, Devkaran Deharia, confirmed the theft and the subsequent fatal accident.

## MPRDC team inspects Parvati bridge

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A day after a portion of the Parvati Bridge collapsed, a team of engineers from the MPRDC (Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation) inspected the damage to the crucial road link on Friday.

The bridge, on the Berasia-Narsinghar Road, was constructed in 1976. The closure of the route is impacting vehicular traffic, which is advised to take long detours to avoid the damaged bridge.

Upon receiving information about the collapse, Berasia SDM Ashutosh Sharma visited the site late on Thursday to inspect the damage. He ordered the closure of the road after the inspection.

Vehicles have been diverted to alternative routes. PWD officials

## Upon receiving information about the collapse, Berasia SDM Ashutosh Sharma visited the site

officials from Narsinghar also inspected the bridge. Police have been deployed at both ends of the bridge. MPRDC experts conducted a detailed investigation on Friday.

The MPRDC team arrived at the site to assess the extent of the damage.

Notably, repairs on the bridge were conducted two years ago. However, cracks in one of its pillars caused the collapse. This closure will add an additional detour of approximately 50 kilometres for commuters.

## Traffic police launches road safety initiative

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

As part of the National Road Safety Month, the Bhopal Traffic Police has introduced a new initiative to promote road safety and responsible driving among auto and e-rickshaw drivers.

The campaign was launched in the New Market area, where drivers gathered at Atal Path Marg and pledged to manage their driving arrangements responsibly. Addressing the participants, Assistant Police Commissioner Shri Ajay Bajpai stressed the significance of adhering to traffic regulations and maintaining controlled speeds. He highlighted the critical role drivers play in ensuring passenger safety and urged them to drop off passengers only at designated stops, avoiding intersections and crowded areas. Shri Bajpai also emphasized the need for route planning and creating a safe travel environment.

The initiative featured a traffic awareness rally with the participation of approxi-

mately 80 auto and e-rickshaw drivers. The rally aimed to spread the message of road safety and responsible driving across the city. Drivers were encouraged to prioritize passenger safety and interact courteously, fostering a cooperative atmosphere on Bhopal's roads.

To ensure safer road conditions, the public was also urged to follow traffic rules diligently and support ongoing efforts to enhance traffic safety. Citizens were reminded to avoid crossing roads at non-designated spots and to cooperate with traffic authorities to create a more organized and secure travel system.

For assistance or to report traffic-related issues, residents can contact the traffic department at 0755-2677340 or 2443850. This collaborative effort between the Bhopal Traffic Police, auto and e-rickshaw drivers, and the general public aims to reduce accidents and improve road discipline in the city. By fostering awareness and mutual cooperation, Bhopal moves closer to a safer, more efficient traffic system that benefits all.

## Alok chairs Airport Advisory Committee meet

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal: Bhopal parliamentarian Alok Sharma chaired the inaugural meeting of the Raja Bhoj Airport Advisory Committee on Friday. The conclave was addressed by several prominent citizens, including Abdul Tahir of the Sapphire Group.

Addressing members of the committee, Tahir sought the removal of encroachments from the vicinity of the airport and advised the management to undertake landscaping to give the aviation facility a facelift.

Committee member Manoj Meek suggested that a direct flight to Prayagraj be launched to facilitate the travel of pilgrims attending the ongoing Mahakumbh festival in the river city. Sunil Jain said that, considering the large number of people travelling between Bhopal and Surat, a direct flight should be started between the two cities. Krishna Mohan Soni suggested improvements to the airport's infrastructure, while Champa Keswani also made suggestions.

Setting the tone for the meeting, Airport Director Ramji Awasthi briefed attendees on passenger facilities and development activities at the airport.

MP Alok Sharma instructed the representatives of airline companies to prepare proposals to initiate flight services from Bhopal to Prayagraj and Surat. Seeking a greater role for the advisory committee, Sharma said that the committee should strive to ensure the implementation of its suggestions.

He said that he would meet with the Union Aviation Minister in Delhi to ensure the suggestions put forth by the members are actualised.

The meeting was attended by Municipal Commissioner Harendra Narayan, ADM Siddharth Jain, DCP Jitendra Singh Pawar, Airport Director Ramji Awasthi, advisory committee members Abdul Tahir, Krishna Mohan Soni, Manoj Meek, Sunil Jain, Champa Keswani, as well as officials from Air India, Indigo, and Flying Airlines, and security officials.

## Shah lauds e-summon system in MP

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday attended the review meeting on the implementation of three new criminal laws in Madhya Pradesh at the office of Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi.

The implementation and current status of the provisions related to police, jail, court, prosecution and forensics were reviewed in the meeting.

Shah provided necessary instructions regarding the implementation of three new criminal laws in the state. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav informed that Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to implement the e-summons system. Union Minister Shri Shah praised the state for this new system and advised other states to follow it.

## Experts divided over HMPV threat, precautions remain key

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

While some members of the medical community have sought to ease concerns about Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), others remain cautious, citing insufficient data on the strength of the current virus and advising precautions, particularly around young children and infants.

They point out that there are fewer than 20 known active HMPV cases in the country—too few for a credible study on the virus's effects on those who come into contact with it, despite the global fears it has triggered in recent weeks.

Noted Unani medicine practitioner and national trustee of the International Unani Forum, Dr Yousuf Khalil, says, "Unfortunately, the current

response trajectory follows a pattern we saw during the early days of the COVID pandemic, with senior medical practitioners dismissing it as nothing more than a minor respiratory infection."

Khalil explains that the response from senior medical administrators is understandable, as they are trying to prevent panic and overcrowding in hospitals—a prospect that could prove counterproductive in the face of a communicable infection.

In defence of the initial response, Khalil adds, "We must understand cultural drivers. We are a society susceptible to hysterical reactions to diseases, with a known history of discrediting and ostracising patients with communicable illnesses." Concluding his argument, Khalil acknowledges that while

the response from medical administrators is understandable, he cautions against the statements being interpreted as a rollback of the threat, which still warrants precautions in public spaces.

Oblivious to the debate surrounding the HMPV threat, very few people in the state capital were seen wearing masks or taking other precautions.

Shoppers, business owners, and office-goers at New Market, Bittan Market, 10 Number Stop Market, and MP Nagar said that they were aware of the threat and were happy to note that the situation had not spiralled out of control.

Responding to queries, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Prabhakar Tiwari said that though the current HMPV scare carries great academic importance, it hasn't yet shown

signs of acquiring proportions that would require any special arrangements at government-run health facilities in the district.

Dr Tiwari said that the treatment for the virus is mostly symptomatic, but the health administration was monitoring the situation, and preparedness would be stepped up to meet any exigencies.

Ayurveda practitioner Dr Umesh Shukla agrees, "Normally, infections in the upper respiratory tract are managed within a week's time, but they are, however, more persistent in some cases."

Despite divisions in medical opinion, health practitioners in the state capital agree that precautionary principles should be maintained by people, especially those with underlying respiratory conditions.

## Bank of Maharashtra

**Bank of Maharashtra**  
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)  
[www.bankofmaharashtra.in](http://www.bankofmaharashtra.in)

**POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)]**  
The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (12) of Section 13 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated mentioned below calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay outstanding amount (mentioned below) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The notice was sent by Regd AD Post and hand delivery.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on dates mentioned below. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of Maharashtra, T.T. Nagar Branch for an amount herein above mentioned. The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section 8 of Sec 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantor (s)	Details of Property	Demand Notice Dt/ Possession Notice	Outstanding Amount ₹
<b>T.T. Nagar Branch, Bhopal Tel: 0755-2551562, 2571152</b>			
Borrower: M/s Banskwar Auto Prop: Mr Akhtar Zia Address: H. No. 7, Ward no 34, Jehangirabad, Near Federation Bldg, Bhopal M.P.	All those pieces & parcel of S No 18/1/1 including construction thereof situated at NH -12 Highway (Badi Bareli Road), Village - Veneka, PH No 27, Tehsil - Goharganj, Dist - Raisen -464990 area measuring 0.099 ha in the name of Mr Akhtar Zia Boundaries: East- Land of Baliram, West- Petrol Pump, North- Land of Baliram, South- NH-12 Road	04/11/2024 14/01/2025	₹ 1,69,14,912.56/- +Unapplied Interest & penal charges + Other charges w.e.f. 04.11.2024

Date : 14/01/2025  
Place : Bhopal  
Chief Manager & Authorised Officer  
Asset Recovery Cell

# Rajnath underlines need to strengthen India's offensive and defensive responses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday here underlined the need to strengthen India's offensive and defensive responses in view of the turmoil being witnessed in the rules-based international order. Addressing an event, organised to commemorate 2024 as the Year of Naval Civilians, he highlighted the increasing complexities for the Armed Forces due to the tense geopolitical security scenario and pitched to increase the critical capability of the country at the earliest.

"If we assess the entire decade from a defence and security perspective, we can say that it has been a volatile decade. We are witnessing conflicts and wars in different regions across

the world. Keeping these things in mind, we need planning, resourcing and budgeting for our security.

There is a need to adopt a consultative approach. We need to take inputs from all the stakeholders on how to face future challenges. Our forces should be equipped and ready according to the changing times," Rajnath Singh said emphasising that the civilian workforce, an integral part of the Armed Forces, will play a crucial role in the planning process.

He stressed that the military is surging forward with a big mandate and complex structure and the civilian workforce "soldiers without uniforms" play a pivotal role as they work behind-the-scenes to provide significant strength to the troops.

In view of India's strategic



location and its geopolitical situation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), defence minister reiterated the resolve of the Government to strengthen the Navy, terming it as a necessity in today's times. He termed the ships as a symbol of India's empowerment.

"India's economic prosperity is linked to maritime security. It is, therefore, necessary to protect our territorial waters, ensure freedom of navigation, and keep sea routes, which are our maritime highways, safe. In recent years, major naval powers have reduced their presence in IOR, while the Indian Navy has increased it. There is a possibility of increase in threats in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and the sea areas adjacent to East African countries. In view of this, the Indian Navy is working towards increasing its presence further," he said.

Rajnath Singh described cyber security as an important aspect of maritime security in today's times, stating that ignoring cyber attacks can prove to be detrimental/fatal. He laid stress on the need to run a special awareness campaign on cyber security in the Armed Forces.

In his welcome address, Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi acknowledged the critical role that the Naval Civilians play in supporting various facets of the Indian Navy's operations including technical assistance, administrative management and logistics support. Their support is essential to the Navy's combat readiness and operational success, he said.

The event commenced with a special photo and painting exhibition that displayed the artistic talents and achieve-

ments of Naval Civilians. The artworks depicted scenes of life at workplace and various contributions of civilians in the operational support of the Navy.

A special moment of the ceremony was the introduction of the recipients of Prime Minister's Shram Awards to the defence minister. The Shram Awards are presented annually to the individuals who have shown extraordinary devotion and outstanding contributions in their respective roles.

In recognition of exemplary service and contributions, Rajnath Singh presented nine meritorious awards and 16 cash awards to Naval Civilians who have demonstrated outstanding dedication and professionalism in their line of duty.

## Private bodies providing essential public services have to be under RTI Act, says CIC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Advising the Delhi government to stop ex post facto renewal of licences of private hospitals, the CIC has said private entities providing essential public services have to be brought under RTI Act in a state-specific amendment of the transparency law. Information Commissioner Vinod Kumar Tiwari made these observations while hearing the case of an RTI applicant who was allegedly given "exorbitant bills" by a private hospital for the treatment of his wife in 2023.

RTI applicant Sanjeev Kumar had approached Delhi government's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) seeking details of licence issued to Artemis Hospital, where his wife underwent treatment, among other information in a 12-point application.

Not getting satisfactory response, he approached the Central Information Commission with his case.

"...Core contention of the appellant in the instant appeal was non-receipt of correct and accurate information from the PIO and also arbitrary practice adopted by the Artemis Hospital in raising unjustified demands/ bills during hospitalisation which gets facilitated by respondent's (DGHS) clandestine practice of renewing the licence with retrospective effect as a matter of routine," Tiwari noted.

Artemis being a private hospital is not covered under the provisions of the RTI Act. "Entities providing Public Services being essential for the citizens have to be included in the definition of the 'Public Authority' by bringing in a state-specific amendment of the RTI Act which is a concurrent list subject," Tiwari said.

During the hearing, Kumar had alleged that the recognition certificate dated August 01, 2023 of Artemis Hospital provided to him by DGHS, in response to his RTI application shows that the hospital had no valid license on dates of hospitalization of his wife on April 07-08, 2023.

"...It is noted from the oral submission of the respondent (DGHS) that registration of hospitals is being renewed retrospectively, which essen-



tially means that private hospitals have an option to withdraw renewal requests should they get caught in malpractices," Tiwari pointed out. He said despite repeated directions from the Commission during pendency of this case, DGHS has not uploaded the relevant legal/executive order authorizing such a back dated/ex post facto issuance.

"... The fact remains that allegation of appellant regarding exorbitant prices/bills raised by the Artemis Hospital cannot be ruled out in entirety as the respondent as well as the third party i.e. Artemis Lite Hospital have failed to file any counter submission to buttress the arguments of the appellant, therefore, the balance of convenience favours the appellant," Tiwari said.

The DGHS claimed that the plea that Artemis Hospital did not possess valid registration certificate at the relevant time is not acceptable since as per their normal practice the registration certificate under process is "deemed to be considered as a fact that registration of Hospital is still valid".

"The Commission considering the submission of the parties concluded that the reply furnished by the PIO in the first instance and the submission given during the course of hearing are contradictory. This casual conduct of the PIO causes unwarranted obstructions to the appellant's right to information and is a grave violation to the provisions of the RTI Act," the CIC noted while issuing a show cause notice to the CPIO.

The CIC imposed a penalty of

Rs 15000 on the CPIO Sandeep Kumar Agarwal and awarded a compensation of Rs 45000 to Kumar for the hardships to be paid by DGHS.

Tiwari said Kumar was made to suffer mental and financial harassment by making him to run from pillar to post at this very old age for the treatment of his wife by imposing exorbitant medical bills merely for the purpose of generation of profits.

"In view of the above, an advisory under Section 25(5) of the RTI Act is issued to the Respondent Public Authority (DGHS) to amend the applicable regulations governing renewal of licenses of private hospitals so as to afford an opportunity of hearing to the citizens affected by the deeds of the hospitals besides stopping the practice of issuing ex post facto renewal of license," Tiwari said in the order, a copy of which was also marked to Delhi Health Secretary.

He said many state governments are bringing the Right to (Public) Services Act to ensure delivery of public services to ensure entities providing services are held accountable for deficiencies.

"Such legislations are complementarity to the Right to Information Act because they rely on flow of information to determine deficiencies," Tiwari said.

He said, in contrast to it, DGHS by declaring hospital running under them as private entities and hence, being outside the purview of the RTI Act has defeated the very purpose of such social welfare arrangement and the Act.

## PM Modi to distribute more than 65 lakh SVAMITVA property cards today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Saturday distribute more than 65 lakh property cards under the SVAMITVA Scheme, the Panchayati Raj Ministry said. According to senior officials of the ministry, beneficiaries from more than 50,000 villages in 10 states -- Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh -- and two Union Territories -- Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh -- will receive the cards. SVAMITVA, a scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, provides a 'Record of Rights' to village household owners with the issuance of legal ownership cards to the property owners by mapping land parcels using drone technology, it said.

The prime minister will preside over the event through video-conferencing, where he will interact with selected beneficiaries and also deliver a nationwide address, the ministry said in a statement.



This event will mark a major milestone of crossing more than 2.24 crore property cards preparation and distribution under the Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) scheme and distribution of about 65 lakh property cards in a day. Union Minister of Panchayati Raj Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan,' Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj S P Singh Baghel, and Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj Vivek

Bharadwaj will be present at the event. It will be attended virtually by several chief ministers, Union ministers, ministers in the concerned states, and Panchayat representatives, the ministry said.

Events are also being organised in more than 230 districts for the physical distribution of property cards. It is expected that around 13 Union ministers will physically join from designated locations to oversee the distribution ceremonies.

Training-cum-orientation programmes and distribution pro-

grammes will also be conducted in more than 25,000 Gram Panchayats across these 12 states and Union Territories, highlighting the scheme's impact and reinforcing its role in empowering rural communities.

Ministry officials said under the scheme, over 90 per cent of the drone mapping has been done, covering around 3.17 lakh of the over 3.44 lakh villages that were the target. This includes full saturation in the Union Territories of Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Delhi, Daman and Diu, as well as the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.

In addition, property cards have been generated for all inhabited villages in Haryana, Uttarakhand, Puducherry, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, and Tripura, highlighting significant advancements in implementation. The scheme's targets are likely to be achieved by 2026.

A survey of rural land in India

for Settlement and record of rights had last been completed many decades back. Moreover, 'abadi' (inhabited) areas of villages were not surveyed in many states. Hence, no 'Record of Rights' could be created for the village 'abadi' areas.

The scheme aims to provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India. The demarcation of inhabited land in rural areas would be done by the use of drone technology with the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Revenue Department, State Panchayati Raj Department, and Survey of India.

The outcome would include creating and updating the 'Record of Rights' in the revenue registers and issuance of property cards to the owners. So far, 31 states and Union Territories have joined the scheme. Of these, Sikkim, Telangana and Tamil Nadu had participated only in the pilot phase. West Bengal, Bihar, Nagaland, and Meghalaya have not joined the scheme.

## Wildlife Department to serve notices to illegal constructions surrounding Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Wildlife Department will soon serve notices to over 100 illegal construction owners who built illegal structures in the restricted area of Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary in Gurugram.

For this, the department has written a letter to the Tehsildar and sought information about all the people doing illegal construction.

After getting the information, notices will be issued to everyone to remove the illegal construction within 15 days. After this, a demolition drive will be conducted. Notable, any kind of construction work is banned within a 5 km radius of Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary located on Jhajjar-Farrukhnagar Road. Despite this, builders and dealers have illegally built over 100 illegal constructions farmhouses and societies.

Last year, a survey was conducted by the Department. It was revealed that over 100 constructions have been done without the permission of the Ministry of Environment within the 5 km restricted area of Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary. These include nine societies



mos, most of the farmhouses and a school.

The central government has declared Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary as an Eco-Sensitive Zone-1 (environmentally sensitive area). In such a situation, construction within a radius of 5 km has been completely banned.

The Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department has issued licenses to nine builders to build group housing societies. The license has a condition that they have to obtain a no objection certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Environment.

But without taking prior permission few builders made construction in the restricted zone.

The survey has also revealed

the collusion of the officials of the concerned department. Nine societies have been built within this area.

It is being said that the TCP Department approved the maps of these societies without checking the NOC. Occupancy certificates were even issued to most of the societies. Now, about 7,000 families have started living in the flats built in these societies.

However, after the survey conducted by the Wildlife Department, the construction work of the two societies has been stopped.

These societies are being built under the Affordable Housing Policy, which has about 1500 flats. These societies have been built in villages Dhorka, Wazirpur and Gopalpur.

## Law officer censures ED for 'half-baked' reply, says miscommunication later in SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an unusual turn of events in the Supreme Court, a law officer criticised the ED for filing a "half-baked" reply in a bail matter and later termed it a miscommunication while urging the court to proceed with the hearing. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing an appeal of Arun Pati Tripathi, an Indian Telecom Services officer, challenging the October 25, 2024 order of the Chhattisgarh High Court denying him bail in connection with the high-profile Chhattisgarh liquor scam. Additional solicitor general SV Raju, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), said, "There is something hanky-panky as far as my department is concerned. Without consultation, a half-baked affidavit has been filed even before we made an appearance." Taking note of the shocking submission, the bench expressed dissatisfaction on the situation, calling it a "serious matter" questioning the accountability of ED and the agency's advocate-on-record (AoR).



"The counter must have been filed by your AoR," Justice Oka said to which Raju said the AoR could not be blamed for the oversight. Subsequently when the matter was taken up for hearing, the bench asked Raju, "You (ED) have filed a counter affidavit. Can you disown it now? What is going on?" He responded, "I am not disowning. I am only saying it was filed without proper vetting so I will have to verify."

The bench termed it a "sad thing" and said it was like casting an aspersion on the AoR. "I am not casting any aspersion. Some miscommunication has happened," said the law officer, insisting the AoR was not to be blamed. Raju then requested the bench to proceed with the matter, but the court posted the hearing on February 5.

## Political parties give multitude of reasons for selecting candidates with criminal records: ADR data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Political parties have given reasons, such as "strong administrative capacity", "commitment to public service" and claims of cases being "politically motivated", for selecting candidates with criminal records in the 2024 Maharashtra and Jharkhand Assembly elections, poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said on Friday.

In many cases, the parties dismissed alternative candidates as lacking experience or the ability to connect with voters, using these explanations to side-step questions about their choices, ADR said.

It has analysed the Form C7 of 1,286 candidates, who contested the Maharashtra and Jharkhand Assembly polls.

Form C7 requires candidates to declare their criminal antecedents, if any.

An ADR report revealed that such reasoning often failed to meet the Supreme Court's directive requiring detailed, merit-based justifications for selecting candidates with criminal backgrounds. Instead, statements like "the candidate is young and energetic" or "cases were filed due to public agitation" were repeatedly used.

Despite these assertions, 29 per cent candidates in Maharashtra and 20 per cent in Jharkhand had no justification published for their selection, a direct violation of the Supreme Court's orders.

For instance, in Maharashtra, Digamber Rohidas Aagwale of the Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, facing 35 criminal cases, was described as an "influential



leader" dedicated to the poor, with no viable explanation for bypassing candidates without criminal records.

Similarly, the selection of Congress's Sanjay Chandukaka Jagtap and Bunty Baba Shelke, facing 27 and 26 cases respectively, as candidates was justified on grounds of administrative experience and alleged political victimisation.

The report also highlighted non-compliance with mandatory disclosures. In Maharashtra, the NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar faction and the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) failed to provide justifications for any of their candidates with criminal cases.

Similar lapses were noted in Jharkhand, where the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) did not disclose reasons

for selecting any of its candidates with criminal records. The ADR has called for urgent reforms, including deregistration of the non-compliant parties, disqualification of candidates with serious criminal charges and stricter monitoring by the Election Commission (EC).

In Maharashtra, 48 per cent of the analysed candidates (503 out of 1,052) declared criminal cases, with 32 per cent facing serious charges.

In Jharkhand, 45 per cent candidates (105 out of 234) declared criminal cases, with 35 per cent facing serious charges. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Babul Marandi, facing 15 cases, was praised for his social service credentials and allegations against him were dismissed as politically driven.

The report criticised political parties for prioritising "winnability" over integrity and accused the EC of failing to enforce compliance effectively.

The ADR report also revealed significant non-compliance with disclosure requirements. It pointed out that in Maharashtra, 83 per cent of such candidates were crorepatris, including the BJP's Prashant Ramsheth Thakur, who declared assets worth Rs 475 crore.

In Jharkhand, Congress candidates dominated the list of the wealthiest, led by Krishna Nand Tripathi, who declared assets of Rs 70 crore.

The ADR emphasised that systemic reforms are essential to address the deep-rooted nexus between money, muscle power and politics.

# Hounded by media, IIT Baba leaves Maha Kumbh

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Hounded by the media, Abhay Singh, famously known as IIT Baba, has abruptly left the Maha Kumbh and the Shri Panchdasham Juna Akhara in Prayagraj. His departure on Thursday night has left both the ashram sadhus and his family in a state of concern, as his current whereabouts remain unknown. Abhay's parents, including his father Karan Singh—an advocate and former head of the Jhajar Bar Association—arrived at the Ashram the same night searching for him, only to discover he had already departed. According to ashram sadhus, Abhay was struggling with increasing mental stress caused by continuous media interactions and controversies over some of his statements. Unable to cope, he decided to leave the ashram, switching off his phone and cutting contact with devotees and media personnel. Abhay Singh, a resident of Jhajar, Haryana, is an aerospace engineering graduate from IIT



Bombay. After a stint working at an airplane manufacturing company in Canada, he returned to India and subsequently disappeared from his family's sight. His family first learned of his spiritual journey through viral videos from the Maha Kumbh, where he was seen explaining spiritual concepts with the help of pictures and diagrams. Despite gaining popularity as Engineer Baba, the media spotlight and associated pressures ultimately led to his departure. Abhay Singh, nicknamed Engineer Baba, gained attention at the Maha Kumbh for his unique approach to spirituality. An alumnus of IIT Bombay, he earned a degree in aerospace engineering and later became a sanyasin associated with the Juna Akhara. Known for simplifying complex spiritual concepts for devotees, he used visual aids to communicate his insights. However, his journey highlights the challenges of adapting to a spiritual life while under intense public scrutiny. Abhay Singh's sudden exit from the Maha Kumbh has added to ongoing discussions about the mental and emotional challenges faced by individuals transitioning into spiritual roles. His story underscores the impact of media attention on the sanctity and personal struggles of modern-day ascetics, raising questions about the pressures associated with public expectations in deeply traditional spiritual settings.

# The making of Naga Sadhus begins at Maha Kumbh

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The process of initiating new Naga Sadhus has commenced at the Akharas along the banks of the Sangam as part of the preparations for Mauni Amavasya during the Maha Kumbh. Both Udasi Akharas and the seven Shaivite Akharas, including Juna, Mahanirvani, Niranjani, Atal, Agni, and Awahan, are set to welcome more than 1,800 new Naga Sanyasis into their fold. The intricate rituals began today at Juna Akhara and will culminate in the Tang Tod (breaking of ties) ceremony within 48 hours. For the Akharas, the Kumbh Mela is not only an occasion for the holy Amrit Snan but also a crucial opportunity for expansion and spiritual renewal. The initiation of new Naga Sanyasis is a significant event, especially during the Maha Kumbh, which holds immense importance for trainee ascetics. Mahant Ramesh Giri of Juna Akhara shared that the rituals began on January 17 with a 24-hour period of dhawaja (religious flag), during which the aspirants abstain from food and water. Following this, the candidates are led to the Ganga banks by the Akhara Kotwal to commence the initiation



process. The initiation begins with the aspirants taking 108 dips in the sacred Ganga, symbolizing purification. This is followed by a head-shaving ceremony and the Vijay Havan (victory offering). The Acharya Mahamandleshwar of the Akhara leads the Sanyas Diksha (renunciation initiation), wherein five senior gurus bestow essential items upon the aspirants. The final rituals will take place on the morning of

January 19, when the aspirants will shed their loin cloths and fully embrace their new identities as Naga Sanyasis. While some may choose to remain Digambar (clothed only by the sky), others are given the option to retain clothing but participate in the Amrit Snan as Nagas. Two key rituals define the transformation into a Naga Sadhu. First is the cutting of the braid, which symbolizes the severing of all social ties. Once

this ritual is performed, the individual cannot return to worldly life. The second is Tang Tod, the final ritual signifying the breaking of all earthly attachments. Unlike other ceremonies, this is performed by a fellow Naga Sadhu under the Guru's guidance, cementing the initiate's commitment to asceticism. Akhara Hierarchy and Responsibilities: Becoming a Naga Sadhu is essential for assuming leadership roles within the Akharas. Positions such as General Secretary, Secretary, Shrimahant, Mahant, Thanapati, Kotwal, and Pujari are reserved exclusively for Nagas. The Akhara's internal committee thoroughly evaluates each candidate before bestowing this responsibility. Mahant Yamuna Puri of Mahanirvani Akhara revealed that while their exact dates for initiation are undecided, the rituals will be completed before Mauni Amavasya. Similarly, Udasi Akharas are preparing for their initiation ceremonies. The initiation of over 1,800 new Naga Sadhus during Maha Kumbh 2025 highlights the enduring significance of this ancient spiritual tradition. The newly initiated Nagas will participate in their first Amrit Snan alongside their respective Akharas on Mauni Amavasya, marking the culmination of their transformative journey. For the Akharas, these rituals reinforce their spiritual legacy and expand their cadre of ascetics who bear critical administrative and financial responsibilities. As the Sangam witnesses this sacred event, the Maha Kumbh continues to uphold its reputation as a confluence of faith, tradition, and renewal.

# BJP felicitates sanitation workers at Maha Kumbh

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in Uttar Pradesh distributed copies of the Constitution to sanitation workers at the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela, calling the religious congregation a 'great celebration of unity' that reflects the principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The initiative is part of the BJP's nationwide 'Samvidhan Gaurav Abhiyan' campaign to celebrate 75 years of the Indian Constitution. As part of this outreach, the party is felicitating Dalits and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) across the state. After garlanding sanitation workers and handing them copies of the Constitution, Uttar Pradesh BJP secretary Abhijit Mishra remarked, "We came here to honor those who were reduced to a mere vote bank by non-BJP parties and

governments. Now, with a strong and sensitive leader at the nation's helm, we are witnessing transformative change." Talking to reporters, Mishra further claimed, "Other political parties have always treated Dalits and OBCs as vote banks. In contrast, our party reveres and empowers them. The Maha Kumbh is a grand celebration of unity, a principle the Constitution guarantees. By distributing copies of the Constitution, we aim to reinforce the vision of unity that our founding fathers had, which our opponents often seek to undermine." The BJP's initiative comes in the backdrop of political sparring with the opposition. During the last Lok Sabha elections, the opposition accused the BJP of pursuing a massive mandate to alter the Constitution—an allegation the ruling party has vehemently denied. Despite falling short of its "400 paar" tar-



get, the BJP managed to form the government with support from regional allies. Meanwhile, the opposition INDIA bloc made surprising gains, bolstering its presence in the Lok Sabha. Adding to the political dynamics, the Samajwadi Party (SP) recently announced plans to install a bust of its founder and prominent OBC leader, late Mulayam Singh Yadav, at the Maha Kumbh. The Congress, on the other hand, is set to launch its 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' rally on January 27, aiming to corner the BJP over its alleged stance on the Constitution. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati, who has been striving to regain her political foothold, is also engaging in outreach efforts, criticizing the BJP over alleged denigration of Constitution framers and Dalit icon BR Ambedkar. In 2019, during the previous

Kumbh Mela, Prime Minister Narendra Modi famously washed the feet of sanitation workers as a gesture of respect. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also initiated educational programs for the workers that year. This year, Modi described the Maha Kumbh as "Ekta ka Mahakumbh" (a Maha Kumbh of unity) during a recent visit to Prayagraj. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath echoed this sentiment, referring to the congregation as "Samajik Samta Ka Mahaparv" (a mega festival of social equality). The government has also unveiled a giant statue of Lord Ram embracing Nishad Raj, a king revered by the politically significant Nishad community, at Shringverpur's Nishad Raj Park. The gesture is seen as an attempt to woo the OBC riverine community, which has been pushing for Scheduled Caste (SC) status. A senior RSS leader

downplayed the political undertones, stating, "You can draw your own political narratives, but we stand for unity. The Maha Kumbh is a classic example of caste harmony, where all differences are bridged. That is the unity the prime minister must have been referring to." Political analyst Sudhir Panwar, who once contested elections on an SP ticket, noted, "The BJP faces a dilemma over the issue of caste census, which has united opposition parties and many of its OBC allies. While it has performed well in recent by-polls, the shock loss of the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat lingers. Measures like the community outreach at Maha Kumbh are part of its strategy to regain lost ground." As the Maha Kumbh unfolds, the event not only remains a spiritual hub but also a platform for political narratives, reflecting the interplay of faith and electoral strategies.

# VHP to push for 'liberation of temple' at Maha Kumbh congregation



**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** LUCKNOW

The ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela has become a focal point for diverse discussions ranging from spirituality to socio-political issues. Adding to its significance, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has announced a high-profile meeting of its Margdarshak Mandal, where saints and spiritual leaders will deliberate on key issues including the "liberation of temples" from government control and Hindu claims over historical sites. This four-day congregation, scheduled from January 24 to 27, is expected to see robust participation from saints across the nation. According to VHP spokesperson Vinod Bansal, "Freeing temples from government control will be the primary agenda, as it directly impacts the sanctity and autonomy of our religious institutions." The VHP is currently running a nationwide campaign advocating for temple autonomy. Bansal elaborated, "The Margdarshak Mandal baithak will not only address temple-related concerns but also deliberate on contemporary

issues affecting the Hindu community, such as 'love jihad,' 'ghar wapsi,' and religious conversions. These discussions aim to foster unity among Hindus, transcending caste and regional barriers." In addition, the VHP's Pranyas Mandal, its Board of Trustees, will meet after the Margdarshak Mandal session to further refine and implement decisions made during the gathering. "The Maha Kumbh is a perfect backdrop for fostering unity and social harmony," Bansal noted. Highlighting the symbolism of the Kumbh, he added, "It is here that people from all walks of life gather, setting aside social and economic differences. This unity is what our community and nation need to overcome the challenges posed by our colonial past, including the entrenched caste system." A key focus of the discussions will be countering what the VHP calls the "divisive politics" of caste-based narratives. "Our goal is to build a united Hindu society that stands strong against such political agendas," Bansal said. The meeting coincides with

growing tensions over Hindu claims to certain historical sites. In recent months, petitions have been filed regarding the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, and the Ajmer Sharif Dargah in Rajasthan. These claims have sparked legal and social debates, with some incidents escalating into violence. A senior RSS leader, speaking on the condition of anonymity, remarked, "The Maha Kumbh represents the essence of unity, bridging divides of all kinds. While narratives can be drawn politically, the event's true purpose lies in fostering harmony and reinforcing our cultural ethos." The VHP's initiatives also come against the backdrop of heightened political activity. The opposition has been vocal about caste-based census demands, which have garnered support from several of the BJP's allies. Political analyst Sudhir Panwar observed, "The BJP faces challenges in maintaining its support base among OBCs, especially after recent setbacks like the Faizabad Lok Sabha loss. Initiatives like this are part of its strategy to consolidate its standing."

# Fake bank accounts: Gurugram police arrest two criminals

**STAFF REPORTER** GURUGRAM

The Gurugram police have arrested two criminals for allegedly opening fake bank accounts in the name of 'Jan Dhan Yojana' and making them available to cyber thugs, police said. The suspects have been identified as Shaun, a resident of village Kiranki, Gurugram and Azharuddin alias Azru, a resident of Punhana, Nuh. The police have also recovered five bank pass book, fake rent agreement and electricity bills from them. The complainant told the police on Monday that he had met two persons who told him that they opened bank accounts



under 'Jan Dhan Yojana', of which Rs 7,000 is given by the government every month. After this, the accused opened a bank account for the victim. After opening the bank account, he took the victim's

ATM cards and mobile numbers registered in the bank account and said that after going to the government office and registering under 'Jan Dhan Yojana', they would get their ATM cards and mobile

numbers back. "When the bank did not return the victim's ATM card and mobile number for several days, he went to the bank and enquired, and then he came to know that a lot of money had been transacted from his bank account," Priyanshu Diwan, ACP, cyber crime said. Based on the victim's complaint, a case was registered under the relevant sections of the IT Act at the cyber police station (west), Gurugram. During the investigation, the police team led by Inspector Sandeep, SHO of the said police station nabbed the accused from Sector-10 on Wednesday. During police interrogation, it was found that both the accused used to open bank

accounts under 'Jan Dhan Yojana' by telling people that the government would deposit money in these accounts. "To open a bank account, the accused used to get fake agreements and electricity bills prepared. After opening the bank account, they used to take the bank ATM card and registered mobile number from the bank account holder in the name of registering the bank account in the government office. After that, they used to sell those bank accounts to another accused for Rs 10,000," he said. Accused Sahun has been taken on one day of police custody and remanded from the Court for further interrogation and recovery, police said.

# 12 Naxalites neutralised in fierce encounter with security forces in Bijapur

**PTI** BIJAPUR

The 12 Naxalites neutralised in a fierce encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Thursday were from the Maoist organisation's strongest unit in the Bastar region, police said on Friday. The identity of the killed Naxalites is yet to be ascertained but preliminary information suggests they belonged to Maoists' People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) battalion no. 1 and Central Regional Committee company, a police official said. PLGA is the armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist). According to police, the PLGA battalion no. 1 is considered the strongest formation of the Maoists in the tribal-dominated Bastar region and is headed by Deva. It has orchestrated several deadly attacks on security personnel in south Bastar in the past. Previously the formation was headed by Hidma, believed to



be the man behind many big strikes against security forces in the Bastar region, which comprises seven districts. Twelve Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in the dense forest of the Pamed-Basaguda-Usoor axis of Bijapur district on Thursday. Besides the bodies, weapons were also recovered from the site, he said. A search operation is still underway in the area and the security forces are likely to return to their bases on Friday evening, the official said. Personnel belonging to the

District Reserve Guard (DRG) from three districts, five battalions of CRPF's elite jungle warfare unit CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) and the 229th battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) are involved in the operation, he said. During the same operation, two CoBRA commandos were injured when a pressure improvised explosive device planted by Naxalites went off near the Putkel CRPF camp under Basaguda police station limits on Thursday, police said.

# 18-year-old NEET aspirant hangs himself in hostel room

**PTI** KOTA

An 18-year-old NEET aspirant hanged himself in his hostel room here, police said on Friday. Officials said that no suicide note was recovered from the room. The incident occurred in Ambedkar Colony, Vigyan Nagar area on Thursday night. According to police, Abhijeet Giri, hailing from Mayurbhanj district in Odisha, had been preparing for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) at a coaching institute since April, 2024. The incident came to light when around 8 pm when a mess worker went to deliver food to Abhijeet's room, a police officer said. Upon receiving no response, the mess worker along with a few hostellers forcibly opened the door and found him hanging from the ceiling fan, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI)

Lal Singh Tanwar said. A police team reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem, which will be conducted after his family arrives. They have been informed about the incident, the ASI added. He said that no suicide note was recovered from the room and the reason behind the suicide is yet to be ascertained. The ceiling fan in the hostel room was not equipped with suicide prevention device, mandated by the district administration to prevent suicides in student accommodations, the officer said. Preliminary investigations suggest that Abhijeet was good in studies and attended his coaching classes regularly, he said. This is the third suicide by a coaching student in Kota this year. The city, a prominent hub for coaching institutes, saw 17 such cases in 2024.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Bonanza before budget

The Cabinet has greenlit the 8th Pay Commission, setting the stage for a revision of salaries of central govt employees

The Union Cabinet's approval of the 8th Pay Commission ahead of the budget marks a significant step toward revising the salary and pension structure for over 49 lakh central government employees and nearly 65 lakh pensioners. Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the decision emphasises improving quality of life and stimulating economic activity through enhanced consumption. The 8th Pay Commission will be tasked with revising salaries, allowances and pensions for central government employees and pensioners. Consultations will be held with central and state governments and other stakeholders before finalising its recommendations. The Commission's chairman and two members are to be appointed shortly, and its findings will replace the existing 7th Pay Commission framework, whose term ends in 2026. Historically, pay commissions are constituted every decade to address inflation, economic growth and employees' changing financial needs.



Prime Minister Modi underscored that the revised pay structure will boost consumption by increasing disposable incomes. Higher salaries and pensions are expected to lead to increased spending on goods and services, driving demand in sectors such as retail, real estate, and automobiles.

This consumption surge could further stimulate production and employment, creating a positive feedback loop in the economy. The Commission's recommendations are expected to address the rising cost of living and improve the financial wellbeing of central government employees and pensioners. While the revisions will inject liquidity into the economy, they will also impose a significant financial burden on the exchequer. Increased salary outlays may necessitate budgetary adjustments, potentially impacting allocations for other sectors like infrastructure and welfare.

Although PSU and state government employees are outside the direct purview of central pay commissions, the 8th Pay Commission's recommendations often set a benchmark. Many state governments and PSUs align their pay scales with central government standards, amplifying the financial impact across the broader public sector. This could also have adverse effect on the economy. Higher disposable incomes could lead to demand-pull inflation, particularly in essential goods and services. Managing inflation will require a balanced monetary policy. Besides, the exclusion of PSU employees and 'gramin dak sevaks' from central pay commission benefits may intensify demands for similar revisions, potentially leading to unrest and political pressure. Increased spending on salaries and pensions may constrain the government's ability to invest in capital-intensive projects, potentially slowing long-term economic growth. Despite challenges, it can serve as a catalyst for the economy by generating demand and boosting production.

### PICTALK



Tourists at Mall Road amid snowfall, in Manali

## A spectacle of faith, unity and cosmic significance



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The Kumbh Mela highlights the blend of tradition and modernity. It links cosmic phenomena with earthly rituals while fostering community feeling

The grand Maha Kumbh Mela, one of the most magnificent spiritual gatherings in the world, is here. The Uttar Pradesh government has meticulously prepared to host this sacred festival – happening once every 12 years – with Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally monitoring the developments. Began on January 13, 2025, the Maha Kumbh is anticipated to draw an awe-inspiring congregation of over 45 crores – a footfall of around 450 million pilgrims, saints, ascetics and tourists – devotees.

At the heart of this divine celebration, is the (coming together) 'Sangam' – the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati rivers. Millions of devotees will come together to take a holy dip, seeking spiritual cleansing and blessings. The Maha Kumbh is a timeless testament to faith, unity, and the eternal connection between humanity and the divine, that owes its origins to mythology and history. Devotees believe that a dip during the auspicious planetary alignments cleanses sins and paves the way for Moksha (liberation). Swami Sivananda, the Yoga Guru, and a proponent of Vedanta, rightly pointed out that "The holy dip at the Kumbh Mela is not just a ritual; it is a profound surrender to the divine." Mythologically connected, the legend of 'Samudra Manthan', or the Churning of the Ocean, is the cornerstone of its mythological significance. According to ancient scriptures, gods and demons churned the ocean to obtain the nectar of immortality (Amrit). As the Gods carried away the nectar, a few drops fell at four locations – Haridwar, Prayagraj, Nashik and Ujjain – and these places became sacred. Thus began the tradition of the Kumbh Mela. Scholar Diana Eck, professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University notes that "The Kumbh Mela reflects the Indian ethos of integrating mythology with geography, turning the mundane into the sacred." References to Kumbha appear in Vedic texts like the Rigveda,



Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. It is also linked to the zodiac sign Aquarius, an astrological interpretation influenced by Greek ideas in the late 1st millennium CE. 'Mela' means "assembly" or "gathering" and signifies fairs or communal celebrations, as found in ancient Hindu texts. Together, Kumbha Mela refers to a "gathering centered around water or the nectar of immortality." Historically, the first recorded mention of the Kumbh Mela can be traced back to the writings of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century CE. Hiuen Tsang documented several key events during Harsha's (Harshavardhana ruled over much of northern India from 606 to 647 AD and his reign is regarded as one of relative peace and prosperity) reign. Tsang also documented the Kumbh Mela festival in Prayag which Harsha attended. Over centuries, the festival evolved from a modest gathering of ascetics to a colossal event that attracts millions. The historical transformation of the Kumbh Mela underscores its resilience and adaptability, blending spiritual fervour with societal changes. A defining feature of the Kumbh Mela is the presence of saints, seers, and spiritual leaders



REFERENCES TO KUMBH APPEAR IN VEDIC TEXTS LIKE THE RIGVEDA, YAJURVEDA, SAMAVEDA, AND ATHARVAVEDA. IT IS ALSO LINKED TO THE ZODIAC SIGN AQUARIUS, AN ASTROLOGICAL INTERPRETATION INFLUENCED BY GREEK IDEAS IN THE LATE 1ST MILLENNIUM CE

who guide the masses. Various 'Akharas' (monastic orders) play a pivotal role in preserving and propagating Sanatan Dharma. The ascetics, often clad in saffron robes or ash, symbolise the renunciation of worldly desires. The ritual bath in the rivers further holds deep symbolic meaning. It signifies the washing away of one's ego and sins, allowing a fresh spiritual beginning. Historian William Dalrymple observes, "The saints at the Kumbh Mela are the custodians of India's timeless spiritual heritage." The Kumbh Mela beautifully embodies the fusion of religion and science. Its timing, rooted in precise astronomical calculations, reflects the profound significance of Hindu cosmology. When Jupiter enters Aquarius and the Sun moves into Aries, planetary alignments create an auspicious period for spiritual connection. This sacred festival links cosmic phenomena with earthly rituals, highlighting the deep interconnection between the universe and human spirituality. Aryabhata's pioneering work in celestial phenomena, including planetary motion and eclipses, continues to influence the Kumbh's timing. The Kumbh Mela is also a melting pot of cultures,

philosophies, and humanity. Participants range from reclusive ascetics to common people and even international visitors. This diversity underscores the universality of the quest for spiritual enlightenment. Sociologist Sudhir Kakar once wrote that the "Kumbh Mela is not merely a religious event but a grand celebration of human interconnectedness." The exchange of ideas, rituals, and philosophies at the Mela fosters a unique sense of global unity. Hosting millions of pilgrims at the Kumbh Mela demands meticulous planning, leveraging cutting-edge technologies like AI-powered crowd management systems, drone surveillance for security, and mobile health clinics to handle medical emergencies. Mobile apps and live-streaming services ensured smooth communication and global accessibility for devotees. The 2025 Kumbh will span an expanded area of 800 hectares, featuring 1.8 lakh tents and 101 smart parking facilities for five lakh vehicles daily. Despite the challenges, the event seamlessly blends tradition and modernity. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### ISRO'S DOCKING MISSION SUCCESSFUL

Madam — ISRO docking two fast-moving spacecraft in space is a highly complex operation with numerous benefits. Docking enables the assembly of modular space stations, telescopes, or other large structures in orbit that cannot be launched in one piece. Example: Docking was essential in constructing the International Space Station (ISS). Docking allows for the transfer of astronauts and cargo between spacecraft or from a spacecraft to a space station. This supports long-term missions, resupply and the exchange of crew. This extends the operational life of expensive assets like communication or scientific satellites. Docking technology allows spacecraft to refuel in space, enabling longer missions or supporting reusable spacecraft. This is crucial for deep space exploration missions. Docking is a critical step for assembling spacecraft or transferring crew for missions to the Moon, Mars, or beyond. Modular spacecraft for such missions often require multiple launches and dockings to combine their components. Docking facilitates international cooperation, as different countries can launch modules or experiments that dock with a shared platform, like a space station. Docking provides a means for evacuation or rescue in case of emergencies aboard a spacecraft or space station. Spacecraft like crew capsules (e.g., SpaceX Dragon, ISRO's Gaganyaan) rely on docking to connect with orbital stations, making them reusable and cost-effective. Successfully executing docking operations demonstrates technological prowess, boosts national pride, and establishes the country as a leader in space exploration. Docking operations are a cornerstone of space exploration and mission sustainability, enabling long-term presence and work in space. This achievement has placed India in the exclusive and elite league of the US, Russia, and China! This docking was successful on January 16, 2025!

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

#### India strengthens its naval fleet



After two days of the inauguration of the strategically important Z-Morh or Sonamarg Tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation three frontline naval combatants—the destroyer INS Surat, the frigate INS Nilgiri and the Scorpene-class submarine INS Vaghsheer on their commissioning at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on the occasion of Army Day on

Wednesday. It is for the first time that all three frontline platforms have been indigenously developed in the country. The simultaneous commissioning of these vessels is a shot in the arm for the Indian Navy, which is preparing itself to challenge China's hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. Equipped with the advanced technology, all three vessels have boosted the Indian Navy's capabilities to respond to various maritime challenges more effectively. In fact, public sector shipyards such as GRSE Kolkata, MDL Mazgaon, CSL Kochi, GSL Goa and HSL Vizag Besides immense contributions to defence preparation, the Indian Navy has contributed immensely to boosting operational preparedness of the Indian Navy by completing various shipbuilding projects in a very efficient and time-bound manner.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

#### ACTOR SAIF ALI KHAN ATTACKED

Madam — Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was stabbed six times after confronting an intruder, who had a confrontation with Khan's maid before the actor intervened, resulting in a physical struggle, in his Bandra residence early Thursday morning. The intruder fled after a violent altercation, and Khan was rushed to Lilavati Hospital by his son, Ibrahim and a caretaker, where he has successfully emerged from surgery and is now out of danger. The actor is currently recovering, with doctors closely monitoring his condition. People wonder how an intruder can enter the building and reach the 11th floor in a high-profile building that is well guarded and then escape also. Moreover, all in Bandra. An area that has the highest concentration of celebrities, which is supposed to have adequate security. No doubt 54-year-old Saif is a fit person, so he could face the intruder. Wishing Saif Ali Khan a speedy recovery, trusting that the law will take its course and those responsible will be held accountable.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

#### HAMAS-ISRAEL TRUCE DECLARED

Madam — The ceasefire accord emerged after mediation by Qatar, Egypt and the US to stop the war that began with deadly Hamas attacks on Israel and saw Israeli forces kill tens of thousands of Palestinians and devastate Gaza. It is a welcome move. As per the deal, Israel and Hamas have agreed to halt the war in Gaza and see the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners. It is the most significant breakthrough in 15 months of war that began in October 2023. Firstly, hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners in Israel would be freed, and Gazans who have been displaced would be allowed to start returning home. During this period, Israeli troops would pull out of all populated areas in Gaza while the Palestinians would also return to their neighbourhoods in all the areas of Gaza. The second stage would be a permanent end to the war, according to Biden.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The silent struggles of a daughter-in-law: A call to change

Allowing a daughter-in-law to flourish in her own right doesn't diminish the family's unity—it strengthens it

Living in a joint family is rarely simple, but for a daughter-in-law, it may be a delicate balancing act filled with judgement and criticism. In many households, the role of a daughter-in-law is laden with unspoken expectations, leaving little room for her individuality. It's time we acknowledge these silent struggles and push for a more inclusive and empathetic family dynamic. A daughter-in-law often steps into a household as an outsider, expected to adapt seamlessly to a new way of life. From changing her surname to understanding the intricacies of family traditions, she embarks on a journey of transformation. Yet, the term "in-law" itself can feel like a trap—a constant reminder of her peripheral status in the family. For many, this word symbolises the invisible cage of societal expectations and sacrifices that are seldom reciprocated. "It feels as though I'm constantly being watched," shares Anonymous, 37, who recently relocated to live with her in-laws following her marriage. "It can be exhausting to sense scrutiny at every corner,



whether it's about your outfit or your manner of speaking." These tales are not one of a kind. Across the nation, countless women grapple with the challenge of fulfilling the expectations of others while striving to maintain their sense of self. Some of my friends and cousins have admitted to bending the truth just to carve out a little time for themselves—a brief coffee catch-up or a quick getaway to relax with friends. Some even refer to it as a means of 'escaping' the steadfast pressures of family life. But why should it come to this? Why must a daughter-in-law justify her need for a breather?

The narrative that has been perpetuated for generations—that she must be the glue holding the family together—needs an overhaul. Living in a joint family should not mean sacrificing one's freedom or sense of self. It's high time families rethink the dynamics and extend the same courtesy of individuality and space to their daughters-in-law that they offer their sons. Empathy and equality within a household aren't luxuries; they are necessities for harmony. Allowing a daughter-in-law to flourish in her own right doesn't diminish the family's unity—it strengthens it. Moreover, it sets an exam-

ple for future generations, teaching them to prioritise respect over rigid roles. Transformation begins with dialogue. It is essential for families to recognise the contributions a daughter-in-law makes and to foster open communication regarding shared responsibilities. Partners also hold a crucial position in connecting their spouses with their families, making certain that everyone feels appreciated and heard. At its core, a family is about mutual love, respect, and support. Let's replace the stifling word "in-law" with something more inclusive—perhaps "in-love," symbolising acceptance and belonging. After all, isn't that what a family should truly be about? For daughters-in-law across the world, the message is clear: You are not alone in your struggle. For families, the challenge is to listen, adapt, and foster a space where everyone, regardless of their title, feels at home. It's not just about rewriting roles—it's about rewriting the narrative for a more equitable tomorrow. (The writer is a freelance writer; views are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI



## FIRST COLUMN

### OUR ACTIONS SHAPE OUR LIVES

Karmaphalas—the results of our actions—are an undeniable force shaping our lives



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We all should know about karmaphalas. These are the results of both good and bad karma (acts) done by us in the past with our minds, words and bodies. I have mentioned minds separately from bodies because karmas done by the mind are subtle. And they can be quite lethal. What is a mental disease? You have guessed right; it is caused by our minds. Similarly, words are no less dangerous. Yes, words can be very deadly, as experienced by all of us, when we choose to speak foolishly. And these bad karmaphalas can manifest at any age but they hurt the most in old age when we are weak and not left with many options.

This is when a person laments about his bad luck and there are not many sympathisers. Aren't we written off as we age? This article describes what we can do about it. We are not so helpless after all. The first step is to stop doing all bad acts right from this moment. And we know what these are. Goodness has to increase in us by doing all acts of goodness.

We must speak pleasantly; we should see goodness programmes; we should stick to foods in goodness; and so on. What this will do is protect us from the ill effects of our present acts, to begin with. Controller mental must be curbed; one must become realistic because there is only one controller and that is God. If it wasn't so we will obtain whatever we desire, which hardly even hap-



pens. The ego must be curbed because there is only one superior entity, which is God. All our lives we try to prove our superiority and what happens? We become very unpopular with others, especially with our family members, whom we desperately need in our old age. Spiritual practices must be started in the right earnest. They will make a lot of sense if we realise that we are souls, parts of God.

Shouldn't parts be dependent on the whole? Should we not be respectful towards God, just like a son is supposed to be towards his father? Don't we thank others when they do us some favour? God is forever doing us many favours. To begin with, He has provided all essentials free like the light of the sun, water, air containing oxygen, etc. God has to help ultimately because fate cannot be changed by anyone else. He also doesn't, but helps to deal with bad karmaphalas; we won't end up badly. (9.31) This is a very big 'kripa' but more important is His mercy in protecting us from our good karmaphalas, when we are most likely to hurt ourselves badly. Because it is hard to tolerate good times. And God and only God can help in improving our nature, which is also part of our fate. Doesn't our nature let us down time and again? We see people destroying themselves by angry acts, lusty behaviour, envious attitudes, etc. God protects us from foolish acts, if we remain in His shelter. I am very scared about the prospect of ill fate in my old age when I am already weak. God has to protect me.

I am not taking any chances; I have taken God's shelter. Only God is the one who can help, being the owner and controller. God can intervene and God does for His devotees. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 18.58) Wouldn't this make us peaceful? It has made me gradually as my connection with God is getting strengthened by my spiritual practices. Please don't take chances.

*(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)*

# Reverse brain drain: A game-changer for growth



WASEEM JAVED

By harnessing the knowledge, networks and expertise of these returnees, India is laying the foundation for a resilient and competitive economy

India has witnessed a mass exodus of talent for decades, as highly skilled professionals and students left the country in search of better opportunities abroad. This phenomenon, known as 'brain drain', has historically deprived the country of its brightest minds. However, the tide is reversing, with individuals returning to their home country, as seen in the recent past. With acquired skills and rich experience, the 'reverse brain drain' is increasingly becoming a powerful force in India's economic growth and development. This comes against the backdrop of India's fast-paced economic growth, combined with government initiatives and an evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem that has made the country an attractive destination for global talent, including those who once left its shores. This shift is not about just people coming back; it's about knowledge transfer, innovation, and global networks essential to building a competitive and resilient economy.

### Economic and Entrepreneurial Opportunities Driving Return

In most cases, what has caused this reverse brain drain is the prospect of available opportunities in India. The growth pattern of India as a country with an upward economic trajectory brings with it demand for science, technology, and innovation skills from professionals in their fields.

Returnees easily get absorbed in suitable roles since their international experience puts them on top of the sought-after candidates at startups, large multinational companies, and research centres. Government initiatives like Make in India, Startup India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat have further made India more attractive. These initiatives encourage entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and innovation by offering financial incentives, regulatory support, and access to infrastructure. Thus, many Indian professionals who had earlier worked in global hubs such as Silicon Valley are returning to start their startups or take up leadership roles in Indian enterprises.

For example, several Indian entrepreneurs who have returned from the United States or the United Kingdom are at the helm of billion-dollar startups in India today. They cut across fintech, e-commerce, health tech, and renewable energy among other sectors that create jobs and spur economic growth. Their global networks and access to venture capital give them a competitive edge that will allow them to scale their businesses quickly and effectively.

### The Role of Overseas Education in Shaping Talent

Education in foreign lands serves as the core of the reverse brain drain. In 2024, more than 13.35 lakh students from India pursued education abroad, of which the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and Germany were among the top destinations. In general, courses in engineering, business management, medicine, and technology attract Indian students with promising career avenues. This international education equips students with advanced knowledge, technical skills, and a global perspective. Many also gain valuable work experience abroad before deciding to return to India.

A key facilitator in this journey has been the rise of AI-powered consultancy plat-



GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES LIKE MAKE IN INDIA, STARTUP INDIA, AND ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT HAVE FURTHER MADE INDIA MORE ATTRACTIVE. THESE INITIATIVES ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SELF-RELIANCE, AND INNOVATION BY OFFERING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES, REGULATORY SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE

forms that streamline the process of studying abroad. These platforms help students identify the best courses, universities, and countries based on their aspirations and career goals.

They also help with visa processes, and education loans, and even offer post-admission help, so everything goes off smoothly. These consultancies not only empower students in terms of succeeding abroad but also lay the groundwork for their potential contributions upon returning to India while bridging the gap between students and global education systems.

### Benefits of Reverse Brain Drain for India

The reverse brain drain is an economy-changing force for India, bringing skilled professionals back to drive progress across sectors. In the case of technology, returnees provide cutting-edge expertise in areas like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and clean energy, which ensure that India is not left behind globally.

The knowledge that these returnees provide creates technological advances that benefit both industries and society. Entrepreneurship and innovation also pick up pace as returnees start new ventures, create jobs, and develop innovative products and services that address local and global challenges. This not only increases employment but also makes India a creative solutions hub.

Furthermore, these professionals enhance scientific collaboration by connecting Indian institutions with international research networks, thereby facilitating the exchange of ideas and resources in areas such as healthcare and renewable energy. The economic impact is equally strong as the

reverse brain drain strengthens productivity, draws in foreign investment, and propels GDP growth.

### Key Challenges and the Way Forward

Although reverse brain drain promises to boost Indian growth immensely, bureaucratic red tape, infrastructural inadequacies, and differing work environments in India versus the developed world will still prevent most professionals from coming back. This will only come true when registration procedures, tax regimes, and the regime for intellectual property become more simplified, paving the way for returnees to establish enterprises or meaningfully contribute to organizations. To tap into returning talent effectively, India must improve its infrastructure: world-class research facilities, modern educational institutions, and strong health care. More competitive incentives to attract international talent include tax breaks, grants for research, and easier access to funding. Only then will the reverse brain drain convert into practical input toward the nation's economic growth and innovation.

### Government Initiatives and Policy Support

The Indian government has been proactively capitalising on reverse brain drain. By setting up innovation hubs, funding startup companies, and collaborating with world-class research institutes, the country is attracting much-needed talent as well as fostering innovation. Many countries have implemented policies and incentives to encourage skilled professionals to return to their home countries. For example, Taiwan created the Hsinchu Science Park and offered tax cuts to encourage the development of high-tech industries. Such poli-

cies not only encourage the return of skilled professionals but also provide them with a platform to flourish.

### The Global Context and Its Implications

Interestingly, reverse brain drain is not an Indian phenomenon alone. Developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom are losing talent due to restrictive immigration policies and limited opportunities for career advancement. For example, America's flawed immigration policies have inadvertently driven away skilled professionals who are now contributing to India's growth.

This shift points to a wider paradigm wherein developing countries are transforming centres of innovation and economic activity. It could also help India emerge as a global leader in sectors ranging from technology to healthcare.

### A Bright Future for Reverse Brain Drain

The reverse brain drain represents a new paradigm in India's journey to become a global economic superpower. In this new scenario, talent can be an asset to the country by nurturing innovation and fostering collaboration. With government support, private sector participation, and an emphasis on developing world-class infrastructure, the country is poised to turn reverse brain drain into a sustained growth driver. In doing so, this movement is not only for India but reshapes the global talent landscape with a new reality of importance— inclusive and dynamic economies in a more integrated and interconnected world.

*(The writer is the founder and CEO of EduVib; views are personal)*

# Andhra Pradesh's journey towards zero hunger and inclusive education

The Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal scheme is a testament to the State's commitment to inclusivity and reforming the education system

Since Independence, food security has been a significant concern in India. Despite notable progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger, India still grapples with the challenge of undernutrition.

According to a United Nations report, the country accounts for nearly 195 million undernourished individuals, with children constituting 43 per cent of this population. Various initiatives, such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the PM Poshan Mid-Day Meal scheme, have been implemented to address this pressing issue.

### Historical Roots of Mid-Day Meal Schemes

The origins of the Mid-Day Meal scheme in India can be

traced back to the colonial era. In 1925, the Madras Presidency proposed the first-ever Mid-Day Meal initiative for underprivileged children. Tamil Nadu became the first state to implement this idea, with Sourashtra Boys Higher Secondary School in Madurai serving meals to children in 1955.

By the 1980s, this programme gained widespread acceptance, particularly with the introduction of the "Nutritious Noon-Meal Scheme" by Tamil Nadu's then Chief Minister, M G Ramachandran. This initiative aimed to provide food to 6.8 million malnourished children in the state. Over the years, the programme has demonstrated the strong correlation between nutritious meals and improved educa-



T V KATTIMANI

tion. For children in tribal and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, the scheme has proven to be a lifeline. Many of these children, previously engaged in household activities or income generation due to food insecurity, could now attend school and pursue their right to education. The programme also had a transformative impact on children from Socio-

Economic Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, De-notified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, and girl children.

### Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme

In a significant step forward, the Andhra Pradesh government recently launched the "Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme." This initiative, named after Dokka Seethamma—revered as Aparna Annapuram—provides free meals to students in junior colleges across the state. Seethamma, born in 1841 in Mandapet village, was renowned for her compassion and dedication to serving the needy. Despite limited formal education, she imbibed strong moral values through



stories and songs from her childhood. Along with her husband, Dokka Joganna, she provided food and shelter to travelers and disaster-stricken communities near the Godavari River. Her legacy of humanitarian service remains a beacon of inclusivity and maternal love.

The Dokka Seethamma scheme is the first of its kind in India, targeting intermediate students. Benefiting 148,419 students across 475 government junior colleges in Andhra Pradesh, the pro-

gramme aims to reduce dropout rates, enhance academic focus, and improve overall student health. By lessening the financial burden on low-income families, the initiative also promotes greater equity in education. It sets a model for other states to emulate, addressing hunger while fostering a nurturing environment for academic and personal growth.

### Complementary Initiatives for Inclusivity

In addition to the Dokka Seethamma scheme, Andhra Pradesh has revived the "Anna Canteens" initiative. This program offers wholesome meals at just Rs 5 to economically disadvantaged individuals, significantly alleviating hunger and improving living standards. By ensuring affordable

access to food, the state aims to bridge socioeconomic disparities and support marginalised communities.

For tribal students, particularly girls, the Dokka Seethamma scheme has been a game-changer. Tribal communities often face acute food insecurity due to geographical remoteness and limited resources. Free nutritious meals enable tribal children to focus on their education instead of household chores or income generation. The scheme also addresses educational inequity by encouraging families to prioritise their children's schooling. For tribal girls, the program has a transformative impact. Social and financial pressures often force girls to leave school prematurely, but free meals reduce fam-

ily burdens and promote their continued education.

### A Vision for a Better Future

The Mid-Day Meal scheme and similar initiatives signify more than just food distribution—they represent a commitment to empowering the marginalised and uplifting the underprivileged. These programs not only ensure access to nutritious meals but also encourage higher education, better living standards, and healthier lifestyles. By fostering cooperation among teachers, students, and staff, the scheme revives the ancient "Gurukula" system of holistic education, emphasising both mental and physical wellbeing.

*(The writer is Vice Chancellor of Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh; views are personal)*

# How long will it take and how much will it cost to rebuild Gaza?

PTI ■ GAZA CITY

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are eager to leave miserable tent camps and return to their homes if a long-awaited ceasefire agreement halts the Israel-Hamas war, but many will find there is nothing left and no way to rebuild. Israeli bombardment and ground operations have transformed entire neighbourhoods in several cities into rubble-strewn wastelands, with blackened shells of buildings and mounds of debris stretching away in all directions.

Major roads have been plowed up. Critical water and electricity infrastructure is in ruins. Most hospitals no longer function. The agreement for a phased ceasefire and the release of hostages held by Hamas-led militants does not say who will govern Gaza after the war, or whether Israel and Egypt will lift a blockade limiting

the movement of people and goods that they imposed when Hamas seized power in 2007. The United Nations says it could take more than 350 years to rebuild if the blockade remains. The full extent of the damage will only be known when the fighting ends and inspectors have full access to the territory. The most heavily destroyed part of Gaza, in the north, has been sealed off and largely depopulated by Israeli forces in an operation that began early October. Using satellite data, the United Nations estimated last month that 69 per cent of the structures in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed, including over 245,000 homes. The World Bank estimated USD 18.5 billion in damage — nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022 — from just the first four

months of the war. Israel blames the destruction on Hamas, which ignited the war with its October 7, 2023, attack into Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were fighters. Israel claims it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence. The military has released photos and video footage showing that Hamas built tunnels and rocket launchers in residential areas, and often operated in and around homes, schools and mosques. Before anything can be rebuilt, the rubble must be removed — a staggering task in itself. The UN estimates that the war has littered Gaza with over 50 million tonnes of rubble — roughly 12 times



the size of the Great Pyramid of Giza. With over 100 trucks working full time, it would take over 15 years to clear the rubble

away, and there is little open space in the narrow coastal territory that is home to some 2.3 million Palestinians. Carting the debris away will

also be complicated by the fact that it contains huge amounts of unexploded ordnance and other harmful materials, as well as human

remains. Gaza's health ministry says thousands of people killed in airstrikes are still buried under the rubble. The rubble clearance and eventual rebuilding of homes will require billions of dollars and the ability to bring construction materials and heavy equipment into the territory — neither of which is assured. The ceasefire agreement calls for a three to five-year reconstruction project to begin in its final phase, after all the remaining 100 hostages have been released, and Israeli troops have withdrawn from the territory. But getting to that point will require agreement on the second and most difficult phase of the deal, which still must be negotiated. Even then, the ability to rebuild will depend on the blockade, which critics have long decried as a form of collective punishment. Israel says it is needed to prevent Hamas from

rebuilding its military capabilities, noting that cement and metal pipes can also be used for tunnels and rockets. Israel might be more inclined to lift the blockade if Hamas were no longer in power, but there are no plans for an alternative government. The US and much of the international community want a revitalised Palestinian Authority to govern the West Bank and Gaza with the support of Arab countries ahead of eventual statehood. But that's a nonstarter for Israel's government, which is opposed to a Palestinian state and has ruled out any role in Gaza for the Western-backed authority. International donors are unlikely to invest in an ungoverned territory that has seen five wars in less than two decades, which means the sprawling tent camps along the coast could become a permanent feature of life in Gaza.

## 'Elon Musk's support for European far-right completely unacceptable'

PTI ■ BERLIN

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Friday that Elon Musk's support for the far-right in Europe is "completely unacceptable", adding to his previous criticism of Musk's interventions in the German election campaign. Musk has said over the past month that only the far-right party Alternative for Germany, or AfD, can "save Germany". Last week, the tech billionaire livestreamed on his social media platform X a chat with Alice Weidel, the party's candidate for chancellor in Germany's February 23 election, amplifying its message ahead of the vote. His interest in Germany and politics elsewhere in Europe, after he poured money and energy into helping Donald Trump win the US election, has set off alarm bells among politicians across the continent. The Tesla and SpaceX chief executive has also demanded the release of jailed UK anti-



Islam extremist Tommy Robinson and called British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government "tyrannical", claiming Starmer should be in prison. Scholz has said it's important to "stay cool" over personal attacks, but that Germany's way forward "will not be decided by the owners of social media channels" but by German voters. Asked on Friday about Musk's interventions, he said it's important to "criticise the

right thing." "What we must criticise is not that a billionaire, or a billionaire from other countries in a global world, expresses his opinion — but what he says," Scholz said at a news conference. "He supports the extreme right throughout Europe, in Britain, in Germany, in many, many other countries, and that is something that is completely unacceptable." "This endangers the democratic development of Europe, it endangers our community, and that must be criticised," Scholz said. Polls show AfD in second place ahead of the election, with support of about 20 per cent, but Weidel has no realistic chance of becoming chancellor because other parties refuse to work with the party. Centre-right opposition leader Friedrich Merz has also criticised Musk's endorsement of AfD. Merz's Union bloc leads polls and he is the favourite to become Germany's next leader.

## 3 lawyers for late Russian opp leader Navalny jailed by court

PTI ■ PETUSKI

Three lawyers who once represented the late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny were convicted by a court Friday as part of the Kremlin's crackdown on dissent that has reached levels unseen since Soviet times. Vadim Kobzev, Igor Sergunin and Alexei Liptser were already in custody and were given sentences from 3 1/2 to five years by a court in the town of Petushki, about 100 km east of Moscow. They were arrested in October 2023 on charges of involvement with extremist groups, as Navalny's networks were deemed by authorities. The case was widely seen as a way to increase pressure on the opposition to discourage defence lawyers from taking political cases. At the time, Navalny was serving a 19-year prison term on several criminal convictions, including extremism.

He died in a Russian prison camp in February 2023. The independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported that Kobzev said in his final statement in court on Jan 10 that "we are being tried for transmitting Navalny's thoughts to other people". The independent Russian news outlet Mediazona reported three journalists attending the sentencing were detained and taken to a police station. Navalny's networks were deemed extremist following a 2021 ruling that outlawed his organisations — the Foundation for Fighting Corruption and a network of regional offices — as extremist groups. That ruling, which exposed anyone involved with the organisations to prosecution, was condemned by Kremlin critics as politically motivated and designed to stifle Navalny's activities. According to Navalny's allies, authorities accused the

lawyers of using their position to pass information from him to his team. Navalny, an anti-corruption campaigner and outspoken opponent of President Vladimir Putin, was arrested in 2021 upon his return from Germany, where he was recuperating from a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin. He was ordered to serve 2 1/2 years in prison. After two more trials, his sentence was extended to 19 years. He and his allies said the charges were politically motivated and accused the Kremlin of seeking to jail him for life. In December 2023, Navalny was moved from a penal colony in the Vladimir region east of Moscow to one above the Arctic Circle, where he died in February at the age of 47 under still-unexplained circumstances. His widow, Yulia Navalnaya, and members of his team alleged he was killed on orders from the Kremlin. Officials have

rejected the accusation. Two other Navalny lawyers, Olga Mikhailova and Alexander Fedulov, are on a wanted list but no longer live in Russia. Mikhailova, who defended Navalny for a decade, said she was charged in absentia with extremism. Kobzev, Liptser and Sergunin have been deemed to be political prisoners, according to human rights advocates from Memorial, Russia's most prominent rights group that won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022. The group demands their immediate release. Independent Russian media reported Friday that Konstantin Kotov, an activist accused of donating to Navalny's organisation, left Russia before he was due to appear in a Moscow court Friday. He told Mediazona he decided to leave after a heart surgeon, Ivan Tishchenko, was jailed for four years for donating around \$34 to Navalny's organisation.

## Pence calls on Trump to renew US support for Taiwan

Taipei (PTI): Former US vice president Mike Pence called on President-elect Donald Trump to renew his pledge to support Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion. Speaking during a visit to Taipei on Friday, Pence said China's annexation of the island would impact global trade, technology and nuclear proliferation. "The fall of Taiwan would likely spark a new nuclear arms race," he said. "Smaller Asian nations concerned about Chinese aggression would no longer be confident of American deterrence. American security commitments would be viewed as empty promises, destabilising not only this region, but the wider world." He added that nations would feel "they had no choice but to develop their own nuclear arsenal", which would increase the risk of global nuclear confrontation. Pence, who served as vice president during Trump's first term but had a falling out with his former boss over Trump's refusal to concede the 2020 election, sought to reassure Taiwanese people of Washington's continued support. The US is Taiwan's main arms provider and favours maintaining the status quo between Taipei and Beijing, which has threatened to annex the self-ruled island, by force if necessary. On his campaign trail last year, Trump cast doubt over the US' continued backing of Taiwan, accusing the island of stealing the chip industry from the US and saying Taiwan should pay the US for protection against China. Pence, speaking at an educational forum in Taipei's capital, said he was convinced the US would never "abandon" its allies across the Pacific Ocean. "I call on the new administration in Washington, and freedom-loving nations around the world to urgently renew our commitment to providing Taiwan with the support it needs to defend itself and its freedom," he said. Pence also called on Trump's incoming administration to start negotiations for a free trade agreement with Taiwan, a development that's long been floated by various US and Taiwanese politicians and that would be sure to anger China.

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
**NOIDA** Administrative Building, Sector-6, NOIDA-201301 (U.P.)  
 Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

**नीलामी की विज्ञप्ति**

मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी, नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण की ओर से भण्डार क्रय विभाग सैक्टर-39 के भण्डार में जमा निष्क्रिय सामग्री जैसा है जहाँ है के आधार पर दिनांक 04.02.2025 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे समिति के समक्ष नीलामी की जानी है। नीलामी में भाग लेने के इच्छुक व्यक्ति/संस्था, निष्क्रिय सामान का निरीक्षण किसी भी कार्यदिवस में दिनांक 20.01.2025 से दिनांक 03.02.2025 तक कर सकते हैं। नीलामी में भाग लेने वाले प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को बोली बोलने से पूर्व रु. 90,791/- (रुपये नब्बे हजार सात सौ इक्यान्वे मात्र) धरोहर राशि एफ.डी.आर./डी.डी. के रूप में नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के पक्ष में बोली बोलने की तिथि से पूर्व पैन नम्बर सहित भण्डार क्रय विभाग के कार्यालय में जमा करानी होगी। धरोहर राशि Refundable होगी। सबसे अधिक बोली लगाने वाले को नीलामी के तुरन्त बाद नीलामी राशि का 25% मुतातान तुरन्त जमा करना अनिवार्य है। सामग्री 20 दिन के अन्दर बाकी मुतातान करके उठाना होगा, अन्यथा धरोहर राशि एवं 25% मुतातान राशि जप्त कर लिये जायेगे। नीलाम होने वाली सामग्री की सूची भण्डार क्रय विभाग के नोटिस बोर्ड व सैक्टर-39 स्थित कार्यालय में कार्य दिवसों में देखी जा प्राप्त की जा सकती है। किसी भी प्रकार का अतिरिक्त कर देय होगा। सक्षम अधिकारी को किसी भी बोली को निरस्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार होगा।

भण्डार क्रय अधिकारी, नीलामी  
 कार्यालय : सैक्टर-39, नौएडा

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

## Lloyd Austin ends his term marred by Afghanistan but buoyed by Ukraine

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin will bid farewell Friday to the forces and personnel he has led through a tumultuous term that had three major military crises, a global pandemic and a personal brush with cancer that became a flashpoint for the way it was mishandled. Austin, 71, spent 41 years of his life in a military uniform. He retired as a highly decorated four-star general who earned a Silver Star — an award given for gallantry in action — for leading troops from the front in the initial 2003 invasion of Iraq. He is one of the many Pentagon leaders who have served in combat and has "dust on his boots" — something President-elect Donald Trump's choice for defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, has falsely claimed is his distinction and why he is needed to restore a military

hollowed out by "woke" diversity initiatives. "There have been a lot of narratives out there about how capable, how weak our military is," Austin said in an interview with The Associated Press. "You've just got to look at the things we have done, that we continue to do, at a moment's notice." Austin retired from the Army in 2016 only to be asked to return to the Pentagon by President Joe Biden in 2021, making history as the nation's first Black defence secretary. He took the helm of the Pentagon at the height of COVID-19 and just weeks after the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol by a mob of Trump's supporters. His early months saw the department working through a divisive COVID-19 vaccine mandate for the force and a deep dive to determine whether there was a wider extremism problem

## Graffiti on Assad's prison walls express Syrians' fears and loves

PTI ■ DAMASCUS

Damascus (PTI): Languishing in a dungeon cell of Syria's then-ruler Bashar Assad, an unknown prisoner scrawled a verse of Arabic poetry on his cell wall — an expression of pain and love amid his torment. "My country, even if it oppresses me, is dear. My people, even if uncharitable to me, are generous," he wrote. It's a well-known verse, composed 800 years ago by a poet defying a tyrannical caliph. As you walk through the cold, dark cells of Assad's prisons, the graffiti on the walls cry out. They plead to God and yearn for loved ones. Often mysterious, they preserve fragments of what anonymous men were thinking as they faced torture and death. "Trust no one, not even your brother," someone darkly warns on a cell wall in Damascus' notorious Palestine Branch detention facility.

Since 2011, tens of thousands of Syrians vanished inside the network of prisons and detention facilities run by Assad's security forces as they tried to crush his opposition. Inmates went for years without contact with the outside world, living in overcrowded, windowless cells where their cellmates died around them. Torture and beatings were inflicted daily. Mass executions were frequent. Most inmates would have fully expected to die. They had no reason to believe anyone would ever see the messages they scratched into the walls except future prisoners. One wrote a single word in Arabic, "ashtaqtalak" - "I miss you" - a love letter that could never be sent to a beloved whose name only the writer need know. More than a month after the prisons were opened by insur-

gents who ousted Assad in December, The Associated Press toured several facilities to view the graffiti left behind. Nothing can be known about the men who drew and wrote them. Only a few bear names, and few are dated. It's impossible to know who of them lived or died. Some walls have layers of graffiti on top of each other, marking generations of suffering. "Don't be sad, mother. This is my fate," reads one, dated Jan 1, 2024. Underneath it are traces of an older text, so faded that only a few words are legible: "... except for you" - a hint of longing for a loved one. Many of the writings and drawings are cries to parents or loved ones. Someone drew a heart broken in two, with "mother" written in one side, "father" in the other.

<p>समाचार पत्र में विज्ञापन द्वारा तारीख के लिए सम्बन्धीत न्यायालय उपजिलाधिकारी/सहायक कलेक्टर (प्रथम श्रेणी), गाजियाबाद।          पत्रांक: 1432 फेर-एफएससी0301/2024          दिनांक 13/01/2025          कम्प्यूटर वाद सं०-T202411280110791          वाद संख्या 10791/2024          अंतिम धारा- उत्तर प्रदेश राजस्व संहिता-2006,144          श्रीराम द्विवेस प्राप्ति          तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद</p> <p>बनाम          अजय सिंह यादव एवं 5 अन्य          ग्राम शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना,          तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद          श्रीराम द्विवेस प्राप्ति-नीमपुर अगस्त्युर कटक उड़ीसा          .....वादी</p> <p>बनाम          1. अजय सिंह यादव पुत्र श्री अमर सिंह निवासी शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद।          2. गन्ध सिंह यादव पुत्र श्री अमर सिंह निवासी शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद।          3. सूरज मान पुत्र कल्लू निवासी शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद।          4. शीर्ष टावरल प्राप्ति, बी-111, सैक्टर-5, नौएडा।          5. नगर निगम गाजियाबाद द्वारा नगर आवक, नगर निगम गाजियाबाद।          6. उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार द्वारा कलेक्टर गाजियाबाद          .....प्रतिवादीगण</p> <p>वादी ने आपके विरुद्ध उत्तर वाद संस्थित किया है। उत्तर वाद में मेरे न्यायालय में सुनवाई हेतु दिनांक 27.01.2025 निश्चित है। अतः आप उत्तर देने के लिए व्यक्तिगत रूप से या अधिवक्ता के माध्यम से अपना उत्तर देने के उपसंहार हेतु के लिए सम्बन्धित न्यायालय में उपस्थित होना आवश्यक है। अतः दिनांक 13.01.2025 को मेरे हस्ताक्षर से उत्तर न्यायालय की मुहर लगाकर जमा किया गया।          (अजय दीक्षित)          उपजिलाधिकारी          सहायक कलेक्टर (प्रथम श्रेणी), गाजियाबाद</p>	<p>समाचार पत्र में विज्ञापन द्वारा तारीख के लिए सम्बन्धीत न्यायालय उपजिलाधिकारी/सहायक कलेक्टर (प्रथम श्रेणी), गाजियाबाद।          पत्रांक: 1431 फेर-एफएससी0301/2024          दिनांक 13/01/2025          कम्प्यूटर वाद सं०-T2024112801044489          वाद संख्या 4489/2024          अंतिम धारा- उत्तर प्रदेश राजस्व संहिता-2006,144          जयपुरिया इस्ट्री थिल्स प्राप्ति          तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद</p> <p>बनाम          पवन सैन एवं 8 अन्य          ग्राम शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना,          तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद          जयपुरिया इस्ट्री थिल्स प्राप्ति-एस-25,          ग्रीनवाड भेन् नई दिल्ली।          .....वादी</p> <p>बनाम          1. पवन सैन पुत्र ब्रह्मलाल निवासी शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद।          2. नगर निगम गाजियाबाद द्वारा नगर आवक, नगर निगम गाजियाबाद।          3. शीमपुत्र पुत्र शिवरत्न          4. मेधापुत्र पुत्र रवीराम          5. रोहित उर्फ बबलू पुत्र नरेन्द्र          6. सोनिया पुत्री नरेन्द्र          7. पवन यादव पुत्र नरेन्द्र          8. मुनी देवी पुत्री नरेन्द्र          9. आशा यादव पुत्री प्रेमपाल          निवासी शाहपुर बम्हेटा, परगना हासना तहसील व जिला गाजियाबाद।          .....प्रतिवादीगण</p> <p>वादी ने आपके विरुद्ध उत्तर वाद संस्थित किया है। उत्तर वाद में मेरे न्यायालय में सुनवाई हेतु दिनांक 27.01.2025 निश्चित है। अतः आप उत्तर देने के लिए व्यक्तिगत रूप से या अधिवक्ता के माध्यम से अपना उत्तर देने के उपसंहार हेतु के लिए सम्बन्धित न्यायालय में उपस्थित होना आवश्यक है। अतः दिनांक 13.01.2025 को मेरे हस्ताक्षर से उत्तर न्यायालय की मुहर लगाकर जमा किया गया।          (अजय दीक्षित)          उपजिलाधिकारी          सहायक कलेक्टर (प्रथम श्रेणी), गाजियाबाद</p>
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## UK orders 'rapid audit' of ethnicity in child sexual abuse

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK government has ordered a "rapid audit" of the scale and nature of grooming gangs based child sexual exploitation, including an examination of ethnicity data to determine "cultural and societal drivers" behind the crimes. UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper laid out the plans in a statement in the House of Commons on Thursday, also noting that many major investigations into the issue have involved "Pakistani heritage gangs". Amid growing demands for a national inquiry into the scandal since Tesla CEO Elon Musk attacked the UK's handling of the historic scandal on his X platform, the minister told Parliament that the Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce will immediately expand the ethnicity data it collects and publishes. "Many major investigations have involved

Pakistani heritage gangs and the police taskforce evidence also shows exploitation and abuse taking place across many different communities and ethnicities. But the data on ethnicity of both perpetrators and victims is still inadequate," Yvette Cooper told MPs. "In order to go much further, I have asked Baroness Louise Casey to oversee a rapid audit of the current scale and nature of gang-based exploitation across the country and to make recommendations on the further work that is needed... It will properly examine ethnicity data and the demographics of the gangs involved and their victims and it will look at the cultural and societal drivers for this type of offending including amongst different ethnic groups," she said. The shadow home secretary, Conservative MP Chris Philp, responded to stress that the authorities had his-



Firefighters watch a helicopter drop water on the Palisades Fire in Mandeville Canyon in Los Angeles, on Saturday.

that it was a 'far-right bandwagon' to raise these issues and call for a proper inquiry. Let me say this: it is not far right to stand up for rape victims, and smearing those who raised this issue is exactly what led to the victims being ignored and the crimes covered up in the first place," he told the Commons. Cooper reiterated that the actions the government has announced this week covers the duty to report child abuse, proper penalties for any cover-ups, stronger sentences for grooming gangs, new rights for victims to get an independent review on reopening their case and new action to reopen historical police investigations. The Home Office said the rapid national audit will begin soon and last three months. "It will be supported by an expert advisory board and draw on the views of victims

and survivors. This work, including the new Victims and Survivors Panel, will be backed by GBP 2.5 million in funding. According to official estimates, of the 115,000 child sexual exploitation and abuse offences recorded in 2023 by police, over 4,000 of them were group-based offending. Of those, around 1,100 involved abuse within the family, and over 300 involved abuse in institutions, whilst over 700 of them were group-based grooming gang offences. "We are also urging police forces to look again at closed and unsolved cases on their files, to ensure they pursue criminals and put them behind bars so they cannot hurt anyone else," added Jess Phillips, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls in the Home Office.



China launches Pakistani satellite into space

Beijing/Islamabad (PTI): China successfully launched a Pakistani satellite into space from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Friday...

Beijing (PTI): Chinese President Xi Jinping held a telephone conversation with US President-elect Donald Trump on Friday...

Xi, Trump hold talks over phone

Beijing (PTI): Chinese President Xi Jinping held a telephone conversation with US President-elect Donald Trump on Friday...

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Om Gulati is the owner of Residential Plot No. 241 area measuring 350 Sq. Mtrs. situated at block C, sector-44, Noida...

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Tejveer is the owner of Plot area measuring 508.59 Sq. Yds. Gata no. 186, situated at Village Agwana, Sikandarabad U.P. 203205 through Sale deed dated 01.11.2021 regd. as doc. No. 10542...

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GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE. SR. NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH. NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER. OPENING DATE AND TIME. AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES. WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH. NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL.

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SPACE INCUBATORIES TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED

Table with columns: S. No., Particulars, 3 months ended, Year ended, 3 months ended. Rows include Total income from operations, Net Profit/(Loss) for the period, Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax), Total Comprehensive Income for the period, etc.

NOTES: 1. The above Audited Quarterly financial results as reviewed by the Audit Committee were approved by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 16.01.2025. The above results have been audited by the Statutory Auditors of the Company and they have expressed an unqualified audit opinion thereon.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME. I, Yati Sirohiwal D/o Satya Prakash, R/o BH-67 East Shalimar Bagh New Delhi - 110088 State that my name has inadvertently got recorded in my passport as Yati Serohiwal, whereas in my other document my name reflects as Anshuman Sirohiwal...

Under the circumstances, notice is hereby given to the General Public/Financial Institutions or other persons, organizations, companies, government authorities, having any claim, rights, title, or any interest of any nature whatsoever into or upon the said property, is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing with documentary evidence by registered AD Post to the undersigned at the address mentioned hereinbelow within 10 days of the publication of this notice and in the event no response having been received to the notice, the title deed of Anita Thapar to the said property shall be deemed to be clear of any claim, charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our client in any manner whatsoever.

Under the circumstances, notice is hereby given to the General Public/Financial Institutions or other persons, organizations, companies, government authorities, having any claim, rights, title, or any interest of any nature whatsoever into or upon the said property, is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing with documentary evidence by registered AD Post to the undersigned at the address mentioned hereinbelow within 10 days of the publication of this notice and in the event no response having been received to the notice, the title deed of Anita Thapar to the said property shall be deemed to be clear of any claim, charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our client in any manner whatsoever.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Public in General is informed that my clients Sh. Pradeep Jain, S/o Late Jai Kumar Jain and Krishna Jain W/o Pradeep Jain both R/o CP-233, Pitampura, Delhi-34 has debarred/dismised/Dis-inherited their son Gaurav Jain and his wife Tanu Aggarwal W/o Gaurav Jain from all their movable and immovable properties and severed all relations from them as they are not obeying them. In future my clients shall not be responsible for any of their acts, deeds, etc.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public on behalf of my client HFC Bank Ltd. who has disbursed a Loan to Mr. Neeraj Jain and Megha Jain (under Loan Account No. 702650837) against the mortgage of property being No. 1362, measuring 160 Sq.Yards, situated at Urban Estate, Sector-4, Gurgaon, Haryana. It has come to the notice of my client HFC Bank Ltd. that the original Allotment Letter dated 23.12.1968 issued by Estate Officer, Faridabad, in favour of Smt. Shanti Devi have been misplaced. It is hereby appointed to the general public that whoever finds the same may kindly return the same to the Branch Manager, HFC Bank Ltd., The Capital Court, Munirka, Outer Ring Road, DLF Phase II, New Delhi-110067 or the undersigned. If anybody found missing the documents mentioned herein, the same shall be at his/her own risk and cost.

ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK. REGD. OFFICE: ESAF Bhanu, Mamthury, Thrisser- 680 651, Kerala. GOLD AUCTION NOTICE. Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold ornaments pledged with ESAF Small Finance Bank and not redeemed by borrowers, despite repeated reminders and notices, of our branches, are listed below. This will be auctioned as per the details given below: DATE OF AUCTION: 10-02-2025 TIME: 2 PM TO 5 PM AUCTION VENUE: THROUGH E-AUCTION AUCTION ADDRESS: https://gold.auctiontiger.net Contact Number: 9099013705/6351896640

Indian Overseas Bank. BARARI-MATHURA BRANCH. (ADDRESS : BARARI VIA REFINERY P.O., BARARI MATHURA, UTTAR PRADESH - 281005. Phone No. 8925950472 & E-mail id : job472@job.in)

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Union Cabinet approves ₹11,440 Crore revival plan for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 11,440 crore revival plan for debt-laden Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), according to a statement released on Friday.



Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said. The equity infusion of Rs 10,300 crore into RINL will help it overcome the operational problems related to raising working capital and start blast furnace operations in the most productive way, the statement said.

contractual) and those dependent on the operations of the steel plant. The revival plan envisages that RINI will start full production with two blast furnaces in January 2025 and with three blast furnaces by August 2025.

Eight former, current Paytm officials pay ₹3.32 Crore to settle case with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



As many as eight current and former officials of One97 Communications, which owns and operates Paytm, have collectively paid Rs 3.32 crore to markets regulator Sebi to settle allegations of flouting securities market norms.

“without admitting or denying of the findings”. In view of the receipt of settlement amount by Sebi, the instant adjudication proceedings initiated against the notices vide show cause notice...Dated May 17, 2024, are hereby disposed of,” Sebi said in its settlement order.

the company's MD and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma and his relatives, in violation of LODR Regulations, 2015. These directors allegedly approved and signed offer documents containing incorrect statements and incomplete disclosures, in violation of ICDR rules.

भारत का राजपत्र The Gazette of India. स. 2271 नई दिल्ली, सोमवार, जनवरी 13, 2025/PAUSHA 23, 1946

India's economic growth poised to rebound, says RBI Bulletin

PTI ■ MUMBAI



India's economic growth is poised to rebound as domestic demand regains strength, though the stickiness in food inflation warrants careful monitoring, the latest RBI Bulletin released on Friday said.

inflation eased for the second successive month in December, although the stickiness in food inflation warrants careful monitoring of second order effects.

India's forex reserves drop by USD 8.714 Billion to USD 625.871 Billion

PTI ■ MUMBAI



India's forex reserves dropped by USD 8.714 billion to USD 625.871 billion in the week ended January 10, the RBI said on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Department of Finance Services (Banking Division) 797 - II, Shantikunj, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur-482001 (M.P.)

Change of Name

I Tanveer Ahmed Khan S/O Shameem Ahmed Khan declare that, My minor daughter ANA TANVEER'S School record/ 10th class CBSE record. Her Father's name wrongly entered as TANVEER AHMED. While according to other documents. My correct name is TANVEER AHMED KHAN.

नाम परिवर्तन

हम मोहन घोषी एवं प्रीति घोषी सर्वसाधारण को सूचित करते हैं कि हमारी पुत्री लक्ष्मी चंदेल है जो उसके जन्म प्रमाण पत्र और शैक्षणिक पत्रों में अंकित है और उसका घर का बोलता नाम तमना है जो उसके आधार कार्ड में लिखा गया है जबकि वर्तमान एवं भविष्य में लक्ष्मी घोषी के नाम से जानी पहचानी, पुकारी जाति है इस प्रकाशन के उपरंत उसे लक्ष्मी घोषी के नाम से ही पुकारा लिखा पढ़ा जाए। आमजन एवं सर्वजन सूचित हो।

पुराना नाम: तमना चंदेल वर्तमान नाम: लक्ष्मी घोषी 4 वार्ड नं. 1 ग्राम सेन्रा कुलसी देवरी सागर म.प्र.

नाम परिवर्तन

मैं हिमत् सिंह (Himmat Singh) पुत्र बद्रीलाल यादव सर्वसाधारण को सूचित करता हूँ कि मेरे सभी शासकीय/अर्धशासकीय/ अन्य दस्तावेजों में मेरा नाम हिमत् सिंह पुत्र बद्रीलाल यादव है जो कि सही है। परंतु त्रुटि से आधार कार्ड में मेरा नाम हेमंत कुमार (Hemant Kumar) अंकित हो गया है जो कि गलत है। इस प्रकाशन के बाद मुझे सभी शासकीय/ अर्धशासकीय/ अन्य दस्तावेजों में हिमत् सिंह पुत्र बद्रीलाल यादव के नाम से ही जाना, पहचाना, लिखा, पढ़ा एवं पुकारा जाए।

Cabinet approves refarming of 687 Mhz of spectrum, more to come: Scindia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The Union Cabinet has approved the refarming of 687 Mhz spectrum for mobile services and more will be done based on the study by a committee of secretaries put in place by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday.

Speaking at an event of industry body COAI, the minister said mobile services need 2,000 Mhz of spectrum by 2030 and the Cabinet decision takes the total quantum of radiowaves to 1,587 Mhz.

Scindia said the government will ensure that the requirement of the industry is met and there are no hurdles in the digital telecom landscape of the country.

"I am in conversation, as we speak, with our telecom majors and OEMs (original equipment makers) to see if there are possibilities to set up telecom manufacturing zones (TMZ). I think that time for TMZs has come," he said.

Rupee ends one paisa down at 86.62 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI



The rupee traded in a tight range and settled 1 paisa lower at 86.62 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, as massive outflow of foreign funds and falling domestic equity markets dented investors' sentiment.

In two back-to-back sessions, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the local unit had gained 30 paise from its lowest-ever closing level of 86.70 against the dollar.

housing market data from the US," he said and projected the USD-INR spot price to trade in the range of 86.55 to 86.95.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent higher at 108.91.



# CLAY SHAPED EMOTIONS



connection. The earthy textures and intricate details of the terracotta forms draw viewers into an intimate engagement with the art. Reghu's ability to blend Dravidian and African features results in works that feel rooted in tradition while addressing contemporary sensibilities. The energy within the sculptures invites viewers to pause and reflect, creating a quiet dialogue between art and audience. Reghu draws inspiration from ancient traditions, including the art of the Indus Valley and Harappan civilisations. His sculptures are not replicas of the past; they reinterpret these influences to explore identity and human emotion in a modern context. His figures, with their expressive stances and thoughtful

An exploration of life and emotion through G. Reghu's evocative terracotta sculptures at Art Magnum Gallery, says SAKSHI PRIYA

gestures, evoke narratives that are both universal and deeply personal. The exhibition showcases Reghu's mastery of terracotta as a medium, bringing his forms to life with an emotional resonance that remains long after one leaves the gallery. The contours and expressions of his sculptures suggest movement and thought, compelling the audience to engage with the works on a deeper level. Whether through the tension in a figure's posture or the serenity of a tilted head, each piece carries an emotional weight that connects with the viewer.

Touchable Emotions celebrates clay as a material with both historical significance and contemporary relevance. Reghu's work honours ancient traditions while pushing their boundaries, demonstrating the enduring power of this medium to express complex themes. Through his art, he creates a bridge between the past and the present, showing how heritage and innovation can coexist.

This exhibition is an invitation to reflect on universal themes of life and emotion.

Reghu's terracotta sculptures serve as a poignant reminder of art's ability to connect us to shared experiences. The world of G. Reghu's evocative terracotta sculptures, on display until February 15, 2025, at Art Magnum Gallery, New Delhi. Don't miss the chance to connect with his transformative journey from traditional pottery to emotionally powerful human forms.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Art has the power to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, offering a language beyond words. Rainer Maria Rilke's observation, "The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions that have been hidden for a long time," resonates deeply when considering the process of sculpting with clay. This medium, both humble and evocative, captures human emotions in their rawest form, narrating stories that connect with the core of our shared experiences.

The Touchable Emotions exhibition at Art Magnum Gallery features the terracotta sculptures of renowned sculptor G. Reghu. Curated by Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya, the exhibition ruminates into themes of life, heritage and emotion. Reghu's relationship with clay is deeply personal, as he shapes it to express stories that reflect universal human experiences. Each sculpture explores facets of existence, joy, introspection and



## Classical Singing at its Best

By SAKSHI PRIYA

What is it about music and dance that can stir our hearts and minds in ways words never could?

### The Power of Classical Music:

The 26th Swami Haridas-Tansen Sangeet Nritya Mahotsav curated by Padma Bhushan Dr. Uma Sharma. The Festival opened with a captivating Dhrupad performance by Ustad F. Wasifuddin Dagar, whose renditions of Raag Kambhoji and Raag Adana drew listeners into a peaceful space. The stillness in the room was striking, as Dagar's music seemed to speak directly to the heart, offering a rare moment of calm in an otherwise busy world. His mastery of the Dhrupad tradition set a perfect tone for the evening, allowing the audience to experience the beauty of classical music in its purest form.

The night took on new energy when Ustad Shujaat Khan stepped on stage. His sitar playing was truly magical. The audience, enraptured by the fluidity of his performance, responded with a standing ovation. The smooth flow of notes and the intricate patterns he created with his strings left a lasting impression on everyone present. His performance was an experience that



pulled the listener into the depths of his artistry.

Following this, the legendary Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia brought a sense of serenity to the evening with his flute recital. His ability to draw emotion from the bansuri (flute) was clear as he moved through ragas with ease. The sound of his flute seemed to fill the room, evoking a wide array of emotions, from joy to contemplation, as he effortlessly navigated complex melodies. Each note he played invited the audience to listen closely and reflect on the feelings embedded in his music.



**The Fusion of Traditions:** Day two of the festival continued to impress, with Pt. Vishwamohan Bhatt and his son, Pt. Salil Bhatt, bringing a unique touch to the proceedings. Their performance on the Mohan Veena and Satvik Veena captivated with its fusion of classical and folk traditions. The melodies were rich and moving, connecting deeply with the audience. Along with the Manganiyars from Rajasthan, their performance was a journey through the cultural heart of India, showcasing the diversity and vibrancy of its musical heritage.

A standout moment on day two was the collaboration between Pt. Shubhendra Rao on the sitar and Smt. Saskia Rao on the cello. Their

performance merged Eastern and Western classical music with remarkable ease. The fusion of sitar and cello was both unexpected and beautiful, offering a fresh perspective on the possibilities of musical collaboration.

Smt. Shubha Mudgal's vocal performance rounded off the evening, showcasing her remarkable ability to convey emotion through song. Her renditions in Raag Kedar and Raag Megh captured the essence of Indian classical music, leaving the audience in wonders of her vocal range and depth.

**Kathak and the Divine Connection:** The final evening was a celebration of Kathak, with Padma Bhushan Dr. Uma Sharma presenting a moving performance, despite health challenges. Her seated portrayal of Kathak Bhav in 'Maiyaa Mori Mein Nahi Maakhan Khayo' showcased the grace and power of the dance form. Accompanied by her disciples, Sharma's performance took the audience through a spiritual journey, demonstrating the depth and beauty of Kathak.

The festival closed with a powerful performance by Begum Parween Sultana, whose voice filled the space with an intensity that left the audience in standing ovation. Her final rendition was the perfect conclusion to a festival that had showcased the very best of India's classical music and dance. It was a celebration of tradition, passion and artistry, an event that will remain etched in the hearts of all who were fortunate enough to witness it.



## KALP: Experience Life in Art

By TEAM VIVA

**KALP (Phases)**, is an exhibition of exquisite artworks by artist Poornima Dayal from Mumbai. This exhibition is taking place at The Lalit Kala Academi, 35, Rabindra Bhavan, Ferozshah Road, New Delhi from 15th January 2025 to 21 January 2025. It was inaugurated on 15th January by Padam Shri Dr. Shovana Narayan, Amita Sarabhai, Joint secretary, Ministry of Culture, Nidhi Kulpati, M.D Ndtv. Poornima Dayal is an internationally acclaimed, award winning artist who has exhibited extensively across the globe.

She is the recipient of the Winner prize Award by The Golden Duck Gallery, Hungary, Budapest in early 2024. She also has received the Honorable Awards and Talent Prize awards from Teravarna Art Gallery, Los Angeles. Poornima had the privilege of representing India at The Venice International Art Fair in 2023. Her artworks have also been displayed several times at the prestigious Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, Telangana Art Gallery, Hyderabad, The Bombay Art Society, Mumbai, The Nehru Centre Art Gallery, Mumbai, Amethyst and Jadoka Art Galleries, Chennai. The 'Vishwarang' program by the Government of India, The Rabindranath Tagore University of Art, Kolkata, The Peak Galleria, Hong Kong, The Holy Art Gallery, Athens and Paris respectively and The Line Contemporary, London. Having had the opportunity to exhibit at The Vienna Biennale, she has been



painting since 33 years. 'Abstract conceptual' is how she describes her style of art. 'I use a lot of textures and colors in my style of painting', continues Poornima. KALP, her latest Solo Exhibition at The Lalit Kala Academi is a depiction of life's journey through the various phases of life. In this exhibition, true to its name are exhibited different series of her Acrylics on Canvas, each representing a different phase. 'KALP' signifies the importance of living a life in reverence loving and accepting life. Of being grateful for everything has a Divine purpose. 'For me Art is very precious. It's something I respect. It is a way of self expression for me and I am grateful for it', quotes Poornima. A treat for Art Lovers the exhibition is on from 11 am to 7pm at The Lalit Kala Academi from 15 to 21 January 2025.



भारत सरकार  
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय

## नयी दिशा की ओर ग्रामीण विकास



डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री

नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

## स्वामित्व योजना

अंतर्गत

15.63 लाख भू-अधिकार पत्रों का  
वितरण एवं लाभार्थियों के साथ संवाद

प्रधानमंत्री

नरेन्द्र मोदी

द्वारा (वर्चुअल माध्यम से)

एवं

डॉ. मोहन यादव

मुख्यमंत्री

द्वारा

विकास कार्यों का भूमिपूजन एवं लोकार्पण

18 जनवरी, 2025 | दोपहर 12:30 बजे | सिवनी, मध्यप्रदेश

- स्वामित्व योजना ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में 25 सितम्बर 2018 के पूर्व से रहने वाले व्यक्तियों को उनकी संपत्ति का कानूनी अधिकार प्रदान करती है।
- योजना से ग्रामीण आबादी को बैंक ऋण प्राप्त करने एवं संपत्ति का विक्रय करने में मिल रही सहायता से ग्रामीण परिवारों का सामाजिक एवं आर्थिक सशक्तिकरण सुनिश्चित हो रहा है।



- सभी जिलों का ड्रोन सर्वेक्षण कार्य एवं 12 जिले- भोपाल, हरदा, डिंडोरी, सीहोर, बुरहानपुर, खरगोन, कटनी, अनूपपुर, शहडोल, उमरिया, जबलपुर एवं श्योपुर में भू-अधिकार पत्र वितरण का कार्य पूर्ण हो चुका है।
- प्रदेश में अब तक 39.63 लाख भू-अधिकार पत्रों का वितरण किया जा चुका है।

सीधा प्रसारण

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