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CITIZENSHIP IN FEDERAL COURT

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BJP CMs CORNER KEJRIWAL

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The star campaigners of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have descended in the national Capital going full throttle against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ahead of the high-octane Delhi Assembly elections with its prominent leaders including party president and Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, and three chief ministers-Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath, Madhya Pradesh CM Mohanlal Yadav, and Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami—holding multiple rallies, road shows and public meetings across the length and breadth of the city.



New Delhi: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj, party candidate Dushyant Gautam, and others during a public meeting for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, in New Delhi

Rahul Gandhi cancels two rallies on consecutive days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's rally in the national capital on Thursday was canceled due to his poor health and medical advice. He was scheduled to hold the rally in Mustafabad in northeast Delhi, but people familiar with him said he is suffering from chest congestion. The Congress campaign for the Assembly elections was expected to get a big boost from Rahul's three daily rallies on three successive days, starting January 22, but two of these have now been canceled. "As of now, Rahul Gandhi's election rally in Madipur on

Friday is on schedule, and he is likely to address a massive gathering," said Delhi Congress chief Devendra Yadav, a day after the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha failed to show up for an election rally near Inderlok metro station in the Sadar Assembly constituency on Wednesday. Dismissing speculation that the cancellation of Rahul's rallies was aimed at helping the AAP by preventing a division of Muslim voters-Yadav said, "These are rumors. We are fighting the election independently." "After Republic Day, the party leaders will step up the campaign in Delhi," he said.

infiltrators. "And on the other side you can see New Okhla [Noida]. Compare the roads of Delhi to Noida and Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, there is a difference of sky and earth. There are world class educational institutions and medical colleges in UP while the educational institutions run by Delhi government are in a very bad condition," he alleged. Calling it a 'well thought conspiracy', the firebrand leader said, "They have not just kept the people of Delhi devoid of basic facilities, they have also compromised on national security through their actions. You must have seen the riots in Delhi in 2020 and how the AAP leaders and councillors were engaged in that. They are repeatedly messing with national security."

India-China continue border talks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will travel to Beijing on a two-day visit starting Sunday to discuss next steps in improving ties between the two nations. This comes after armies of India and China in October last year agreed to disengage from friction points at Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. High level talks between the two countries gathered momentum following the pact. It will be the second top level meeting in the last one and half months between the two neighbours. National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval travelled to Beijing and held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang under the framework of Special Representatives (SR) dialogue on the boundary dispute. "Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will be visiting Beijing on January 26 and 27 for a meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Minister mechanism between India and China," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.



The importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquillity in border areas. The Modi-Xi meeting came two days after India and China firmed up a disengagement pact for Depsang and Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh. In the SR dialogue, India pressed for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the overall boundary dispute between the two countries. Doval and Wang also focused on "positive" direction for cross-border cooperation including resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, river data sharing and border trade.

"The resumption of this bilateral mechanism flows from the agreement at the leadership level to discuss the next steps for India-China relations, including in the political, economic, and people-to-people domains," it said in a brief statement. The decision to revive the SR dialogue mechanism and other such formats was taken at a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan on October 23. In the nearly 50-minute meeting, Modi underscored

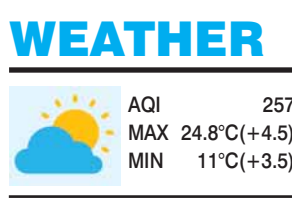
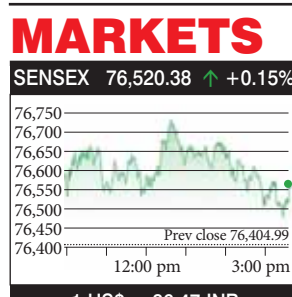
the importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquillity in border areas. The Modi-Xi meeting came two days after India and China firmed up a disengagement pact for Depsang and Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh. In the SR dialogue, India pressed for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the overall boundary dispute between the two countries. Doval and Wang also focused on "positive" direction for cross-border cooperation including resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, river data sharing and border trade.

Last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the India-China relationship is trying to disentangle itself from the complications arising from the post-2020 border situation and more thought needs to be given to the longer-term evolution of the ties. "At a time when most of its relationships are moving forward, India confronts a particular challenge in establishing an equilibrium with China. Much of that arises from the fact that both nations are on the rise," he had

MEA Jaishankar talks deportation of Indians in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India has always been open to legitimate return of undocumented Indians to their country, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday, noting that New Delhi is still in the process of verifying those from the US who can be deported to India and the number of such individuals cannot be determined yet. "As a government, we are obviously very much supportive of legal mobility because we do believe in a global workplace. We want Indian talent and Indian skills to have the maximum opportunity at the global level. At the same time, we are also very firmly opposed to illegal mobility and illegal migration," Jaishankar told a group of Indian reporters here.



Differential pricing: Uber, Ola, Apple under scanner

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

NRAI calls for CCI probe into Zomato, Swiggy

The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), which represents half a million eateries nationwide, said it will approach Competition Commission of India over "private labelling" by Zomato and Swiggy and their foray into quick commerce food delivery via Binstro by Blinkit and Snacc, respectively. In an interview, NRAI President Sagar Daryani raised concerns over "anti-competitive" practices of food delivery aggregators, "data masking" and "deep discounting". "We will be adding to our petition in CCI about them (Zomato, Swiggy) doing private labels through Binstro and Snacc," Daryani shared. He said NRAI will also request CCI to investigate complaints received from its member restaurants that Zomato and Swiggy were procuring from third party commercial kitchens for Zomato Everyday and Swiggy Daily. Queries sent to Swiggy and Zomato remained unanswered. Daryani said NRAI was "very concerned" as many restaurants were already shutting down with several workers losing their livelihoods. Addressing an NRAI townhall with restaurant industry stakeholders on Wednesday, Daryani suggested that restaurants need to look at a "third alternative" like ONDC and could replicate the success achieved through a pilot in Bengaluru, throughout India. During the townhall, top restaurateurs raised concerns over the entry of food delivery aggregators like Zomato and Swiggy into private labelling and dining-in, and stressed the need for alternatives in the market.

Days after a Delhi-based entrepreneur shared his findings on differential pricing by two ride-hailing apps in a series of posts on X, comparing fares across different devices and battery levels, the Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has issued notices to tech giant Apple Inc. and cab aggregators Ola and Uber, seeking clarification on reports of alleged differential pricing based on the type of mobile device used to book rides. This comes after reports that the two companies appeared to charge different fares for the same service, depending on whether the customer was using an iPhone or an Android device. "As a follow-up to the earlier observation of apparent #DifferentialPricing based on the different models of mobiles (#iPhones/#Android) being used, the Department of Consumer Affairs, through the CPA, has issued notices to major cab aggregators #Ola and #Uber, seeking their responses," Union Minister for Consumers' Affairs Prahlad Joshi said in a social media post. Apple has been asked to respond to technical issues reported by iPhone users after a recent software update. Apple has been releasing updates, including iOS 18.0.1 in October, to address screen and camera freezing issues, and the latest 18.2.1 update for bug fixes. In its notice, the CPA asked the companies to explain their pricing methods and address concerns about potential discrimination. The ministry described the practice as "apparent differential pricing" and sought a detailed response to ensure transparency and fairness in fare calculations.



Recently, a survey by LocalCircles revealed that 60 percent of iPhone users experienced service problems, with call failures being the most significant issue. Nearly 90 percent of surveyed iPhone users attributed their difficulties directly to an iOS update, with no blame placed on Wi-Fi or mobile networks. Last month, the internet was abuzz with speculation that cab aggregators charged different fares - higher for those making bookings on iPhones - for the same ride. However, other social media users soon joined the chorus, alleging they were being charged different fares for identical rides when booking through Android and iOS devices. Joshi had emphasized "zero tolerance for consumer exploitation" and asked the CPA to conduct a thorough inquiry into these allegations. He had described this practice as a "prima facie unfair trade practice" and a "blatant disregard" for consumers' right to transparency.

Poll chai-naastha fixed by EC

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The poll watchdog is closely monitoring the rates of chai, pakora, even chole-kulche, and how much is spent on garlands and drones while campaigning in the assembly polls in the national capital. The Election Commission of India has specified rates such as Rs 35 for a plate of poori-sabzi, Rs 30 for kulche-chole, Rs 19 for a plate of pakoras, Rs 12 for a samosa or bread pakora, Rs 6 for a cup of tea, Rs 12 for a cup of coffee, Rs 20 for a sandwich, Rs 15 for a kachori, Rs 19 for a one-litre water bottle, and Rs 70 for lunch or dinner. According to the rates chart approved by the EC, the rate for the use of drones is fixed at Rs 7,000 per day. A small garland cannot exceed Rs 20, while 10-foot garlands cannot cost more than Rs 1,500. Flowers used for stage decorations are priced at Rs 35 per square foot. A candidate can hire a horse at Rs 3,075 per day and an elephant at Rs 6,150 per day. Candidates need to get the poll panel's approval to hire animals for campaigning. The daily wage rate ranges from Rs 692 for unskilled workers to Rs 913 for graduates and above. The EC has also set rates for accommodations in hotels and



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

for vehicles. The rates for vehicles like Tata Sumo, Toyota Innova, and Mahindra Scorpio, among others, are Rs 2,421 per day per vehicle. For a normal car, the limit is Rs 1,499 per day. The maximum cost for a two-wheeler is Rs 84 per day. The rate list also specifies the maximum expenditure limit for tents, chairs, tables, podiums, and generators. For gatherings of up to 2,000 people, for example, the maximum rate, including all related expenses, is set at Rs 30,000 per event. For smaller gatherings of fewer than 250 people, the staging rate is Rs 6,150. A broom, the party symbol of the

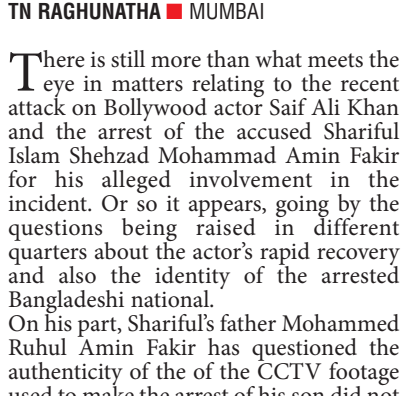
ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), used for maintaining party offices, event venues, or during campaigning, cannot cost more than Rs 25 each. There are also price limits for flags, posters, hoardings, cut-outs, and stickers. Pens used in party election offices cannot exceed Rs 6 each. Among the musical instruments used at campaign events, drums are priced at Rs 500 per day. According to officials, each returning officer prepares the rate list of services and materials used by the candidates. Officials said the itemized rate list is finalized by a committee, which includes

the electoral officer, in consultation with political parties, candidates, and traders, and is handed over to each person filing nomination papers. Though in a city like Delhi, which has 70 assembly constituencies with an average of 22-25 lakh voters each in an area of 1,483 square kilometers, the prices of most commodities are more or less the same but may vary occasionally. Candidates are required to submit their expenditure report to the poll panel within 30 days of the completion of an election. The expenses are also monitored by the commission through video recording during the campaign. The accounting of expenses is done from the date candidates file their nomination papers until the day of the results. In the event of a violation or incorrect claims, the candidacy of the person is canceled as per Election Commission rules. As a norm, the poll panel tracks candidates' expenses item-wise during election campaigns. The rates are fixed based on feedback from district election officials, market dealers, political parties, and the prevailing Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Doubts raised in Saif Ali attack case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

There is still more than what meets the eye in matters relating to the recent attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan and the arrest of the accused Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Amin Fakir for his alleged involvement in the incident. Or so it appears, going by the questions being raised in different quarters about the actor's rapid recovery and also the identity of the arrested Bangladeshi national. On his part, Shariful's father Mohammed Ruhul Amin Fakir has questioned the authenticity of the of the CCTV footage used to make the arrest of his son did not match with that of the person in the CCTV footage taken from actor's building on the day of incident, in which the intruder to Saif's house is seen climbing down the stairs. The CCTV-based photograph which initially made it to social media has been featured widely in print and electronic media. Talking to a leading television, the accused's father Mohammed Fakir said:



"The person in the CCTV footage is not my son. But the police have used this footage as the basis to arrest my son (in connection with the Saif Ali Khan attack)". Mohammed Fakir also defended his son by saying his son had never kept his hair long, unlike the person in the video. Shariful was arrested by the Mumbai police from Hiranandani Estate at Thane



(west) on January 19. Police said Shariful hailed from Rajabariya village in Nalchity sub-region of Jhalokati district in southern Bangladesh. When Shariful was produced before a holiday court on the same day, the accused's lawyer Sandeep D. Sherkhane had contested the claim made by the police that his client was a Bangladeshi who came to Mumbai six months ago. "The accused has been living in Mumbai with his family for the past 7 years. I argued in court yesterday very clearly on this. The police are trying to make him a scapegoat as this case involves a Bollywood celebrity," Sherkhane had said. It may be recalled that during the knife attack carried out on him allegedly by Shariful in the small hours of January 16, Saif had sustained six stab wounds, including the one in his spine while he was grappling an intruder in the actor's 12th floor apartment in posh "Satguru Sharan" building at Bandra (W) in north-west Mumbai.

INDONESIA IN INDIA



Band of the Indonesian contingent marches during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade on January 25. Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto is the chief guest at India's 76th Republic Day celebrations. Photo: Ranjan Dimri

Newly constructed flyover to be named after BR Ambedkar

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav today inaugurated a flyover in Bhopal costing Rs 154 crore, which will significantly accelerate the city's development. This three-kilometer-long flyover, connecting Gayatri Mandir to Ganesh Mandir, has been named after the great patriot and constitution maker, Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. Yadav said that Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, has transformed from a small village in 1956 to one of the most beautiful capitals in the country. Under the current government, the city's development will continue at a rapid pace. The inauguration coincided with the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The flyover will connect the Netaji Subhash Chandra Setu

and Veer Savarkar Setu, improving connectivity. Dr. Yadav congratulated the Public Works Minister and his department for overcoming challenges during the construction of this flyover. Additionally, Dr. Yadav announced the construction of another flyover at Bavadiya-Kalan costing Rs 180 crore, and mentioned that the Bairagarh Bridge will also be dedicated soon. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav was addressing the gathering after inaugurating the 3 km flyover in Bhopal on Thursday. He said the flyover will help ease traffic routes to Obaidullaganj, Narmadapuram, Betul, Khandwa, and Jabalpur. Praising Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose with whose birth anniversary the event coincided, Dr. Yadav said Netaji's life is an inspiration for all of us. He highlighted the leader's achievements, including passing

the ICS examination in 1923 and winning the Indian National Congress Presidential election with the highest number of votes, choosing patriotism over servitude to the British. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav highlighted Baba Saheb Ambedkar's pivotal role in advocating equality and shaping the Constitution of India, noting his opposition to Article 370. He announced the development of 'Panch Teerth' pilgrimage sites to honour Ambedkar's legacy, encompassing his birthplace, initiation place, karmabhoomi, education site, and the location of his demise. Yadav praised the contributions of great warrior women like Devi Ahilyabai, Rani Durgavati, and Rani Lakshimbai, emphasizing their role in enhancing the nation's pride. He announced the forthcoming implementation of a

women empowerment policy and highlighted the government's mission focused on the welfare of women, youth, farmers, and the poor. Yadav also shared that significant efforts are being made to attract investments to the state, with industrialists expressing interest during a recent investors' conference in Pune. He noted that the natural beauty of regions like Bhopal has impressed potential investors. Public Works Minister Rakesh Singh said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Yadav, development in the state is touching new heights. He said that the flyover will bring about a great improvement in the traffic management of the city and provide relief to the commuters. Minister Singh said that modern infrastructure is the backbone of any state with the moving ahead at a rapid pace in this direction. Yadav has

always given priority to development works. When it came to the inauguration of the flyover, he stressed on dedicating it to the public immediately. This is proof of his sensitivity and his commitment to the public. He informed that elevated corridors are being constructed in the metros of the state at a cost of about Rs 3000 crore. Along with this, the construction of 361 bridges is also in progress. Roads are being expanded to remote areas of Madhya Pradesh. Four-lane roads are being constructed in place of two-lane roads and six-lane roads will replace the four lane roads. Along with this, the construction of expressways is also going on at a fast pace. Minister Singh said that recently along with senior officials I visited various states and studied the development works and now those models will be implemented in Madhya Pradesh.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav during the inauguration ceremony of GG Flyover, in Bhopal on Thursday.

Armed miscreants attack businessman

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In a violent and shocking incident in TT Nagar area on Wednesday evening, a group of six miscreants barged into a shop and attacked a businessman, Ashish Ahirwar. Armed with swords, sticks, and rods, the attackers viciously assaulted Ashish, forcing him to flee to a neighboring shop in an attempt to save his life. However, the attackers followed him there and continued their assault. The entire incident was captured by the CCTV cameras installed in Ashish's shop, providing crucial evidence for the police investigation. The attack is believed to be a result of an old rivalry between Ashish and a local miscreant named Bali. According to the police, Ashish

had previously attacked and beaten up Bali's associate six days ago on Smart City Road, which led to the attack to take revenge. Bali, along with his partner Chinu and other accomplices targeted Ashish. The police confirmed that the earlier altercation had also been recorded on CCTV. Ashish, who runs a photocopy shop at Jawahar Chowk, was repeatedly beaten by the attackers despite seeking refuge in another shop. Following the incident, Ashish filed a complaint, and an FIR has been registered by TT Nagar police. TT Nagar police station in-charge Sudhir Ararajia assured the public that raids are underway to capture the accused, particularly Bali and Chinu, who have been named in the FIR. Police are working to identify their accomplices, and further arrests are expected soon.

First heart Transplant successfully conducted in Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh has achieved a historic milestone in healthcare services with the successful completion of its first-ever heart transplant. Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla expressed immense happiness over this achievement and stated that it reflects the dedication and diligence of the medical staff at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College, Jabalpur, and AIIMS Bhopal. He emphasized that the state health department is fully committed to public service. Shukla congratulated the doctors, support staff, and police administration, whose prompt actions and teamwork made this accomplishment possible. He also wished the patient a

speedy recovery. Shukla highlighted the effective use of green corridors and the PM Shri Air Ambulance Service in this process. He acknowledged that under the leadership of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, this citizen-focused service has elevated the state's healthcare system to new heights. Shukla praised the coordination between the health department, police, and administration, which ensured the timely transport of organs through green corridors created in Jabalpur, Bhopal, and Indore—marking a first in the state's history. Shukla lauded the family of 61-year-old Shri Baliram Kushwaha, a resident of Manakvai village in Sagar district, for their initiative to donate his organs. He described their decision as both noble and inspiring, espe-

cially during a difficult time. Shukla stated that their selfless act is not only commendable but also sets an example for society. Their contribution symbolizes humanity and the gift of new life. He urged the citizens of the state to draw inspiration from this extraordinary act and work towards raising awareness about organ donation. Shukla remarked that the PM Shri Air Ambulance Service is being utilized not only for critical patient transport but also for emergency and essential medical services. This initiative is strengthening the healthcare system significantly. He wished for the patient's speedy recovery post-transplant and emphasized that this achievement is not just a milestone in the medical field but also a beacon of hope for patients and their families. Shri Shukla called this

accomplishment a pivotal step in the delivery of healthcare services. Following the news of a brain-dead patient in Jabalpur, the state administration acted promptly. A team of doctors from AIIMS Bhopal reached Jabalpur overnight and carried out the organ retrieval process. The entire procedure involved the creation of three green corridors—in Jabalpur, Bhopal, and Indore. Exceptional coordination between the police and medical departments ensured the timely transport of organs. The heart was transported from Jabalpur to Bhopal via a green corridor and air ambulance, and successfully transplanted at AIIMS Bhopal. Meanwhile, the liver was transported to Choithram Hospital in Indore using a combination of helicopter and aircraft.

AIIMS organises daylong Hindi workshop

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A one-day Hindi workshop was organized at AIIMS Bhopal for all the faculty members, officers and employees. The workshop was inaugurated by Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh. Expressing his views, Professor Singh said, that such workshops are very important for the employees to develop the habit of working in Hindi. We should adopt simple and popular Hindi words in our work so that it becomes easier for people to understand and the official language can be propagated. With everyone's efforts we will be able to do more and more work in the official language. Earlier during the workshop, Deputy Director (Admin) Colonel (Dr.) Ajit Kumar said that such workshops provide ease and proficiency in work-

ing in Hindi and this is a very good initiative. More and more people should learn from this workshop and try to work in Hindi which will lead to development of the official language. During the first session of the workshop, AIIMS Bhopal's health educator Mr. Samad Hashmi and Psychiatric Social Worker Dr. Rishi Pandey provided important information to the participants on the topic "Impact of Mental Health on Human Life." In the second session of the workshop, Hemant Kumar Jaiswal, Consultant (Official Language), and Ms. Anju Chauhan, Junior Translation Officer, provided guidance on important points for the Hindi Quarterly Progress Report. More than 100 participants participated in this workshop.



Chief Secretary Anurag Jain speaks at the Capacity Building workshop on Sustainable Development Goals Monitoring Framework, Environmental Accounting and Gender Statistics at Kushabhau Thackeray convention center in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo

Missing FSL scientist Pankaj located in Ujjain

PNS ■ INDORE

Bhopal's Forensic Science Laboratory scientist Pankaj Mohan (51), who was missing for 4 days, has reached Ujjain. He left his house in Bhopal on January 18 for Delhi for an interview and later he went missing and remained uncontactable. According to the police, Pankaj Mohan lives in the Kolar area of Bhopal. On Wednesday night, his family registered his missing report in Kolar police station. A police team left for Delhi in search of the scientist. His last location was traced at a station in Delhi. Since then, his mobile was found to be switched off. On Thursday, Pankaj Mohan reached his home district Ujjain. The police have contacted him. He has been called to Bhopal for questioning. He informed the police over the phone that one of his bags was lost in

His departmental interview was to be held in Delhi on January 19. For which he left for Delhi on the evening of January 18

Delhi. It contained his mobile, purse and important documents along with a letter for the departmental interview to be held in Delhi. Due to the loss of the letter, he could not even give the interview in Delhi. The police team that reached Delhi in search of him is now preparing to return to Bhopal. Pankaj Mohan lives in Revenue Colony located in Kolar police station area. His departmental interview was to be held in Delhi on January 19. For which he left for Delhi on the evening of January 18 by Goa Express

but he did not reach for the interview the next day. Since then, no information about him was available. Family members and friends tried to contact him on the phone but the call did not come after which police were informed. Initial investigation by the police revealed that Pankaj had done the transaction from an ATM booth at a railway station in Delhi. After this, SI Santosh Singh of Kolar police station, Head Constable Mohammad Ahmed and Constable Kanchan Yadav reached Delhi. Scientist Pankaj Mohan's family was in Ujjain. His in-laws live here. Pankaj returned from Ujjain on January 17. After this, he left for Delhi on January 18 after packing essential items in his bag from his Kolar home. His family consists of a son and a wife who is a housewife.

Day temp reaches 31 degrees in Mandla

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The day temperatures have soared to 31 degree celsius in the state marking the concluding of winter season on Thursday. Mandla recorded the highest day temperature at 31.2 degree celsius. The weather forecast for Madhya Pradesh predicts a return to severe cold conditions starting January 25. This will be due to the shift in wind direction from south-easterly to northern winds, expected to cause a drop of 2 to 3 degrees in both day and night temperatures across the state. This change is linked to two active systems, a cyclonic circulation in Punjab and a Western Disturbance. Over the past few days, most cities in Madhya Pradesh have experienced sunny weather, with dry conditions prevailing across all divisions.

IIFM Bhopal with HCL Foundation conducts three-day workshop

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, in collaboration with the HCL Foundation, inaugurated a three-day training program on "Environment Management" for HCL Foundation officials. The program has drawn a diverse group of participants, including Program Officers, Project Leads, Associate Managers, Managers, Senior Program Officers, Deputy Managers, and Group Managers from the organization. The inaugural ceremony was honoured by the presence of Dr K. Ravichandran, Director, IIFM; Mr Shantanu Basu, Program Director and Project Director (Harit), HCL Foundation; and C.P. Kala, Chairperson (MDP), IIFM. In his inaugural address, Dr Ravichandran applauded the HCL Foundation's efforts in restoring degraded land and emphasized the significance of the three-day event as a platform to tackle key challenges in environment management. He highlighted the potential of the Trees Outside Forests in

India initiative to expand tree cover without disrupting agriculture or horticulture. Additionally, he addressed the growing demand for wood and underscored the importance of restoring degraded land through the Green Credit Program. This three-day workshop from January 22-24, 2025 features various technical sessions covering vital topics namely - Environmental Leadership and Life Skills, Economic Valuation and Natural Resource Accounting, Science and Art of River Rejuvenation through NBS, Natural Resources and Environment Management, Integrated Watershed Management, Lifecycle Analysis, Baseline, Midterm, and Endline Monitoring Framework for Climate Action Projects, Community Leadership Team Management and Conflict Resolution Skills, Development of an Indicator Framework and Theory of Change for Climate Action Projects, Environmental Communication Awareness Campaigning, and Community Resource Management.

Employees protest at CIC office

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Accusing senior officials of high-handed exploitation, employees at the State Information Commission office staged a fierce protest under the banner of the Madhya Pradesh Employees Forum in Bhopal on Thursday. Agitated employees submitted a memorandum to Chief Information Commissioner Vijay Yadav, who has promised prompt redress of their grievances. Ashok Pandey, the state president of the Employees Forum, charged Information Commissioner Omkarnath and Vandana Gandhi with exploiting employees detailed to them. He accused the officials of forcing employees posted at their residences to carry out menial household chores, amounting to a violation of their rights. The protesting employees have demanded that both officials be re-posted to the State Information Commission office within seven days. If this demand is not met, they will go on strike and submit a memorandum to the Governor.

Burglars target two high-profile houses at Char Imli, Neelbad

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In a concerning turn of events, two high-profile houses in Bhopal were targeted in separate burglary attempts, raising serious questions about the adequacy of security measures in the city. The incidents involved the government residence of Anupam Rajan, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of the Higher Education Department, and the private residence of Upendra Joshi, a former staff member of the Chief Minister's office. The first incident occurred on Tuesday night at ACS Anupam Rajan's government bungalow in the high-security Char Imli area, known for housing several top bureaucrats and officials. A thief managed to gain access to the premises and peered through a bedroom window. However, a relative inside the house heard the noise and raised an alarm, prompting the suspect to flee the scene. Police were alerted about the incident on Thursday. Investigators have collected fingerprint samples from the gate and conducted a thorough crime scene inspection. However, no formal First Information Report (FIR) has been filed yet. The breach in this highly secured area has drawn

attention to the effectiveness of existing security protocols, which are expected to provide top-notch protection for such residences. The second incident took place on January 18 at the residence of Upendra Joshi in Balaji Phase-1, Neelbad. Joshi and his wife were away, accompanying their daughter to a train station. Upon their return the following morning, they discovered the house had been broken into. The locks were smashed, and valuables, including cash and jewelry worth an estimated ₹3 lakh, were missing. In this case, an FIR has been registered, and the police have launched an investigation. Initial suspicion has fallen on a servant employed by the family, who has not reported to work since the theft. These incidents underscore significant lapses in security, even in areas considered well-protected. The breach at Char Imli has especially raised alarm bells about the vulnerability of high-profile government residences. Experts have called for a reassessment of security protocols, including the implementation of advanced surveillance systems, stricter monitoring, and comprehensive background checks for household staff.



BJP State Media In-charge Ashish Usha Agarwal shares views with Congress State Media In-charge Mukesh Nayak during foundation day celebration programme of a daily newspaper in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo

IGRMS organises lecture on TB Free India

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Dr Ajay Singh, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, AIIMS Bhopal, delivered a lecture on the topic of TB-free India: A National Aspiration under the Museum popular Lecture Series organized by Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal.

At the beginning of the programme, head of office Dr Surya Kumar Pandey welcomed and introduced Singh. In his address, Dr Ajay Singh said that the launch of TB Free India Campaign has taken an important step towards strengthening community participation and ownership in the fight against TB. This initiative received widespread support. Notably, Nishchay

Mitras have pledged to help people affected by TB. Nikshay Poshan Yojana provides financial assistance for TB patients by distributing Rs. through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), port and to increase its reach, government institutions actively participated in awareness campaigns and programs to remove the fear of TB from the minds of people.

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State upholding good governance, social welfare ideals of Lokmata

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that today marks a historic occasion as the Madhya Pradesh Cabinet convenes its significant meeting in the holy city of Maheshwar, the revered home of Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai. During her reign, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar set unparalleled examples of good governance, excelling in areas such as justice, education, social welfare, religious welfare, water conservation, and public welfare.

The state government is progressing rapidly by adopting her principles as benchmarks for governance, efficient administration, and social development. Inspired by her legacy, the government has launched numerous schemes, programs, and activities to carry forward her vision. On Friday, the entire

Cabinet will arrive in Maheshwar to pay homage to the remarkable Punyashloka Devi Ahilyabai and reaffirm its commitment to her ideals. Devi Ahilyabai took over the reins of the Indore state and made important reforms in the fields of justice, religion, and education. Her rule was a symbol of a prosperous and advanced society. She became famous as an efficient administrator. During her time, the security system in the Indore state was strengthened, trade grew, and cultural and religious harmony reigned in the society. Her love for justice and kindness have been her special identity. She always made strict decisions to punish the criminals in her state. She left no stone unturned in helping the poor, the helpless, and the needy. Devi Ahilyabai did many

important works for the welfare of women and weaker sections of society. She built temples and made an unforgettable contribution to the propagation of religion. She particularly got many temples constructed and reconstructed. Apart from this, she took many initiatives to promote Indian culture and traditions. She got wells and step wells constructed for water conservation and enrichment. She started Anna Kshetra, got kiosks constructed and ghats built. Devi Ahilyabai was not only a disciplined ruler but also a strong military ruler. Her military force was very strong and she led her army in many wars. Her war skills and strategic approach were always appreciated. Devi Ahilyabai fought off external attacks many times and ensured the safety of her state. Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar

ruled the royal family of the Holkar dynasty from the year 1767 to 1795 from Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh. Her rule is known for her farsightedness and justice. She carried out many reforms for the welfare of the people of her state and her administration was fair, diligent, and effective. Her rule focused on the welfare of farmers, the promotion of trade, and infrastructure such as roads, water supply, and education. She built the fort, temples, and other infrastructural works of Maheshwar. Devi Ahilyabai was a great ruler of Indian history, whose contribution was remarkable not only in the Maratha Empire but also in the history of Madhya Pradesh. Known for her administrative capabilities and vision in the 18th century, the reign of Devi Ahilyabai became a symbol of develop-

ment and cultural prosperity in Madhya Pradesh. Devi Ahilyabai was not only an excellent ruler but also a great patron of culture. She built many temples, forts and other religious structures. She renovated and reconstructed important religious sites like Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Somnath Temple and Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain. Her aim was to preserve religious and cultural heritage. Devi Ahilyabai took many initiatives for social welfare during her rule. She not only gave priority to education, health, and infrastructure but also tried to end the discrimination prevalent in the society by including people from every caste and community in her court. Many schemes were made for the poor and deprived during her rule, which provided relief to them.



Preparations are in full swing ahead of the Republic Day celebrations at Lal Parade ground in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo



Madhya Pradesh police contingents during parade rehearsals ahead of the Republic Day celebrations at Lal Parade ground in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo

No loudspeakers till 6 AM, places of worship to comply: Collector

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Invoking section 163, District Collector Kaushalendra Vikram Singh on Thursday barred the use of loudspeakers, DJs, and PA systems in the district from 10 PM to 6 AM. Places of worship have not been exempted from the order. Citing orders from the Supreme Court, the High Court, and the National Green Tribunal, Singh issued the orders, which he said were pertinent for citizens to be able to rest, work, sleep, and communicate. The collector, however, made an exception for emergency situations that may require the use of PA systems. "A noisy environment can

cause effects such as high blood pressure, anxiety, mental stress, and insomnia. Excessive noise can also damage the inner ear," said Singh in the order, copies of which were circulated to the media on Thursday evening. The fresh restrictions are binding on all DJ operators, hotels, restaurants, and bars, which have been advised to obtain a license for operating a DJ unit. Furthermore, only one sound system, conforming to prescribed standards or lower, can be used per DJ unit. Violations of the restrictions will be met with penalties and confiscation under Sections 15 and 16 of the Madhya Pradesh Noise Control Act, 1985, warned Singh.

Indian players have made their mark in the whole world with their strength, valour, skill and intelligence: CM

Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav while addressing the All India Pro-Kabaddi Tournament organized by Sahayog Krida Mandal in Gotegeon said that the country's players have made a mark in the whole world with their strength, valour, skill and intelligence. Players have made the country proud in various international and national games. Kabaddi and wrestling players have won medals in every event. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that the future belongs to the youth, highlighting efforts under Prime Minister Modi's leadership to promote players and sports, include it as a subject in the new education policy, and recruit Jan Shikshaks to support these initiatives. Yadav commended the efforts of the Maninagendra Singh Foundation and Sahayog Krida Mandal for promoting traditional sports and organizing a grand Kabaddi competition, which has been held continuously for the past 41 years. He noted that the committee's efforts have produced numerous national and state-level players, emphasizing that every Kabaddi player has played from Gotegeon. He also praised the committee's contributions to sports and social service. Dr.

Yadav announced a grant of Rs. 11 lakh for the committee and stated that a Kabaddi League would be organized in the future to further encourage traditional sports. Member of Parliament Choudhary Darshan Singh, MLAs Vishwanath Singh Patel and Mahendra Nagesh, founder member of Sahyog Krida Mandal Mulam Singh Patel and other prominent public representatives were present. Yadav praised Kabaddi for reflecting Indian philosophy and being linked to Pranayam and exercise. He linked the game's structure to the Chakravayuh of Mahabharata, highlighting the coordination of valour and energy. Dr. Yadav noted that Kabaddi is gaining international recognition, with players bringing pride to India, and emphasized the state's commitment to promoting traditional sports. He also expressed that the unique joy of playing on the soil is unmatched, with Kabaddi and similar sports being embraced warmly in foreign countries. Yadav highlighted the government's commitment towards welfare of women, the poor, youth and farmers through various campaigns. He mentioned that under Prime

Minister Modi's leadership, efforts are being made to provide permanent homes to every poor by 2028 and to fill over one lakh government posts for youth, with plans to fill 2.70 lakh posts in the next five years. He also stated that all the pending Public Service Commission examinations will be held soon. A state-wide youth welfare campaign is being run alongside initiatives in school education, higher education, and employment. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav praised Lokmata Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar for her remarkable contributions to good governance and emphasized the state's commitment to following her ideals and establishing the parameters of good governance. He also stated that the government will work to provide basic facilities and enhance healthcare across all regions. Yadav highlighted the nationwide excitement on the completion of one year of the Ram temple construction in Ayodhya, with cultural rituals being organized all over. He also mentioned that in the state, locations where Lord Shri Ram and Shri Krishna stepped in will be developed as religious tourist centers.

Health camp for kids with congenital ailments at Hamidia on R-Day

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In a humanitarian effort, Hamidia Hospital has announced plans to organize a special sports competition and health camp for hundreds of children suffering from congenital diseases to mark the 76th Republic Day on Sunday. Around 400 children are expected to participate in the event, which involves six departments that are busy preparing for the camp, which begins at 10 AM at the hospital premises. In this programme, experts from the Departments of Orthopaedics, Cardiology, Ophthalmology, Blood Bank, Radiology, and Paediatrics will examine the eyes, heart, bones, and other organs of the

children. During the camp, a full-body check-up of the children will also be conducted. If needed, X-rays, blood tests, and medicines will be provided free of charge. Hospital Superintendent Dr. Suneet Tandon has said that the aim is to detect the effect of genetic diseases on other organs of these children in time and treat them. Dr. Tandon said that there cannot be a better occasion than Republic Day for this programme. The aim of this event is not only to focus on the health of the children but also to make them feel happy and excited for the day. An effort will be made to inspire enthusiasm and confidence in the children through sports competitions.

Mobile phones banned during Bhasma Aarti at temple

PNS ■ UJJAIN

The renowned Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain, known for its spiritual significance, has implemented a strict ban on mobile phones during the sacred Bhasma Aarti. The decision comes in response to increasing incidents of devotees creating social media reels on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram within the temple premises. The temple administration, led by Additional District Magistrate (ADM) and temple committee administrator Anukool Jain, decided to prohibit mobile phones during the Bhasma Aarti to preserve the sanctity of the ritual. Effective from Thursday, devotees attending the Aarti will be required to deposit their mobile phones at designated check-



points before entering the temple hall. The Mahakaleswar Temple attracts devotees from across the country, many of whom book their attendance for the Bhasma Aarti through online and offline systems. The administration has emphasized that the ban aims to maintain the spiritual atmosphere of the temple and ensure that the focus remains on devotion rather than digital distractions. Jayant Rathore, the Security Officer on Special Duty (OSD) for the temple committee, confirmed that the ban was enforced from the Bhasma Aarti conducted on Thursday, January 23. Devotees will be required to deposit their mobile phones with security guards or temple staff at the designated checkpoint after verifying their entry permits. The phones will be safely stored and returned to the devotees after the conclusion of the Aarti. The administration has assured devotees that this measure will enhance the spiritual experience while protecting the sanctity of the temple rituals. The temple committee has urged visitors to cooperate with the new rule to ensure a serene and uninterrupted atmosphere during the sacred Aarti.

Lokmata Ahilyabai: Life dedicated to society, culture, self-respect and nation

RAMESH SHARMA

Most people live their lives focused on personal or family interests, but some exceptional individuals dedicate themselves to society, culture, and the world. Punyashloka Devi Ahilyabai was an extraordinary personality, devoted to the nation, society, and culture. Though she ruled the small state of Indore, her vision encompassed the entire country. Her personal life was serene and simple, like that of a Sadhvi, yet she was a resolute and decisive ruler. She first ensured her state's prosperity, strength, and security by eradicating anarchy and crime, then initiated a cultural renaissance across India. Punyashloka Devi Ahilyabai was born on 31 May 1725 in Chondi village, located in Jankhed town, Ahmednagar district. Her father, Mankoji Rao Shinde, and his brother served in the Maratha army, while her mother, Sushilabai, embodied Indian traditions and values. Sushilabai actively participated in village self-defense and maintained a disciplined routine of temple visits and listening to spiritual discourses, which Ahilyabai joined from a young age. Ahilyabai possessed remarkable memory, effortlessly retaining Purana stories and bhajans after hearing them once. She learned Marathi under Acharya Shivle in her village, further nurturing her intellect and spiritual foundation. At the age of eight, Ahilyabai was chosen by Malharrao Holkar, the governor and commander of the Malwa region, to be his daughter-in-law. While traveling to South India for a war campaign, Malharrao stopped at a temple in Chondi village, where he noticed a young girl organizing food distribution for the poor alongside her peers. He was further impressed when she sang bhajans in a melodious voice. After learning about her identity, he proposed to her father, Mankoji Rao, for her marriage to his son, Khanderao Holkar.

The marriage took place in 1733, but due to her young age, Ahilyabai stayed in her maternal home for four years. In 1737, her gauna ceremony was held, and she moved to Indore as a royal bride. She was welcomed into a much larger family than the one she had grown up in, yet her upbringing in a strong family tradition prepared her for her new role. Malharrao Holkar had four wives who lived harmoniously together, along with other family members. Ahilyabai's melodious voice and devotion endeared her to everyone. She was entrusted with coordinating daily bhajans and aartis in the palace, becoming the center of affection within the family. Recognizing her exceptional qualities, Malharrao assigned her the responsibility of managing the family's internal arrangements. In 1745, Ahilyabai gave birth to a son, Malerao, and in 1748, she had a daughter, Mukta Bai. Her life was filled with joy and familial warmth until tragedy struck. On 24 March 1754, her husband, Khanderao, died in the Kumbher war, leaving Ahilyabai widowed at the young age of 29. After Khanderao's death, Ahilyabai was determined to commit sati on his funeral pyre. However, Malharrao Holkar stopped her, emphasizing her responsibilities towards her young children. Recognizing her strength and intelligence, Malharrao involved her in state affairs, gradually helping her heal from her grief. Over time, Ahilyabai became an invaluable partner in governance, assisting her father-in-law with administrative matters. When Malharrao passed away on 23 March 1766, Ahilyabai's son Malerao ascended the throne. Unfortunately, his rule was short-lived as he died on 5 April 1767, leaving the state in a precarious position. Finally, in December 1767, Ahilyabai assumed the throne. Demonstrating her progressive thinking, Ahilyabai prioritized merit over lineage for her daughter Muktabai's marriage. She declared that Muktabai

would marry the individual who could effectively enhance the state's security system, showcasing her commitment to the welfare and stability of the kingdom. During Ahilyabai's time, India was plagued by widespread anarchy. The Mughal Sultanate had weakened, and groups like the Ruhelas, Pindaris, and Pathans roamed freely, causing plunder and destruction. Ahilyabai took decisive steps to restore order. She resettled nomadic communities and forest warriors in the border villages by granting them agricultural land. This initiative, coordinated by Nayak Phanse, had two significant outcomes which included external robbers were effectively controlled and the wandering and unemployed populace finding stability through agricultural work, leading to increased production and prosperity in the state. Impressed by this success and Nayak Phanse's leadership, Ahilyabai arranged her daughter Muktabai's marriage to him. After ensuring peace and safety in her state, Ahilyabai laid the foundation of Maheshwar, a city built with a deep sense of environmental responsibility. She avoided cutting stones from mountains and instead used stones collected from the Narmada region. She carefully chose a location where forests did not have to be cleared for the city's construction, ensuring ecological balance. Ahilyabai also established the Maheshwar saree industry, which became a hallmark of the region. To develop Maheshwar, she invited workers and their families, providing them with opportunities suited to their skills and interests. This inclusive approach not only built the city but also laid the foundation for a thriving cottage industry. Her efforts to promote cotton cultivation contributed significantly to the region's prosperity. The cotton grown in Indore was used in the production of the world-renowned Dhaka muslin, making the region a key player in global textile trade. (The author is senior journalist)

Maheshwar 'Destination Cabinet' to be dedicated to Devi Ahilyabai's Jayanti year

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that the state government has taken the historic initiative of 'Destination Cabinet' for the state's overall development. This initiative also brings to reality Prime Minister Narendra Modi's concept of promoting tourism. On Friday, the state government is going to hold a Cabinet meeting in Maheshwar, the city of Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai, which will be dedicated to her 300th birth anniversary year. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that Lokmata

Devi Ahilyabai's entire life has been dedicated to public welfare and good governance. The Madhya Pradesh government is committed to achieving holistic development by following the principles of Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai, particularly in the areas of women empowerment, farmer welfare, and good governance. Her ideals will be integrated into the state's policies and vision for building an ideal state. Inspired by her life, the government has implemented effective measures to promote women's leadership and empowerment.



Congress party workers pay tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary at PCC headquarters in Bhopal on Thursday. Pioneer photo

Seizure of Saif Ali Khan's Bhopal properties unlikely anytime soon

AKBAR KHAN ■ BHOPAL

Speculations aside, a rumoured government move to confiscate the personal estate of Bhopal's last ruler, Nawab Hamidullah Khan, is likely to entail difficult and long-drawn legal battles, say those familiar with the intricacies of the matter. While it is difficult to gauge the actual worth of the Nawab's personal estate, sources say that the properties consist of palaces, bungalows, kothis, and even large tracts of agricultural land spread across as many as 137 villages in the vicinity of the state capital. During his reign as the ruler of Bhopal, Nawab Hamidullah controlled three types of properties: his personal estate, the properties of the Bhopal State (which he oversaw as ruler),

and the properties he managed on behalf of his elder brother's widow, whose estate is referred to as Idgah Deodhi. At the time of the merger of Bhopal into the Union of India, Hamidullah relinquished control of the properties of the Bhopal State and retained ownership of his private estate, while Idgah Deodhi was not a part of the merger discussion, as the erstwhile ruler never actually owned these properties. After the merger, Hamidullah lived like a commoner, enjoying equal rights as any private citizen, except for the title of 'Nawab' and a few privileges granted to him by the government in accordance with provisions listed in a 350-page document signed between him and the government, which is commonly referred to as the

'merger agreement'. Upon his death in 1960, Hamidullah's heirs included his two wives and three daughters. However, as the Nawab did not leave behind a son, his two surviving nephews also had a share in his personal estate in accordance with the principles of Muslim Personal Law. As per Islamic laws guiding inheritance, the two widows could claim a share of a little over six percent each, the daughters were entitled to a little over 22 percent each, and the nephews a share of approximately 10.5 percent apiece. If the theoretical division of the personal estate had been simple, the title of Nawab became a point of contention before the government intervened to overlook the claims of Princess Abida Sultan, Hamidullah's eldest but estranged daughter,

who had migrated to Pakistan a decade earlier (in 1950). The government acknowledged her younger sister, Princess Sajida Sultan, as the titular Nawab of Bhopal. Sajida Sultan is the grandmother of Bollywood star and current head of the Royal House of Bhopal, Saif Ali Khan. Speculations of the seizure of the Nawab's estate gained momentum after the government amended the Enemy Property Act of 1968 in 2017. Under provisions of the amended law, the government can claim or confiscate properties that are solely or jointly owned by Pakistani nationals or their legal heirs and assignees. As Abida Sultan is the only one of the Nawab's original heirs to migrate to Pakistan, the law, in this context, would mean her share in Hamidullah's estate

that is duly recorded in her name or the properties that she (or her heirs) continues to share with other inheritors, say sources close to the palace. In either case, the seizure proceedings would not have a bearing on the personal holdings of Saif Ali Khan, as he is neither an heir nor an assignee of his grand-aunt Abida Sultan. While listing out a number of judgements delivered by various courts, they contend that Article 8 of the merger agreement blocks retrospective action by the current government on land-related orders issued prior to the merger. Responding to the massive coverage the matter has garnered in the local press, the sources say that it amounts to little more than 'akhbarbaazi,' a local euphemism for sensational news headlines.

CEC sounds note of caution against fake narratives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Thursday sounded a note of caution against fake narratives, saying they erode trust in electoral processes, and noted that the misinformation is typically timed to target the vitals of poll process.

Making this assertion at an international conference of election management bodies organised by Election Commission of India, he said while technology offers significant opportunities, it also brings challenges like cybersecurity threats and misinformation. He urged Election Management Bodies to streamline strategies for addressing these technological challenges to effectively mitigate the risks. Sounding a note of caution against fake narratives which erode trust in electoral processes,

he said that such fake narratives are typically timed at crucial junctures of the election process to target its very vitals. In his address, CEC Kumar also outlined key trends shaping the future of elections, including AI-driven processes, online and remote voting, biometric authentication and increased global collaboration. He urged the participating poll management bodies to explore the opportunities with technological advancements in making elections more transparent, inclusive and accessible. He underscored the role of election management bodies in not only safeguarding electoral processes globally but also expanding their reach and impact. Poll organisations from Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Indonesia and Kazakhstan placed their concerns on disinformation, misinformation and fake narratives on social media affecting elec-

toral integrity while making their presentations on their electoral experience in 2024. CEC of Mauritius Abdool Rahman also stressed on the menace of fake news, saying it undermines voters' trust in the poll bodies. Highlighting a particular case of fake online applications for recruitment of election staff, Rahman expressed concern over the use of technology and social media in intensifying the menace of misinformation and disinformation during elections. A representative of the Electoral Commission of Namibia, while expressing concern over the rising trend of fake news, sought suggestions on tackling fake news on social media. Commissioner, General Election Commission of Indonesia, Idhan Holik spoke about their experience of using a dedicated WhatsApp channel to tackle misinformation in real



time. The ECI is hosting the two-day international conference. It brings together representatives from Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of nearly 13 countries and international organisations for discussions on key issues of contemporary election management. The conference on the theme 'Global Election Year 2024: Reiteration of Democratic Spaces, Takeaway for EMBs' is hosted by the ECI based on the varied experiences of EMBs in conducting elections in 2024, in India and the other countries. Nearly 30 representatives from the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of 13 countries including Bhutan, Georgia, Namibia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Ireland, Mauritius, Philippines, Russian Federation, Tunisia, and Nepal are attending. In his address, CEC Kumar also reflected that 2024 was a defining year as a test for EMBs for

reaffirmation of democratic values amidst challenging and complexities. He emphasized on the critical role of technology and digital innovations in enhancing efficiency, transparency and voter confidence. He underscored the role of EMBs in not only safeguarding electoral processes globally but also expanding their reach and impact. Highlighting India's historic general elections with a record participation of 647 million voters and over one million polling stations, CEC Kumar said the elections were also more inclusive with greater participation especially among women, elderly aged 85+, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and the third gender. CEC Kumar underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in capacity building and global cooperation as vital to safeguarding democratic processes and strengthening election management world-

wide. Bhutan's Chief election commissioner Dashi Sonam Topgay said the electronic voting machines provided by India have brought process efficiencies during polls in his country. He said the EVMs have won the trust of the people in Bhutan. Thanking India for providing the EVMs, he lauded the process efficiencies brought in by the machines since their use in the elections in that country. Speaking on digital IDs, Topgay said Bhutan has a biometric Unified National ID which is used for voter authentication. Bhutan is exploring the possibility of online voting in future elections, he told the gathering. Besides Bhutan, a limited number of Indian EVMs are used in Nepal and Namibia, EC functionaries said. Public undertakings BEL and ECIL produce EVMs for the Election Commission.

Keen on finding solution over disparity in High Court judges pension, says SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it was keen on finding a solution over the issue of disparity in pension to retired high court judges. A bench of Justices B R Gavai, Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran said it wanted to settle the issue once and for all. "We have been telling it since the beginning that we are keen on finding a solution, not laying down a law," it said. The top court was hearing arguments on a batch of pleas raising the issue of different pension being payable to retired high court judges. "One of the key reasons highlighted before the top court was that the high court judges, who were elevated from the district judiciary, were covered under the New Pension Scheme. However, those elevated to



the high court from the Bar were the beneficiaries of the Old Pension Scheme leading to a mismatch in the pension payable to two sets of high court judges. "We know that when you are there, it will all be resolved," the bench told attorney general R Venkataramani on Thursday. The bench deliberated over uniformity in the pension to

retired high court judges for parity. "We want to settle these issues once and for all," it observed. The arguments in the matter would continue on January 28. In December 2024, the top court said it was "pitiable" that some retired high court judges were getting a pension ranging between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15,000. It asked authorities to have a

"humane approach" instead of adopting a "legal approach". The bench observed the matter would not be decided on individual cases and whatever the top court might lay down would be applicable to all the high court judges. The top court had also expressed "shock" that some retired high court judges were getting a meagre pension ranging between Rs 6,000 and Rs 15,000. While hearing a separate plea in March last year, the apex court said there cannot be any discrimination in computing the pensionary benefits of retired judges of high courts based on whether they were elevated from the bar or the district judiciary. Pensionary benefits of a retired high court judge, elevated from the district judiciary, should be computed based on his or her last drawn salary as a high court judge, it said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister to visit India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty is set to visit India in the first week of next month to review the overall trajectory of bilateral ties and explore ways to expand cooperation in areas of trade, investment, shipping and agriculture. Abdelatty will hold wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar covering the entire gamut of bilateral ties as well as the evolving situation in the Middle East following the Israel-Hamas cease-fire deal. The two ministers are also set to take stock of implementation of the decisions firmed up during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in 2023, sources said here on Thursday. The two sides will look at shoring up cooperation in a number of areas including trade, investment and agriculture, they said. While the Egyptian President visited India in January 2023 to grace the Republic Day cele-



brations as the Chief Guest, Modi travelled to Egypt in June that year, reflecting growing intensity in the bilateral ties. India and Egypt elevated their ties to the level of strategic partnership and resolved to significantly broaden the bilateral engagement in areas of defence, security and trade during El-Sisi's visit to India. The two leaders also decided to take the volume of bilateral trade to USD 12 billion in the next five years from around USD seven billion recorded that year.

Egypt has traditionally been one of India's most important trading partners in the African continent. The India-Egypt bilateral trade agreement has been in operation since March 1978. The bilateral trade has increased more than five times in last 10 years. Around 50 Indian companies have invested in various sectors in Egypt with a combined investment exceeding USD 3.25 billion. A joint statement issued during El-Sisi's visit to India two years back mentioned that the Egyptian side is considering

the possibility of allocating a special area of land for the Indian industries in the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCEZ). The Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, is one of the world's busiest trade routes. About 12 percent of global trade passes through the canal each day. India and Egypt are also looking at deepening cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied services besides strengthening the supply chain of food articles. The defence and strategic cooperation between India and Egypt has been on an upswing in the last few years. The Indian and Egyptian Armies conducted the first ever joint exercise in January this year. Egypt had already shown interest in procuring Tejas light combat aircraft, radars, military helicopters and other platforms from India. In July 2022, the IAF participated in a month-long tactical leadership programme in Egypt with three Su-30 MKI jets and two C-17 transport aircraft.

Court refuses FIR over M F Husain paintings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court has refused to direct an FIR on a plea alleging two paintings of late artist and Padma awardee M F Husain hurt religious sentiments and said no further probe was required. Judicial magistrate first class Sahil Monga said all the facts and circumstances of the case were within the knowledge of the complainant, the CCTV footage of Delhi Art Gallery, and the paintings in question have already been seized. "No further investigation and collection of evidences is required on the part of investigating agency at this stage, as all the evidences are in the possession of complainant as well as on record," said the court. The matter, it went on, could proceed before the court as a complaint case and issued notice to Delhi Art Gallery Pvt. Ltd., its CEO and MD Ashish Anand, and Director Ashwani Anand for February 12.



The judge observed police in its action taken report said the paintings in question were seized. The report further said the commission of cognisable offence could not be ascertained, the judge noted. The judge on January 20 ordered the seizure of the paintings displayed at the art gallery and reserved the order

on FIR after hearing arguments. The paintings feature Hindu deities Hanuman and Ganesh. During the hearing on the plea, complainant and advocate Amita Sachdeva, said the most revered entities of Sanatan Dharma -- Hanuman and Ganesh -- were insulted in Husain's paintings.

"This is obscenity. Depicted most revered deities in obscene manner a deliberate and malicious insult. Husain may be the greatest artist in the world, but he has no right to insult my deities," she argued. She claimed there was an advertisement and thousands of people saw the painting of "deities being ridiculed".

"Prima facie case is made out for exhibiting such offensive paintings for public viewing and hurting religious sentiments," added Sachdeva. Ordering the seizure, Monga cited the police's action taken report, which said the investigating officer seized the security camera footage and the network video recorder of the art gallery. The report said the art exhibition was held privately and the paintings, including the two in question, were only to display the original work of Husain. "At this stage an application has been moved by complainant for direction to the IO to seize the painting in question. In light of the facts and circumstances mentioned in the said application, the said application is allowed and IO is directed to seize the said painting," the January 20 order said. Husain, a recipient of Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, died in 2011.

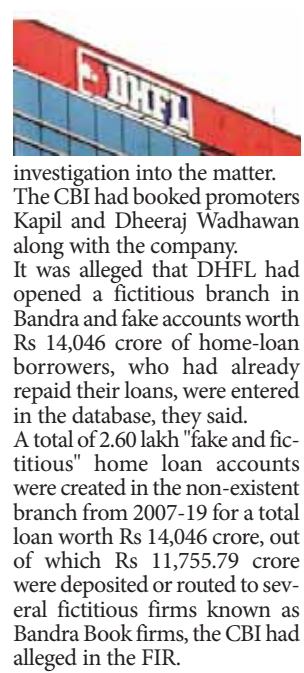


Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Minister Piyush Goyal, MoS Jitendra Singh, and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge during a ceremony to pay tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary, at Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan in New Delhi on Thursday

CBI closes case against DHFL in 'fake accounts' case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has closed the case against the DHFL and its directors pertaining to 2.60 lakh allegedly fictitious home loan accounts, some of which were used to claim interest subsidies under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna, officials said. After over three years of probe, the agency could not find evidence suggesting a criminal conspiracy which could have led to the creation of such accounts, they said. The irregularities were pointed out in the report of auditor Grant Thornton, appointed by the new board of the scam-hit Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL), they said. The agency has now submitted its final report before a special court in Delhi, which would take a call on whether to accept the closure report or order further



investigation into the matter. The CBI had booked promoters Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan along with the company. It was alleged that DHFL had opened a fictitious branch in Bandra and fake accounts worth Rs 14,046 crore of home-loan borrowers, who had already repaid their loans, were entered in the database, they said. A total of 2.60 lakh 'fake and fictitious' home loan accounts were created in the non-existent branch from 2007-19 for a total loan worth Rs 14,046 crore, out of which Rs 11,755.79 crore were deposited or routed to several fictitious firms known as Bandra Book firms, the CBI had alleged in the FIR.

ing other routes to channelise funds. "Email communication found during IT (income tax) survey by the CBDT shows that Oxfam India has been planning to pressure Indian government for renewal of FCRA through foreign governments and foreign institutions," it had alleged. "Oxfam India has the reach and influence to request multilateral foreign organisations to intervene on its behalf with the Government of India," it had alleged.

CBI chargesheets Oxfam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against research and advocacy group Oxfam India and its former CEO Amitabh Behar in connection with alleged violations of rules and regulations related to foreign funds, officials said. In its chargesheet filed before a special court here, the CBI has named the group and Behar, who is now executive director of Oxfam International as accused. The FIR against the Indian arm of the global NGO Oxfam was registered in April 2023 based on a complaint from the Ministry of Home Affairs. An email seeking reaction of Oxfam India remained unanswered till writing of this story. The complaint, which is now part of the FIR, has alleged that though Oxfam India's FCRA registration ceased, it planned to circumvent the law by tak-

Indian Navy to showcase three frontline combatants in Republic Day parade tableau

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Navy will showcase its three newly commissioned frontline combatants -- warships INS Surat and INS Nilgiri, and submarine INS Vaghsheer -- in the tableau at the 76th Republic Day Parade on the Kartavya Path in Delhi. At a press conference held here at Kota House on Wednesday, the Navy unveiled a model of the tableau featuring the thematic tagline, 'Atmanirbhar Nausena se Rashtra Nirman' (Nation Building through a Self Reliant Navy). Officials said the Navy's mixed marching contingent and a band will also participate in the ceremonial parade. Vice Admiral Vineet McCarty, the Controller Personnel Services, highlighted that the tableau will depict the three



platforms commissioned just a week ago in Mumbai, symbolising India's naval prowess and the spirit of 'Atmanirbharta'. On January 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the three frontline naval combatants to the nation during their commissioning at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The commissioning of three major naval combatants

marks a significant leap forward in realising India's vision of becoming a global leader in defence manufacturing and maritime security, the defence ministry had earlier said. INS Surat, the fourth and final ship of the P15B Guided Missile Destroyer Project, ranks among the largest and most sophisticated destroyers in the world.

Historic: 10-crore pilgrims take a dip at Triveni Sangam

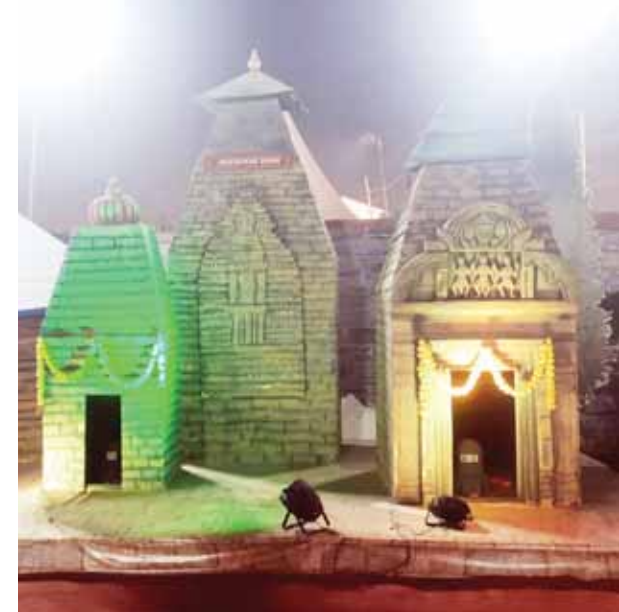


BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

In a historic moment, the Mahakumbh 2025 in Prayagraj recorded an unprecedented turnout as the number of devotees taking a holy dip in the sacred Triveni Sangam surpassed the 10-crore mark on Thursday afternoon. This extraordinary milestone highlights the spiritual significance of the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers, drawing pilgrims, sadhus, and Kalpvasis from across the globe.

According to the Yogi Adityanath-led government, this Mahakumbh is projected to welcome over 45 crore visitors. The early milestone of 10 crore bathers reflects the immense faith and enthusiasm surrounding the event. Thursday alone saw 30 lakh devotees participating in the holy ritual, including 10 lakh Kalpvasis who have taken up temporary residence in Mahakumbh Nagar to dedicate themselves to spirituality during the event. Major bathing festivals have witnessed record-breaking crowds, with 3.5 crore devotees performing the Amrit Snan on Makar Sankranti and 1.7 crore on Paush Purnima. The Triveni Sangam, bustling with activity, serves as a vibrant reflection of India's cultural diversity, bringing people of different castes, communities, and even nationalities together in an act of shared faith. The Mahakumbh's overarching theme of unity is evident in the harmony among the millions of devotees. Despite the staggering influx of pilgrims, everyday life in Prayagraj remains unaffected, thanks to meticulous planning and management by the district administration. Schools, offices, and businesses continue to function smoothly, with restrictions imposed only during peak bathing days. This seamless coordination has won appreciation from residents and enhanced the prestige of the Mahakumbh as a global spiritual and cultural spectacle. With an estimated 35 crore visitors yet to arrive, Prayagraj is gearing up for an unforgettable culmination of this massive event, reaffirming its status as the spiritual heart of India.

Prayagraj transforms into a magnificent city of temples

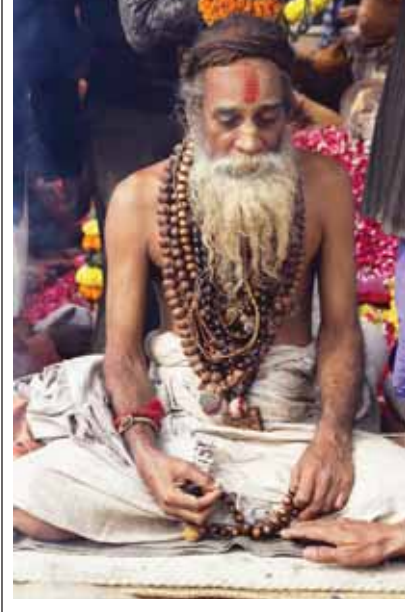


BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Prayagraj has been transformed into a magnificent city of temples, offering devotees a unique spiritual experience. Pilgrims visiting the Mahakumbh have the rare opportunity to witness replicas of some of India's most revered temples all in one place. Among the highlights is the newly constructed replica of the Tirupati Balaji temple, which is ready to welcome worshippers. Additionally, the grand replicas of the Ram

Temple and Mehndipur Balaji temple are already drawing long queues of devotees. Adding to the spiritual allure are replicas of Akshardham, the sacred Char Dham, Khatu Shyam, Maa Kamakhya Devi temple, and the ISKCON temple. These iconic structures are captivating the hearts of pilgrims and making the Mahakumbh a hub of religious and cultural significance. Every day, millions of devotees gather in Prayagraj, not only for spiritual fulfillment but also to enjoy delicious offerings and traditional dishes. From creamy rabri to tea, halwa, and poori-sabzi, a wide variety of

Babas and their spiritual hacks steal the show at Sangam

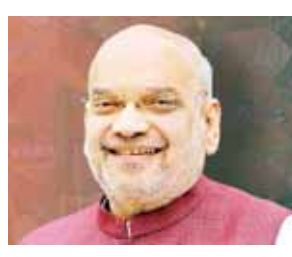


BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The Mahakumbh 2025 has transformed the sacred banks of the Sangam into a vibrant spiritual hub, attracting millions of devotees and saints from across India. This once-in-a-lifetime celestial event is a testament to faith, tradition, and the grandeur of Sanatan culture. From the mystical chants of Har Har Gange and Jai Shri Ram echoing through the air to the unique offerings of saints like Rabri Baba and Gaadiwale Baba, the Kumbh is a kaleidoscope of devotion and divinity. According to Swami Tanmayanand Puri from Madhya Pradesh, this Kumbh marks a rare alignment that occurs once every 144 years. "The meticulous arrangements by CM Yogi Adityanath's government have made it possible for saints to engage in uninterrupted spiritual practices along the sacred banks," he said. "Unique Experiences at the Kumbh" The Kumbh is home to many remarkable figures. Rabri Baba, for instance, distributes 120 kilograms of rabri daily as prasad, continuing a tradition he began during the 2019 Kumbh. Devotees flock to him, drawn by his sweet offerings and spiritual aura. Meanwhile, Gaadiwale Baba offers solutions for those unable to attend the Kumbh. "If you cannot come to the Sangam, pour holy Ganga water into a bucket and bathe with it. This will grant you the same spiritual benefits," he advised. Bade Baba, known for his nationwide efforts to strengthen Sanatan traditions, hailed the event as a shining example of faith and governance. "CM Yogi Adityanath is a leader like no other. The grand scale of the Kumbh, with tireless support from officials and volunteers, reflects his commitment to Sanatan Dharma," he said, awarding the Chief Minister a symbolic "102 out of 100." With chants of Bam Bam Bhole and Har Har Gange reverberating through the air, the Maha Kumbh 2025 is not just a religious gathering but a celebration of India's rich spiritual heritage. Saints and devotees alike see it as a divine opportunity to connect with their faith and culture, making this Kumbh a truly extraordinary event.

Kumbh a message of unity and harmony: Amit Shah

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD



Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said no other event in the world conveys a more powerful message of harmony and unity than Maha Kumbh where anyone can take a dip in the Ganga irrespective of identity. People across the world are in awe after watching the scale on which the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj has been organised, he said, speaking after inaugurating the Hindu Spiritual & Service Fair, also known as Hindu Adhyatmik Seva Mela, at the Gujarat University grounds here. Ambassadors of various countries requested him for "invitation cards," said the senior BJP leader. "I told them there is no formal invitation for this mega gathering, because crores of people converge here on their own at a specific time as per the alignment of the planets," Shah added. They could not believe that 40 crore

Chinar trees of Jammu and Kashmir to be geo-tagged

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

"Digital Tree Aadhaar" programme has been launched by the Jammu and Kashmir government for conservation of the majestic Chinars which will see creation of a comprehensive database of the tree facing threats due to rapid urbanisation. Under the initiative, the chinar trees – a cultural and ecological symbol of J-K – are being geo-tagged and equipped with QR codes that record information, including its geographical location, health, and growing patterns, enabling conservationists to track changes and address risk factors. The campaign involves use of modern technology, including Geographical Information System (GIS), to create a comprehensive database for conservation of the chinar trees. The initiative aims to safeguard chinar trees from threats such as urbanisation, deforestation, and habitat



degradation. The project is being spearheaded by J-K Forest Research Institute (FRI) of J-K Forest Department. The QR-based digital plate is affixed to each surveyed Chinar tree using a specialised spring-enabled metal. Each tree is given a unique id like Aadhaar specifying the year the tree is surveyed, the district it is located and a serial number for easy identification. "Chinar is a part of our culture. We are doing a survey to know the total number of chinars, their status, their height, girth, etc. So, we have taken this initiative of tree geo-tagging," Project Coordinator, FRI, Syed Tariq, told PTI here. He said so far, around 28,500 chinar trees have been identified, surveyed and their data updated, and the process is going on. "We are preserving that data in the heritage registers of each district. Each district will have its own heritage register

girth," he said. The official said the project has been named as "Digital Tree Aadhaar" with each tree having a tree number. "There is complete information about the specific chinar tree in the QR code. When the code is scanned, it will give instant information about the tree. "A person can get required information about the tree including its location with coordinates, physical characters, health status, height, girth, tree shape, number of main branches, whether the tree is a seed bearer or not, and whether the tree is diseased or not" he said. The district specific codes in the unique code have been taken from the RTO codes. Each tree is photographed and those are uploaded so that they are readily available at the click of a mouse. The official said the department lacked credible data about the number of chinar trees in the valley before this survey. "We had a rough estimate of 40,000 or 45,000 trees, but there was no exact number. The idea of a unique code came because once we go for a census, there is always an apprehension of duplication. To avoid this, we came up with this unique ID," Tariq said. He said the chinar tree, a symbol of cultural heritage, faces threats like urbanisation, deforestation and habitat loss. To ensure its survival, the J-K Forest Department and J-K FRI are leveraging digital tools, including geo-tagging and QR codes, for effective monitoring and conservation. These efforts aim to preserve chinars and their habitats, he said. The campaign has revealed that the highest number of chinar trees in the valley are found in Srinagar, followed by Ganderbal, Anantnag and Baramulla districts. The official said in the top 20 series of chinars in the World Monumental Trees, 11 are in from Kashmir.

AI-chatbot to enhance experience of devotees

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR



Pilgrims attending the Mahakumbh will no longer need to wander in search of essential facilities and information as a revamped chatbot has been introduced for their convenience. Equipped with three new features, the AI-based chatbot aims to enhance the experience of devotees. The chatbot will provide accurate details about parking spaces, food courts, and hospitals within a 1-kilometer radius of the user. It will not only provide pilgrims with a complete mapping of the Mahakumbh but also offer detailed information about each sector along with Google

Map links for easy navigation. Additional Mela Officer Vivek Chaturvedi announced that the AI chatbot is

enabling pilgrims to access vital information about parking, transportation, banking, public water ATMs, and other services within seconds. The chatbot also allows users to download real-time PDFs tailored to their needs, containing details about toilets, lost-and-found centers, exhibitions, and other essential locations. By simply scanning a QR code, pilgrims can instantly receive key information directly on their mobile devices. Millions of pilgrims have already benefited from this innovative AI chatbot. Its effective and user-friendly features are providing unparalleled convenience, making the world's largest religious gathering smoother and more organized. By integrating technology with faith, the chatbot is enhancing the overall experience of devotees.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trump's ultimatum

Trump's plain talk on the Ukraine war—'end it or face sanctions'—could mark a turning point in the conflict

In a dramatic intervention, US President Donald Trump has asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to bring an immediate end to the ongoing Ukraine war. Labeling the conflict 'ridiculous,' Trump warned of severe economic sanctions and tariffs against Russia if Putin failed to negotiate peace. The threat marks a sharp escalation in Trump's rhetoric on a war that has already claimed the lives of over a million soldiers on both sides. Speaking on Truth Social platform, Trump reaffirmed his affinity for the Russian people and his respect for Putin but did not shy away from criticising the Russian leader for prolonging the bloody conflict. "We must never forget that Russia helped us win the Second World War, losing almost 60 million lives in the process," Trump said, highlighting historical ties while urging an end to the ongoing devastation. Trump's approach combines a mix of hardline economic threats and diplomatic overtures. In his straightforward message he suggested that the economic repercussions of prolonged conflict would be catastrophic for Russia. He emphasised that his preference was for a peaceful resolution.

The Ukraine war, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, has dragged on for nearly three years. The conflict has claimed the lives of nearly a million Russian soldiers and 700,000 Ukrainian troops. These staggering figures underscore the war's devastating impact, making it one of the deadliest conflicts of the 21st century. Economic consequences have also been severe, particularly for Russia. International sanctions, coupled with the strain of prolonged military operations, have left the Russian economy struggling with inflation and stagnation. Trump pointed to these economic pressures as a potential leverage point, suggesting that a peace deal is in Russia's best interest. Trump's ultimatum reflects a marked departure from his earlier, more ambiguous stance on the conflict. Trump administration is in direct talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Trump himself plans to engage with Putin directly. He appears intent on delivering on that promise with a mix of economic coercion and diplomatic engagement. Despite the grim reality of the war, Trump's comments offers a glimmer of hope for an early resolution. He has emphasised that both Zelensky and Putin should pursue a deal, suggesting that the leaders' willingness would be pivotal in ending the conflict. Trump's ultimatum to Putin could signal a turning point in the Ukraine war, but the path forward remains fraught with uncertainty. While the economic pressure could incentivise Russia to negotiate, the deep-seated political and territorial disputes fueling the conflict may prove challenging to resolve. As the world watches, Trump's next moves—whether imposing sanctions, brokering a deal, or recalibrating military aid—will shape not only the future of the Ukraine war but also the broader geopolitical landscape. For now, one thing is clear: Trump is determined to make his mark on history by ending a war that has caused untold suffering and reshaped global politics.

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PICTALK



Tourists pose for pictures at the Taj Mahal, in Agra

Can suspending commodity derivatives rein in food price



SANJAY RAWAL

The debate over whether speculative trading in futures commodity markets drives food price inflation remains unresolved in India and across Asia

While there are several concerns in India and across Asia, certain policy and key opinion circles that food price inflation is catalysed or influenced somehow by speculative trading in the futures commodity markets. Even while opinions are divided in policy circles and among economists who have studied and examined the nature of the relationship between food inflation and commodity and derivative futures trading contracts, and no empirical evidence hitherto seems to have been found despite numerous studies undertaken in India. It would be worth mentioning that a detailed empirical research study conducted by leading researchers from the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur specifically studied three suspension events in India of futures traded commodities, which led the researchers to firmly state that the counterfactual for each of the examined episodes confirms that even in the absence of trading suspensions, food prices or inflationary trends would have followed their dynamic path. Any upward price volatility could ostensibly be the effects or counter-effects of various extraneous domestic or global (especially geopolitical) factors. It is also equally understandable and natural for any governing policy institution to be both fully cognisant and mindful of food price inflationary trends, and the fact that rising food prices can have a cataclysmic effect on food security and thus, by extension could have substantive socio-economic impact.

Successive policy establishments and ecosystems have always been overly cautious, ever since futures trading commodity derivatives exchanges were established in the early 2000s. Despite the mandate of such commodity exchanges that futures trading contracts encourage effective and fair price discovery and risk hedging, which consequently safeguards the commodity value chain from price risk which is a result of a fundamental play between demand and supply the apprehensions concerning these market-driven tools continued to remain, manifesting itself the way of multiple instances of suspensions on certain commodity derivative contracts. While trading suspensions have been a constant feature since 2007-2008, under the advisement of the price monitoring mechanisms and agencies within the government policy ecosystem, there never has been an occasion when suspensions of commodity trading exceeded more than a year in a single stretch, barring the odd 'sensitive' food commodity. So as a commodity markets expert, with a domestic and world view of ongoing trading in global commodity markets, one begs to specifically ask - Do derivatives trading suspensions really rein in food price inflation? Researchers have constantly alluded to synthetic control methodologies to apply to their studies for studying specific suspensions, their findings fairly and comprehensively conclude and determine that there is no empirical evidence that derivatives suspension had any impact whatsoever on food prices. On the contrary, from specific instances studied, such as those of Bengal Gram (Chana)



in August 2021 and Mustard Seed Derivatives in October 2021, analysis from the said report from IIM Udaipur shows that prices of both commodities, Chana and mustard oil, would have continued on the same price trend path even without the suspension. To specifically quote a potent segment of the said study - it clearly articulates that the conducted research does not find any role of futures market trading on price changes, nor does it find any empirical evidence of the impact of suspension of trade on price behaviour in the period after suspension. Rather, the analysis shows that prices of commodities such as mustard oil would have had a similar trend even without the suspension. Furthermore, the study finds that before the suspension futures market had a dominant share of 64 per cent in discovering the true and fair price of the mustard seed commodity derivative. The study goes on further to articulate that commodity derivative suspensions hurt genuine participants discourage the growth of domestic agri-derivatives markets and resultantly impact the growth of price hedging prospects of the commodity value chain including CBBOs (Cluster Business Organisations) and FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations), while consequently hurting the value realisation and income levels of farmers. It also adversely impacts India's position in providing a global price benchmark, despite the country being a major producer and consumer of several agricultural commodities. Needless to say, as an active observer of the Indian agri-based commodity trading ecosystem, it behove advocacy and argument that summary commodity suspensions as a method to arrest or contain food price inflation should not be adopted and further the suspension of futures trading contracts of agricultural commodity derivatives must be revoked. In closure, one must say emphatically that the development of the agri-derivatives market is supported in India, which in turn will lead to fair price discovery and transparent hedging of price risks, eventually creating a positive socio-economic impact for farmers and the agri-ecosystem in India. (The writer is national president of Commodity Participants Association of India; views are personal)



SUCCESSIVE POLICY ESTABLISHMENTS AND ECOSYSTEMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OVERLY CAUTIOUS, EVER SINCE FUTURES TRADING COMMODITY DERIVATIVES EXCHANGES WERE ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLY 2000S

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PANIC KILLS PASSENGERS

Madam — Twelve passengers on the Pushpak Express were killed and 55 injured after jumping from the tight-packed unreserved coaches onto the track in panic, fearing a fire (they don't even notice or hear approaching trains), only to be run over by the Karnataka Express near Pachora railway station in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Unable to understand when the public will get some sense. Why do they need to wander on tracks even if they had jumped out of a train that they thought was on fire? Though for this sad mishap we definitely cannot blame the railways from any angle. Even though people may have agreed with me that Indians have lost trust and faith in the railway administration to such an extent that without verifying the rumour, they believe it (smoke that perhaps sparked rumours of a fire) and act accordingly. This shows total distrust of the railways. This is not the first instance; the Jalgaon tragedy revives the painful memory of a similar accident in which 21 women and a boy lost their lives in Mumbai's Goregaon. On October 13, 1993, passengers on Western Railway's 'ladies special' local between Borivali and Kandivali jumped off a first-class compartment onto the tracks after seeing smoke rise from the undercarriage of their stationary train. Whatever, we all know how our system works. It's the responsibility of people who travel to take care of themselves, not the railway. Yes, it is really tragic for people to lose their lives. It is a big loss to their families. A moment of profound grief and sorrow. May God give strength to all the deceased family members at this difficult time. May their souls rest in peace. Om Shanti. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

FREEBIES HURT ECONOMY

Madam—The growing trend of offering freebies during elections, such as in the Delhi Assembly polls, poses significant challenges to both the economy and democracy. Economically, these promis-

US withdraws from WHO



In a tearing hurry to make America great again, Trump bombarded his country and the rest of the world with a slew of executive orders. He withdrew the US from the World Health Organisation, alleging that the global agency had mishandled the COVID-19 pandemic. His own handling of the coronavirus catastrophe was dreadful—over 3,50,000 deaths were reported in the US in 2020, the final year of his first term—but those glaring lapses are of no con-

sequence to him now. He has washed his hands of international collaboration to combat any future pandemic. Trump also signed America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement, whose main goal is to limit global warming to 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. Last year ended as the planet's hottest on record, and the target looks even more improbable now with the US jumping ship. In an irrational way, the President pardoned 1,500-odd protesters who stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in a bid to prevent lawmakers from certifying his election defeat. The incident was a big blow to American democracy. In stark contrast, there is bad news for those desperate to sneak into the US, as Trump has declared illegal immigration at the US-Mexico border a "national emergency." It's America First for him—and the world must brace itself for the worst. N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

Market and on Companies with Large USD Borrowings and other relevant issues. Rupee's further decline cannot be avoided. RBI's own calculations indicate a large overvaluation of the rupee, so a lot more decline of the rupee against the dollar must happen, especially if the US imposes tariffs. In case of a large and rapid rupee decline, the economy and stock markets could be disrupted. Therefore, economic turmoil is unavoidable. If the rupee becomes significantly weaker against the dollar, the debt and interest repayment burden of these Indian companies will go up. If the rupee is strong, then dollar debt becomes cheaper. So, nobody gained from this RBI pivot of 2022. Short-term strategies can sometimes have long-term consequences. India got into this mess by betting on high GDP growth, which can be the only saviour in this situation. But now the GDP growth itself has slowed. Jayanthi Subramanian | Mumbai

RUPEE'S FURTHER DECLINE EXPECTED

Madam — India's Weakening Rupee and its expected Impact on the Indian Stock

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

AI and defence dynamics: Global trends and India's adaptation

India is harnessing AI to enhance national security, counter threats and establish itself at the forefront of the defence innovation landscape



TARUN VIG

Cross-border terrorism and geopolitical tensions, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Israel-Iran hostilities, have driven unprecedented defence spending since World War II. To counter these threats, nations are leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to build resilient defence systems. AI enhances national security by enabling robust decision-making to detect, analyse, and address complex threats across multiple fronts. The Shift Towards AI in Defence AI is transforming defence strategies, reducing reliance on human personnel. The US military's active-duty personnel are at their lowest levels in eight decades, while the U.K. has seen a 30 per cent reduction since 2000, largely due to AI-driven tools replacing soldiers in high-risk operations. With advancements in IoT and data analytics, experts predict a significant increase in AI-based defence systems globally. India's AI-Driven Defence Evolution



India, a leading G20 nation, is actively integrating AI into its defence framework to counter internal and external threats. Initiatives like the 2022 launch of 75 AI-enabled defence products highlight India's focus on cybersecurity, automation, and autonomous systems. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) allocates \$12.6 million annually for AI projects, including the establishment of an AI center at the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE). Additionally, the 2024 launch of India's first AI Data Bank aims to enhance national security through real-time analytics and predictive capabilities. AI in Security and Surveillance AI aids investigation agencies in video surveillance and threat detection, analysing behaviour, communications and psychological patterns to identify risks. Using both Strong AI (mimicking human cognition) and Weak AI

(focused tasks), intelligence agencies enhance security, mitigate breaches and safeguard civilians and public institutions. Challenges and Future Prospects Despite promising advancements, AI adoption in India's defence faces challenges, including data privacy, cybersecurity and ethical concerns surrounding autonomous systems. To remain competitive, India must increase investments in research, collaborate internationally and address accountability issues tied to AI-driven military operations. Conclusion By adopting a risk-based regulatory framework, India can ensure the ethical and effective deployment of AI in defence. While challenges persist, the ongoing innovations and strategic initiatives signal a future where India's defence capabilities transcend traditional methods, embracing AI as a cornerstone of national security. (The writer is Co-founder & CEO, Innefu Labs; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: CHAMPIONING THE GLOBAL SOUTH

India's approach balances national priorities with global responsibilities



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the US presidential inauguration earlier this week. President Trump's inauguration by itself is an epochal moment for global international relations. India outlined its foreign policy approach a few days ago, during EAM's address at Nani Palkivala's memorial lecture. He mentioned that India's foreign policy in 2025 reflects a deepening commitment to multilateralism, but also recognises the competitive realities of a shifting global order. The nation has embraced issue-based partnerships with major groupings like the Quad, BRICS, and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). India's ability to balance multiple memberships and partnerships underscores its evolving diplomatic strategy, driven by a pragmatic approach to international relations.

At the heart of India's foreign policy is a strong solidarity with the Global South, rooted in post-colonial values of independence, sovereignty and resistance to external pressures. This unique perspective sets India apart from traditional alliance structures, as it champions the rights of developing nations while pursuing its strategic interests. While India continues to engage in global dialogues, it maintains its core principle of non-alignment and the freedom to choose partners based on national priorities. Recent shifts in India's domestic policies—across politics, economics and security—have influenced its foreign relations.



Notably, India's relationship with the United States has transformed, moving past historical hesitations to embrace a deeper strategic partnership. This cooperation spans security, technology, trade, and science, benefiting both nations. India's diaspora also plays a crucial role, acting as a living bridge to enhance bilateral ties. Despite occasional policy shifts in the US, the foundation for a robust relationship is now firmly established. However, India's engagement with China remains a complex challenge. As the two largest Asian nations with over a billion people each, their dynamic is shaped by historical disputes and differing political systems. The boundary issue, exacerbated by tensions since 2020, continues to complicate bilateral relations. The guiding principles for India's approach to China are mutual respect, sensitivity, and shared interests, with an emphasis on long-term stability and a multi-polar Asia. In the Indo-Pacific, India has extended its Act East policy, fostering deeper relationships with Japan, Australia and ASEAN countries, and strengthening the Quad alliance.

This partnership has progressed in areas such as climate action, maritime security, and digital connectivity. Similarly, India's collaboration with Russia remains a pillar of its foreign policy, with growing economic ties and shared strategic interests. India advocates for diplomacy in addressing global challenges, such as the Ukraine conflict, and seeks to provide solutions to global problems, including food security and climate change.

It has assisted smaller neighbours during crises, including the 2023 financial support to Sri Lanka, reinforcing its role as a regional leader. However, India's relationship with Pakistan remains strained due to ongoing cross-border terrorism. India is also engaged in strengthening ties with Myanmar and Afghanistan, maintaining its people-to-people connections despite political complexities. India's global ambitions are reflected in its increasing role in international organisations. As a proponent of multilateral reform, India has pushed for changes in the United Nations, advocating for greater representation of the Global South. It also leads initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. These efforts highlight India's growing responsibility as a global power, dedicated to addressing pressing issues like climate change, digital governance, and humanitarian crises.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Budget 2025: A roadmap to empower farmers and reignite rural India



A S MITTAL

The Budget must go beyond promises—it must deliver feasible solutions to secure livelihoods, strengthen rural demand and bridge the rural-urban divide

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to present the Union Budget 2025-26 on February 1, the nation stands at a pivotal crossroads. With GDP growth projected to dip to a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in FY 2024-25, the spotlight turns to revitalising the rural economy, a cornerstone of the country's consumption-driven progress.

The urgent call for agricultural reforms has grown louder, fueled by ongoing farmer protests, including the fast-unto-death by 70-year-old farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal at Punjab's Khanauri border, which has captured national attention, demanding a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP). Agriculture, which employs nearly 45 per cent of the country's workforce and sustains over 60 per cent of its rural population, is at a breaking point. Stagnant productivity, declining incomes, and policy neglect have left farmers in crisis. This Budget cannot be limited to lofty promises—it must deliver practical solutions to secure livelihoods, strengthen rural demand, and narrow the rural-urban divide. Revitalising agriculture is not just an economic necessity but a moral obligation to foster inclusive growth. Here's how Budget 2025 can introduce transformative measures to bolster the agricultural sector and ensure rural spending—currently contributing 60 per cent of total consumption—fuels India's economic resurgence.

1. Boost Agriculture Budget and Research

The allocation for agriculture and allied sectors constitutes only 3 per cent of the Union Budget, which needs to be raised to at least 7.5%. Unspent funds in this category should be carried forward to address critical gaps in research, education, and infrastructure for crop storage and processing. Investing in agricultural research institutions to develop climate-resilient crop varieties and sustainable farming techniques can enhance productivity. Encouraging public-private partnerships in agrarian innovation can further drive the sector's growth.

2. Provide Legal Backing to MSP

The persistent demand for Minimum Support Price (MSP) with legal guarantees highlights the sector's vulnerabilities. Implementing the MS Swaminathan Commission's recommendation of setting MSP at C2 (comprehensive cost of production) +50 per cent and granting it legal status can ensure private buyers do not exploit farmers. This reform would not put a significant financial strain on the government but could protect farmers from distress sales. Furthermore, creating a robust monitoring mechanism to enforce MSP and extending its coverage to more crops can improve farmers' incomes. Enhancing the transparency of procurement processes through digital platforms and integrating MSP enforcement with local market committees can also make the system more reliable.

3. Enhance PM-KISAN Support

The Rs 6,000 annual support to around 10 crore small and marginal farmers under PM-KISAN to help meet their working capital needs, unchanged since its launch in 2018, has not kept pace with inflation. However, with inflation averaging 6 per cent over the past six years. The government should consider doubling this support to Rs 12,000 annually to address farmers' growing financial needs. This increase could significantly impact



INDIA'S FARMERS LACK A ROBUST SOCIAL SECURITY NET. A NON-CONTRIBUTORY PENSION OF RS3,000 PER MONTH FOR SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS AGED 60 AND ABOVE, OWNING UP TO 2 HECTARES OF LAND, COULD PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED FINANCIAL SECURITY

small-marginal farmers, who struggle to meet their expenses amid rising input costs for seeds, fertilisers, and irrigation.

4. Transform the Kisan Credit Card (KCC)

The KCC scheme provides short-term loans with an interest subsidy for up to Rs 3 lakh. However, the rigid repayment schedule often forces farmers to rely on private moneylenders to meet short-term cash requirements.

A more farmer-friendly approach would be to convert KCCs into running overdraft accounts, increase the credit limit to Rs 10 lakh, and cap interest rates at 4 per cent. Removing usage restrictions on loans would further empower farmers to make long-term agricultural investments. Additionally, simplifying the KCC application process and enhancing awareness through rural outreach programs can improve access to credit. Expanding the scheme to include sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and farm labourers can promote financial inclusion in agriculture.

5. Introduce a Pension Scheme for Small Farmers

India's farmers lack a robust social security net. A non-contributory pension of Rs3,000 per month for small and marginal farmers aged 60 and above, owning up to 2 hectares of land, could provide much-needed financial security. Contributions from state governments could further augment this scheme. Implementing such a pension system can alleviate poverty among elderly farmers and reduce their dependence on family support.

6. Strengthen Animal Husbandry and Dairy Sectors:

Livestock contributes over 25 per cent to agricultural GDP but suffers from fluctuating milk prices and restrictive cattle rearing and trade policies. A simple yet impactful step would

be legally mandating private dairies to match or exceed the milk procurement prices set by cooperatives like Amul. Additionally, incorporating milk and eggs into the mid-day meal scheme can improve farm incomes while tackling malnutrition among children. Promoting cattle insurance schemes and increasing budgetary allocation for veterinary services can enhance livestock productivity. Encouraging the adoption of modern technologies like artificial insemination and genetic improvement can further boost the sector's contribution to rural livelihoods.

7. Reform Fertiliser Subsidy Policies

The current system treats fertiliser subsidies as farmer benefits but deducts the subsidised amount while calculating MSP. This practice lowers farmers' actual remuneration. MSP calculations should instead consider the market price of inputs, ensuring fairer returns for farmers. The government could also promote balanced fertiliser use by incentivising organic farming practices and providing subsidies for bio-fertilisers. A shift towards a direct benefit transfer system for fertiliser subsidies can reduce leakages and ensure benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

8. Simplify Crop Insurance

The PM Fasal Bima Yojana requires farmers to navigate complex procedures to claim compensation. The government should shoulder the entire premium initially, including the state's share, and simplify the claim process. This would reduce the administrative burden on farmers while ensuring timely compensation for crop losses. Leveraging technology like satellite imagery and AI-driven risk assessment models can streamline the verification process and minimise disputes. Expanding insurance coverage to include post-har-

vest losses and natural calamities can make the scheme more comprehensive and farmer-friendly.

9. Reassess Inflation Control Policies

Policies like export bans, stock limits on agricultural produce, and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) dumping grains at below-market prices undermine farmers' profitability. These interventions should be re-evaluated to balance inflation control with fair returns for farmers. Encouraging exports of surplus produce and ensuring better storage infrastructure can reduce post-harvest losses. Developing a decentralised agricultural pricing system driven by real-time market data can align domestic policies with global demand trends. A Vision for Fairness and Growth India's agricultural sector has long been the backbone of its economy, yet farmers have faced systemic neglect and economic disparity.

Over the last decade, the government has written off Rs12.30 lakh crore in big corporate loans, while farmers continue to struggle under mounting debt (Rs 18 lakh crore) and policies that fail to guarantee fair prices for their produce. The 2025 Budget presents an opportunity to correct these imbalances. By addressing these critical issues, the government can improve farmers' lives, spur rural demand, catalyse GDP growth and lay the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable agricultural future. It's time to honour the farmers who feed the nation by delivering the support they deserve.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are personal)

Pioneering community-led groundwater management for a sustainable future

The Atal Bhujal Yojana, designed to address India's growing groundwater crisis, shifts the focus to a community-driven approach

The Atal Bhujal Yojana, or Atal Jal, is a pioneering government initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with the World Bank. This innovative program marks a significant departure from traditional top-down approaches to water management, instead empowering communities to take the lead in sustainable groundwater management. A Bottom-Up Approach to Water Security Atal Jal has been implemented across 8,203 Gram Panchayats, 229 blocks, and 80 districts in seven states: Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.



SHANTANU GARG

By directly engaging with marginalised farmers, the poor, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and other vulnerable groups, the scheme promotes inclusive development and social equity. The core objective of Atal Jal is to increase groundwater availability and ensure its long-term sustainability. By bolstering groundwater resources, the programme aims to enhance agricultural productivity and build resilience against the growing threats of climate change. Atal Jal is more than just a water management programme; it is a catalyst for social and economic transformation. By empowering communities and prioritising gender equity, the

ety, this groundbreaking initiative is a harbinger of hope, fortifying the future through equitable resource management and fostering prosperity among those it touches.

The Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal) is a comprehensive initiative that goes beyond technical solutions to address the pressing issue of groundwater depletion. It is a multifaceted programme that combines technical interventions with social and behavioural change strategies.

Empowering Communities

A key aspect of Atal Jal is its focus on gender equality and community empowerment. By involving women in decision-making processes and capacity-building



programmes, the scheme empowers them to play a crucial role in sustainable water use. Women are encouraged to participate in meetings, training and leadership roles, ensuring that their perspectives and needs are

considered. Atal Jal employs innovative approaches to engage with communities. Through a variety of activities, including rallies, community meetings, competitions, and social media campaigns, the scheme raises awareness about groundwa-

ter issues and promotes sustainable practices. The programme also recognises the importance of educating the next generation and conducts essay and drawing competitions in schools.

To further enhance its impact, Atal Jal utilises technology to monitor groundwater levels and disseminate information. The Atal Jal mobile app provides stakeholders and the general public with access to information about groundwater resources and management practices.

A Sustainable Future

Atal Jal's well-defined sustainable strategy involves training community resource persons and preparing water budgets in

collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. This systematic approach ensures the long-term sustainability of the program and empowers communities to make informed decisions about water use.

The success of Atal Jal is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the team behind the initiative. By combining technical expertise with a strong focus on social and behavioural change, Atal Jal is poised to become a model for future groundwater management programmes.

(The writer is Programme Coordinator, the Green Evolution, India, Nepal, Bangladesh & Coalition for Food Systems Transformation in India; views are personal)

Trump threatens Russia with tariffs, sanctions

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has warned his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to end the 'ridiculous war' in Ukraine or face high tariffs and further sanctions. Trump, who was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on January 20, said this on Truth Social on Wednesday, a social media platform owned by him. Trump called out Russian President Putin by name in the social media post, arguing that he always had a good relationship with the leader, but that it was time to settle "this ridiculous war!" Asserting that he is looking to hurt Russia, Trump said he wants no more lives to be lost in the war. "Let's get this war, which never would have started if I were President, over with! We can do it the easy way, or the hard way - and the easy way is always better. It's time to 'MAKE A DEAL.' NO MORE LIVES SHOULD BE LOST!!!" Trump said. "I love the Russian people, and always had a very good relationship with President Putin - and this despite the Radical Left's Russia, Russia, Russia HOAX. We must never forget

that Russia helped us win the Second World War, losing almost 60,000,000 lives in the process," he said. He also warned that if there was not a ceasefire deal soon, he would "have no other choice" but to impose tariffs, taxes and sanctions on "anything being sold by Russia to the United States, and various other participating countries." "All of that being said, I'm going to do Russia, whose Economy is failing, and President Putin, a very big FAVOUR. Settle now, and STOP this ridiculous War! IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE. If we don't make a "deal," and soon, I have no other choice but to put high levels of Taxes, Tariffs, and Sanctions on anything being sold by Russia to the United States, and various other participating countries," Trump said making an open appeal to the Russian leader. The Biden administration has already imposed numerous sanctions on various Russian economic sectors, including its oil and energy sectors earlier this month, in an effort to cut off its revenues to fund the war in Ukraine. Trump has for months called for a ceasefire in Ukraine, urging both sides to negotiate.

Russian forces invaded Ukraine in early 2022, and both sides have sustained heavy losses in the nearly three years of fighting since. During his campaign, Trump repeatedly said he could settle the war between Russia and Ukraine in one day if he was elected president. He would go on to claim that Putin would never have invaded had Trump been president, the National Public Radio reported. On Tuesday, Trump said he is ready to meet Putin anytime, but at the same time, he warned that he would likely impose sanctions on Russia if the latter does not come to the negotiations table on the issue of Ukraine. "It sounds likely," Trump told reporters when asked if the US will impose additional sanctions on Russia if Putin doesn't come to the negotiation table. Trump also said that Ukraine's President Zelensky told him that he would like to have peace. "He's told me that he wants to have peace very strongly, but it takes two to tango. We'll see what happens. Anytime they want, I'll meet. I'd like to see that end. Millions of people are being killed. It's a vicious situation," he said.

House passes immigrant detention bill

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Republican-led House on Wednesday gave its final approval to a bill that requires the detention of unauthorised immigrants accused of theft and violent crimes, marking the first legislation that US President Donald Trump can sign as Congress, with some bipartisan support, swiftly moved in line with his plans to crackdown on illegal immigration. Passage of the Laken Riley Act, named after a Georgia nursing student who was murdered last year by a Venezuelan man, shows just how sharply the political debate over immigration has shifted to the right following Trump's election victory. Immigration policy has often been one of the most entrenched issues in Congress, but a crucial faction of 46 politically vulnerable Democrats joined with Republicans to lift the strict proposal to passage on a 263-156 vote tally. "For decades, it has been almost impossible for our government to agree on solutions

for the problems at our border and within our country," Senator Katie Britt, an Alabama Republican, said. She called the legislation "perhaps the most significant immigration enforcement bill" to be passed by Congress in nearly three decades. Still, the bill would require a massive ramp-up in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's capabilities, but it does not include any new funding. Meanwhile, the new president has launched a slew of executive orders intended to seal off the border of Mexico to immigration and ultimately deport millions of immigrants without permanent legal status in the US. On Wednesday, Trump also cancelled refugee resettlement while his administration signalled intentions to prosecute local law enforcement officials who do not enforce his new immigration policies. Republican congressional leaders have made it clear they intend to follow suit, though their toughest challenge will be finding a way to approve the funding to actually implement

Trump's hard-line plans. "What he's doing is kick-starting what will ultimately be our legislative agenda," said House Speaker Mike Johnson. House Republicans initially passed the legislation last year with support from 37 Democrats in a move that was intended to deliver a political rebuke to then-President Joe Biden's handling of the southern border. It then languished in the Democratic-controlled Senate. This year, Republicans, now with control of both congressional chambers, have made it their top priority. When it came before the Senate, 12 Democrats voted in favour of passage, and when the House voted on a version of the bill earlier this month, 48 Democrats supported it. The vast majority of US adults favour deporting immigrants convicted of violent crimes, according to a recent survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. However, only about 37 per cent of US adults are in favour of deporting immigrants who have not been convicted of a

crime. "While the bill is not perfect, it sends a clear message that we think that criminals should be deported," said Rep Tom Suozzi, a New York Democrat who has called on his party to support tougher immigration enforcement. Under the legislation, federal authorities would be required to detain any migrant arrested or charged with crimes like shoplifting. The scope of the proposal was widened in the Senate to also include those accused of assaulting a police officer or crimes that injure or kill someone. The bill also gives legal standing to state attorneys general to sue the federal government for harm caused by federal immigration decisions. That gives states new power in setting immigration policy when they have already been trying to push back against presidential decisions under both the Trump and Biden administrations. Democrats unsuccessfully pushed to have that provision stripped from the bill in the Senate, saying it would inject even more uncertainty and

partisanship into immigration policy. Ultimately, even the Trump administration is likely to struggle to implement the new requirements unless Congress follows up later this year with funding. Republicans are currently strategising how to push their priorities through Congress through a party-line process known as budget reconciliation. They have put the cost of funding Trump's border and deportation priorities at roughly USD 100 billion. Trump has "laid out the largest domestic logistical undertaking of our lifetimes — that being the deportation of the vast majority of illegal aliens present in the United States", Ken Cuccinelli, who directed US Citizenship and Immigration Services during Trump's first presidency, recently told a Senate panel. Cuccinelli said it would require a surge of immigration judges, prosecutors and other staff, but Trump has also paved the way to use military troops, bases and other resources to carry out the mass deportations.

Firefighters struggle to control massive blaze north of LA

PTI ■ CASTAIC

Firefighters fought to maintain the upper hand on a huge and rapidly moving wildfire that swept through rugged mountains north of Los Angeles and resulted in more than 50,000 people being put under evacuation orders or warnings. The Hughes Fire broke out late Wednesday morning and in less than a day had charred nearly 16 square miles (41 square kilometers) of trees and brush near Lake Castaic, a popular recreation area about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires that are burning for a third week. Though the region was under a red flag warning for critical fire risk, winds were not as fast as they had been when those fires broke out, allowing for firefighting aircraft to dump tens of thousands of gallons of fire retardant on the latest blaze. By Wednesday night, about



A helicopter drops water on the Hughes Fire along Castaic Lake in Castaic, Calif., Wednesday. AP/PTI

14% of the Hughes Fire had been contained. "The situation that we're in today is very different from the situation we were in 16 days ago," Los

Angeles County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone said Wednesday evening. Red flag warnings were extended through 10 a.m. Friday in LA

and Ventura counties. Officials remained concerned that the Palisades and Eaton fires could break their containment lines as firefighters continue watching for hot spots. More than 31,000 people have been ordered to evacuate from the Hughes Fire, and another 23,000 are under evacuation warnings, LA County Sheriff Robert Luna said. There were no reports of homes or other structures burned. Parts of Interstate 5 near the Hughes Fire that had been closed reopened Wednesday evening. A 30-mile (48-kilometer) stretch of the major north-south artery had been closed for emergency vehicles, to move equipment and to prevent accidents due to smoke billowing across it. Crews on the ground and in water-dropping aircraft tried to prevent the wind-driven fire from moving across the interstate and toward Castaic.

Bid to block Trump's cancellation of birthright citizenship in federal court

Washington (PTI): A federal judge in Seattle is set to hear the first arguments on Thursday in a multi-state lawsuit seeking to block President Donald Trump's executive order ending the constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship regardless of the parents' immigration status. US District Judge John Coughenour scheduled the session to consider the request from Arizona, Illinois, Oregon and Washington. The case is one of five lawsuits being brought by 22 states and a number of immigrants rights groups across the country. The suits include personal testimonies from attorneys general who are US citizens by birthright, and names pregnant women who are afraid their children won't become US citizens. The order, signed by Trump on Inauguration Day, is slated to take effect on February 19. It could impact hundreds of

thousands of people born in the country, according to one of the lawsuits. In 2022, there were about 255,000 births of citizen children to mothers living in the country illegally and about 153,000 births to two such parents, according to the four-state suit filed in Seattle. The US is among about 30 countries where birthright citizenship — the principle of jus soli or "right of the soil" — is applied. Most are in the Americas, and Canada and Mexico are among them. The lawsuits argue that the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees citizenship for people born and naturalised in the US, and states have been interpreting the amendment that way for a century. Ratified in 1868 in the aftermath of the Civil War, the amendment says: "All persons born or naturalised in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the

State wherein they reside." Trump's order asserts that the children of noncitizens are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and orders federal agencies to not recognise citizenship for children who don't have at least one parent who is a citizen. A key case involving birthright citizenship unfolded in 1898. The Supreme Court held that Wong Kim Ark, who was born in San Francisco to Chinese immigrants, was a US citizen because he was born in the country. After a trip abroad, he faced being denied reentry by the federal government on the grounds that he wasn't a citizen under the Chinese Exclusion Act. But some advocates of immigration restrictions have argued that case clearly applied to children born to parents who were both legal immigrants. They say it's less clear whether it applies to children born to parents living in the country illegally.

Pentagon sending active duty troops to help secure US-Mexico border

Washington (PTI): The Pentagon on Wednesday said it has begun deploying 1,500 active duty troops to help secure the southern border in the coming days, putting in motion plans US President Donald Trump laid out in executive orders shortly after he took office to crack down on immigration. Acting Defence Secretary Robert Salesses said the Pentagon will provide military aircraft to support Department of Homeland Security deportation flights for more than 5,000 detained migrants and the troops will assist in the construction of barriers. The number of troops and their mission may soon change, Salesses said in a statement. It remains to be seen if they will end up doing law enforcement, which would put American troops in a dramatically different role for the first time in decades. The active duty forces will join the roughly 2,500 US National Guard and Reserve forces already there. There are currently no active duty troops working along the roughly 3,219-km border. Personnel started moving to the border earlier Wednesday, according to a military official briefing reporters on the condition of anonymity to provide additional details on the deployment. The troops will include 500 Marines from Camp Pendleton in California, and the remainder will be army personnel. "Troops have done similar duties in support of Border Patrol agents in the past, when both Trump and former president Joe Biden sent active duty troops to the border. Troops are prohibited by law from doing law enforcement duties under the Posse Comitatus Act, but that may change. Trump has directed through executive order that the incoming secretary of defence and incoming homeland security chief report back within 90 days if they think an 1807 law called the Insurrection Act should be invoked.

Elon Musk clashes with OpenAI CEO

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Elon Musk is clashing with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman over the Stargate artificial intelligence infrastructure project touted by President Donald Trump, the latest in a feud between the two tech billionaires that started on OpenAI's board and is now testing Musk's influence with the new president. Trump on Tuesday had talked up a joint venture investing up to \$500 billion through a new partnership formed by OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, alongside Oracle and SoftBank. The new entity, Stargate, is already starting to build out data centres and the electricity generation needed for the further development of fast-evolving AI technology. Trump declared it "a resounding declaration of confidence in America's potential" under his new administration, with an initial private investment of \$100 billion that could reach five times that sum. But Musk, a close Trump adviser

who helped bankroll his campaign and now leads a government cost-cutting initiative, questioned the value of the investment hours later. "They don't actually have the money," Musk wrote on his social platform X. "SoftBank has well under \$10B secured. I have that on good authority." Altman responded Wednesday to say Musk was "wrong, as you surely know" and inviting Musk to come visit the first site in Texas that is already under construction. "(T)his is great for the country. I realize what is great for the country isn't always what's optimal for your companies, but in your new role I hope you'll mostly put (America) first," Altman wrote, using a US flag emoji to represent America. The public clash over Stargate is part of a years-long dispute between Musk and Altman that began with a boardroom rivalry over who should run OpenAI, which both men helped found. Musk, an early OpenAI investor and board member, sued the

artificial intelligence company last year alleging it had betrayed its founding aims as a non-profit research lab benefiting the public good rather than pursuing profits. Musk has since escalated the dispute, adding new claims and asking for a court order that would stop OpenAI's plans to convert itself into a for-profit business more fully. A hearing is set for February in a California federal court. The world's richest man, whose companies include Tesla, SpaceX and X, last year started his own rival AI company, xAI, that is building its own big data center in Memphis, Tennessee. Musk says it faces unfair competition from OpenAI and its close business partner Microsoft, which has supplied the huge computing resources needed to build AI systems such as ChatGPT. Tech news outlet The Information first reported on an OpenAI data center project called Stargate in March 2024, indicating that it's been in the works long before Trump announced it.

Teen fatally shoots female student, self at Nashville high school: Police

PTI ■ NASHVILLE

A female student was killed and another student was wounded on Wednesday in a shooting at a Nashville high school cafeteria, police said. The 17-year-old shooter, who was also a student at Antioch High School, later shot and killed himself with a handgun, Metro Nashville Police spokesperson Don Aaron said during a news conference. Police identified him as Solomon Henderson. Police chief John Drake said the shooter "confronted" a 16-year-old female student in the cafeteria and opened fire, killing her. Police identified her as Josselin Corea Escalante. Drake said police are looking into a motive and whether the students who were shot were targeted. The male student who was



Students wait to get off a bus at a unification site following a shooting at the Antioch High School in Nashville, Tenn., Wednesday. AP/PTI

wounded suffered a graze, and was treated and released from the hospital, Drake said. Another student was taken to a hospital for treatment of a

facial injury that happened during a fall, Aaron said. There were two school resource officers in the building when the shooting happened around 11 am (local time), Aaron said. They were not in the immediate vicinity of the cafeteria and by the time they got down there the shooting was over and the gunman had killed himself, Aaron said. The school has about 2,000 students and is located in Antioch, a neighbourhood about 16 km southeast of downtown Nashville. At a family safety centre close to a hospital, officials were helping shocked parents to reunite with their children. Dajuan Bernard was waiting at a Mapco service station to reunite with his son, a 10th grader, who was being held in the auditorium with other students on Wednesday afternoon. He first heard of the shooting from his son who "was a little startled", Bernard said. His son was upstairs from the cafeteria but said he heard the gunfire.

Thousands line up for whiff of flower smelling like gym socks

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The rare unfurling of an endangered plant that emits the smell of decaying flesh drew hundreds of devoted fans to a greenhouse in Sydney on Thursday where they joined three-hour lines to experience a momentous bloom — and a fragrance evoking gym socks and rotting garbage. Tall, pointed and smelly, the corpse flower is scientifically known as *amorphophallus titanum* — or *bunga bangkai* in Indonesia, where the plants are found in the Sumatran rainforest. But to fans of this specimen, she's Patricia — a portmanteau of "putrid" and "Patricia" eagerly adopted by her followers who, naturally, call themselves

Putricians. For a week, she has graced a stately and gothic display in front of a purple curtain and wreathed in mist from a humidifier at the Royal Sydney Botanic Garden. Her rise to fame since has been rapid, with up to 20,000 admirers filing past for a moment in her increasingly pungent presence. No corpse flower has bloomed at the garden for 15 years. "The fact that they open very rarely, so they flower rarely, is obviously something that puts them at a little bit of a disadvantage in the wild," said garden spokesperson Sophie Daniel, who designed Patricia's kooky and funereal display. "When they open, they have to hope that another flower is open nearby, because they can't

self-pollinate." There are thought to be only 300 of the plants in the wild and fewer than 1,000 worldwide — including those in cultivation. Among them is Patricia, which arrived at the garden seven years ago. When her flower was spotted in December she was just 25 centimeters (10 inches) high. By Thursday, she was 1.6 metres (5 feet 3 inches) tall — and her flower spike was slowly opening like a pleated skirt around a majestic central tuber, the yellow-green outer curling to reveal a burgundy centre. As excitement grew in Sydney after the moment of her bloom, garden staff erected crowd barriers, giving the Victorian greenhouse the air of a rock concert. Fans trod a red

carpet to view Patricia from behind velvet ropes in a display inspired by Queen Victoria's funeral, the Rocky Horror Picture Show and the oeuvre of the late director David Lynch. Inside, fans took selfies and leaned in for a sniff — an increasingly perilous prospect as Patricia's odor developed. One young woman raised her hands and bowed as though in worship. On social media, garden staff performed a viral dance to Chappell Roan's summer hit HOT TO GO! against a backdrop of the Stargate plant. It was difficult to say why the regal, mysterious and stinky flower had attracted such a following — but perhaps the answer lay in the "reverence" viewers felt in the presence of "such an amazing living being,"

Daniel said. Along with her real-life visitors, Patricia's online fandom has been rapid, global and deeply strange — if much less smelly. A 24/7 live stream established by the botanic garden drew close to a million views in less than a week and a shared language of memes and inside jokes sprang up. Frequently deployed acronyms included WWTF, or we watch the flower, WDRNP — we do not rush Patricia — and BBTB, or blessed be the bloom. "Patricia is a metaphor for my life," wrote one poster, who did not elaborate. Commenters on social media made plans to hurry to the garden as the plant opened. In just 24 hours, Patricia's bloom — and her stench — would be gone.

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Water Work Department						
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S. No.	NIT No.	Tender ID.	Details of Work	Estimated Cost (INR)	Earnest Money (EMD)	Bid Submission End Date
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.	74/T.Sec/EE/W.W.D./2024-25 First Call	2025_UAD_397511_1	Providing Laying and Jointing of DI Pipeline at Pul Patra Area under Zone 09 WWD	35,22,810/-	26,421.00	20.02.2025
2	75/T.Sec/EE/W.W.D./2024-25 First Call	2025_UAD_397524_1	Providing Laying and Jointing of HOPE Pipeline at Ankur Complex, Shivaji Nagar, Shankar Nagar Under Zone 10 WWD	1,15,60,060/-	57,800.00	20.02.2025
3	76/T.Sec/EE/W.W.D./2024-25 First Call	2025_UAD_397528_1	Providing Laying and Jointing of DI Pipeline at Rachna Nagar, Kasturba Nagar, Gautam Nagar Under Zone 12 WWD	35,22,810/-	26,421.00	20.02.2025
4	77/T.Sec/EE/W.W.D./2024-25 First Call	2025_UAD_397805_1	Providing Laying and Jointing of HOPE Pipeline at Devki Nagar, Navab Colony, Shiv Nagar Under Zone 17 WWD	1,92,15,282/-	96,076.00	20.02.2025
Executive Engineer (WWD)						
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal						
T.N.1172/024/025						

Russian victory in Ukraine will hurt NATO's credibility'

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte warned on Thursday that a Russian victory over Ukraine would undermine the dissuasive force of the world's biggest military alliance and that its credibility could cost trillions to restore.



NATO has been ramping up its forces along its eastern flank with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, deploying thousands of troops and equipment to deter Moscow from expanding its war into the territory of any of the organisation's 32 member countries.

Dutch prime minister said, "That would be geopolitically a big, big mistake. Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski welcomed Trump's acknowledgement that it must be Russia which should make the first peace moves, but he cautioned that "this is not the Putin that President Trump knew in his first term".

S Korean investigators call for indictment of President Yoon

Seoul (PTI): South Korean investigators asked prosecutors to indict the country's detained President Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived imposition of martial law last month, as it accused him of rebellion, abuse of power and obstruction of parliament on Thursday.

Yoon defended his actions again as he appeared at a court hearing for the second time Thursday, saying the December 3 martial law decree was only meant to inform the public of the danger of an opposition-controlled National Assembly.

useless." Yoon was impeached and suspended by the assembly on December 14. The Constitutional Court is now deliberating to determine whether to formally throw Yoon out of office or reinstate him.

Public Notice regarding the construction of a hybrid platform with drain and boundary wall at Nischintpur (NCTP) near Agartala.

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Provision of Different Type of Bonds in Alipurduar Division. Tender Notice No. AP-EL-TRD-13-24-25.

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Public Notice regarding the construction of a hybrid platform with drain and boundary wall at Nischintpur (NCTP) near Agartala.

E-Auction for Rail Coach Restaurant at Circulating Area of Agartala Railway Station.

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/50/SR/DMM/KIR/PUB/E-Tender-2024/25/08.

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/50/SR/DMM/KIR/PUB/E-Tender-2024/25/08.

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E-Auction for Catering Units over Alipurduar Division. Details are as under: Auction Catalogue No.: C-470-GMU-CATG.

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/33/2024-25 Dated: 21-01-2025.

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/33/2024-25 Dated: 21-01-2025.

Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/33/2024-25 Dated: 21-01-2025.

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Stores E-Procurement. Tender Notice No. S/33/2024-25 Dated: 21-01-2025.

Format C-1 (for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV) Declaration about criminal cases: (As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate: Anil Bhardwaj R/o. C-4/160-B, Keshav Puram, Delhi-110035

Name of political party: Indian National Congress (Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025

Name of Election: Legislative Assembly of Delhi-2025



NEW LAUNCH



STRENGTH OF POETRY

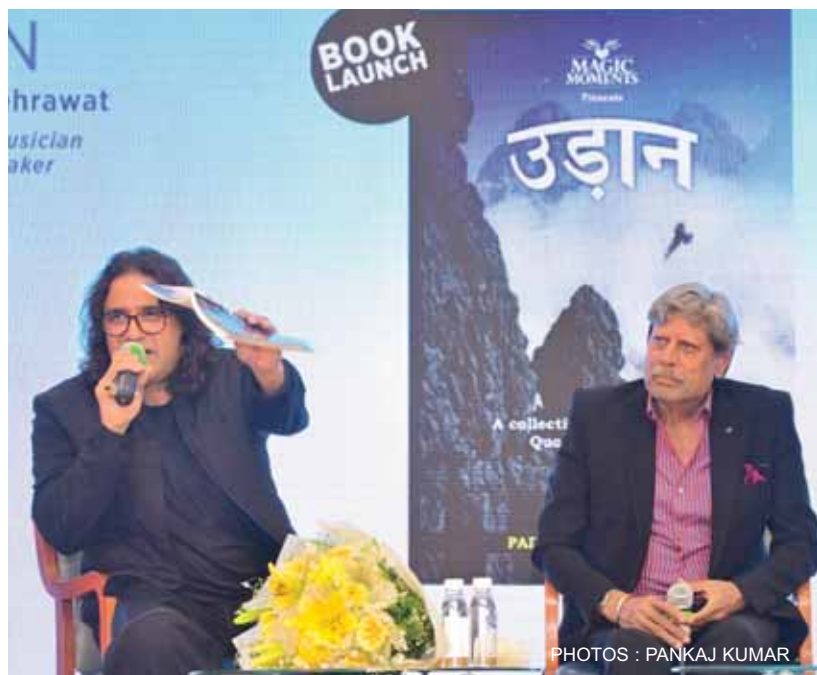
Udaan, a poetry collection by Padamjit Sehrawat, was launched by Kapil Dev, inspiring hope and resilience through uplifting verses and life lessons, says SAKSHI PRIYA

“A book is a doorway to countless worlds, and poetry is the rhythm that brings those worlds to life.” This sentiment was at the heart of an event at the India International Centre in New Delhi, where Padamjit Sehrawat’s poetry collection, Udaan, was launched.

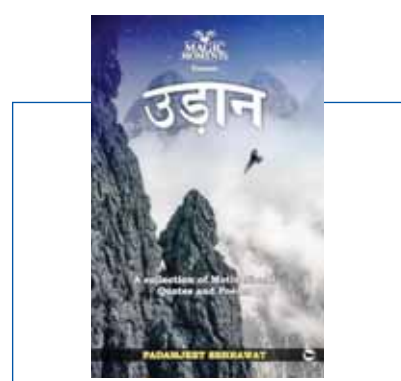
“When passion becomes your profession, the concept of struggle disappears. Passion brings joy, not hardship,” said Kapil Dev at the event. He emphasised the importance of self-awareness, adding, “True success lies in recognising yourself before seeking to impress others.”

The title Udaan, meaning “flight,” beautifully encapsulates the core message of Sehrawat’s poetry. It urges readers to rise above challenges, embrace courage, and view life with optimism. The collection consists of poems that delve into themes of hope, personal growth, and inner strength.

Padamjit Sehrawat is a man of many talents, which enriches his work. A former cricketer who competed in prestigious tournaments like the Ranji Trophy and Deodhar Trophy, he has also built a reputation as a cricket commentator for international sports



PHOTOS : PANKAJ KUMAR



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Udaan

Author: Padamjit Sehrawat

channels. Beyond sports, he is a singer, musician, and motivational speaker. These diverse experiences infuse his poetry with unique perspectives, blending creativity and depth to connect with readers on a personal level.

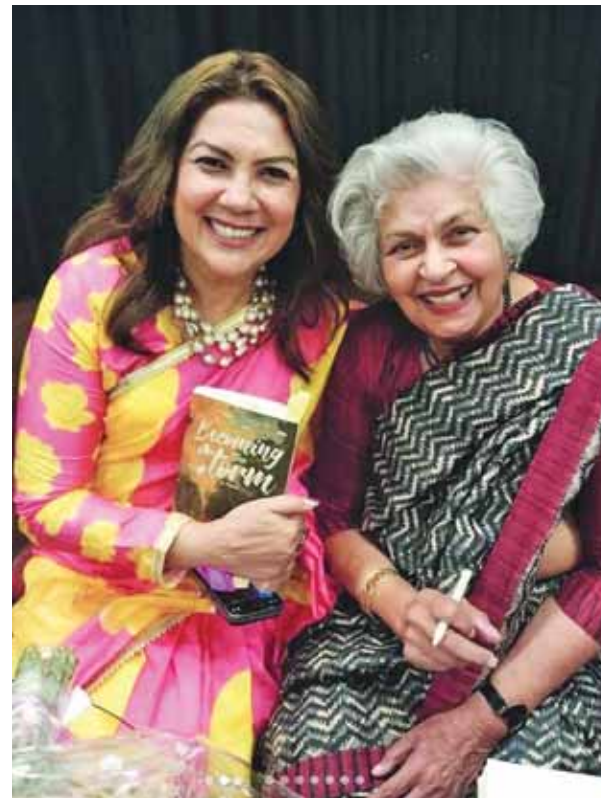
Kapil Dev brought his characteristic humour to the launch, remarking, “There’s no bigger thief than a cricketer, they steal runs! But even this is a positive theft.” He compared this light-hearted analogy to the uplifting nature of Sehrawat’s poetry, which encourages readers to focus on life’s brighter side. Udaan offers readers a chance to rise beyond obstacles and discover strength within themselves.

WOMEN’S FIGHT FOR IDENTITY

‘Becoming the Storm’ Stands Witness to India’s Tryst with Modernity, writes DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

At the age of 86 years, veteran journalist Rami Chhabra made a debut in novel writing with her book ‘Becoming the Storm’. She had been India’s one of the first few women journalists who broke the glass ceiling to straddle the media space in the national capital.

Importantly, Chhabra’s accounts of India’s fight for identity are set in the backdrop of India also gaining strength in the early years since Independence. Yet, the backdrop to India’s tales is also set by India’s three wars in quick succession – 1962 with China, 1965 with Pakistan, and the 1971 War of Independence of Bangladesh.



passing away of Nehru and the subsequent scenes at his residence as the people queued up to pay their last respects to the departed leader. Chhabra recalls in the book Indira Gandhi “holding herself steadily while her eyes had turned red as she stood in one corner when the people paid their respects to the late Nehru”.

The people also rushed to partake in the industrialisation of India with the stock market tales also finding space in the novels of the veteran journalist. In essence, the conflict between tradition and modernity has never ceased.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Becoming the Storm

Author: Rami Chhabra

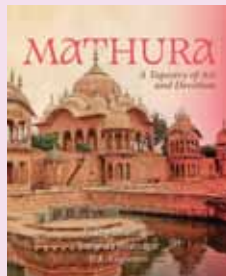
Publisher: Occam

Price: ₹899

JANUARY READS



Book: Job Charnock and The Potter’s Boy
Author: Madhurima Vidyarthi
Publisher: Niyogi Books
Price: ₹595



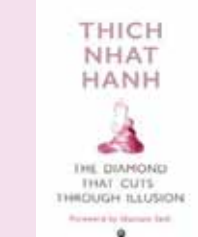
Book: Mathura: A Tapestry of Art and Devotion
Author: Goswami, Sangeeta Bhatnagar, Pradip Bhatnagar
Publisher: Niyogi Books
Price: ₹850



Book: Timeline India: Rediscovery of the Chronology of A Ten Millennia Civilization
Author: Rajnish Karki
Publisher: Rupa Publication
Price: ₹795



Book: Around Varanasi in Assi days
Author: Raja Venkateswara
Publisher: Rupa Publication
Price: ₹395



Book: The Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion
Author: Thich Nhat Hanh
Publisher: Aleph Book Company
Price: ₹399

INDIA’S SPIRITUAL ICONS

Swami Mukundananda’s Nourish Your Soul beautifully explores the inspiring lives and journeys of eleven Indian sages, says KUMAR CHELLAPPAN



as a corporate chieftain for a few years before renouncing materialistic life to become a disciple of Jagadguru Kripaluji Maharaj, a renowned spiritual leader.

What makes Swami Mukundananda different from other authors is the ease and élan with which he communicates his thoughts to the readers without hurting anybody and taunting any religions. While evangelists and preachers proselytise people by addressing them as sinners and kafirs, Mukundananda does not discriminate against people based on their religion or ideology.

other than peace and prosperity throughout the universe. He has carefully selected the sages and monks who attained spirituality through their prayers, deeds, words and commitment. The chances of the present generation of Indians having heard about them are quite remote, as our ‘ace’ historians successfully succeeded in wiping out even the last vestiges of these great men and women from our academic curricula for obvious reasons like national integration and communal harmony.



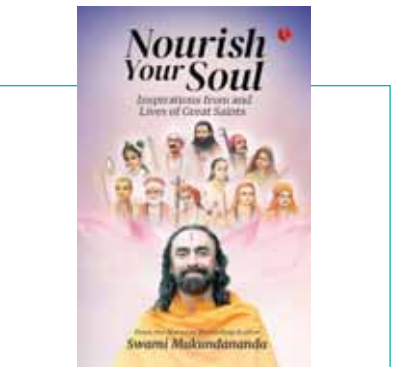
them in their path to eternal sainthood. According to Mukundananda, saints are the embodiment of purity and goodness, being endowed with God’s infinite love and grace. “Their mere presence makes a place holy. Elevated devotees transform wherever they go into a pilgrimage site, for they hold God in their heart,” says the author in the introduction to the book.

master and lover in human form. Despite this truth, she was committed in her devotion and love and she wrote hundreds of poems like Payo Ji Maine Ram Ratan Dhan Payo... a bhajan/hymn which retains its charm and lyrical beauty even today.

listeners on a one-way flight to heaven. The lyrics by the mystic get life and emotion when they are rendered by the likes of M.S. Subbulakshmi and M.L. Vasanthakumari.

The debate between Shankaracharya and Mandan Misra on the relative merits of Mimamsa and Advaita viewpoints, in which the former demolished the concept of the so-called Dravidian philosophy, is enthralling. Bhaia Govindam – described as a wake-up call to a soul in slumber. The exotic poetic beauty and perfection of composition elevate Bhaia Govindam to a state of devotional bliss.

Space constraints prevent me from elaborating about all the saints who feature in this collection. But if I fail to mention Saint Tyagaraja (1767–1847), one of the Trinity of Carnatic Music, it would be an unconscionable sin. Tyagaraja, the saint and composer of Carnatic hymns and kritis (poems), a proof of his adoration and salutation to Lord Rama, should be heard to enjoy them. Born at Tiruvaiyaru on the banks of the River Kaveri, Tyagaraja is described as the most famous son of this landscape. His parents were Rama Brahmam and Sitamma. When Tyagaraja wrote and sang Sitamma Mayamma, Sri Ramudu Matandri, he was celebrating his earthly parents as well as proclaiming Sita and Rama to be his parents (It Happened Along the Kaveri by Padma Seshadri and Padma Malini Sundararaghavan – Niyogi Books). One gets the feeling that this world is a beautiful place because of the hymns and bhajans composed by the likes of Meera Bai and Saint Tyagaraja. Nourishing Your Soul is not an ordinary work; it is the much-needed energiser and nourisher of the mind and shows to the world that Bharat was a Vishwa Guru even before the advent of AI, satellites and the internet.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Nourishing Your Soul

Author: Swami Mukundananda

Publisher: Rupa

Price: ₹395

Growing geo-economic fragmentation can decrease global GDP: WEF report

PTI ■ DAVOS

Growing geo-economic fragmentation can decrease global GDP by up to \$5.7 trillion, giving it a bigger blow than the financial crisis of 2008 or the COVID-19 pandemic, a new study showed on Thursday. India and some other emerging economies can bear the biggest burden in the most extreme fragmentation scenario, it cautioned. Countries are increasingly using the global financial and trading systems to advance geopolitical objectives through sanctions, industrial policies, and other economic measures, the World Economic Forum said while releasing the report here during its Annual Meeting 2025. The Navigating Global Financial System Fragmentation report estimated that fragmentation resulting from statecraft policies could cost the global economy \$0.6 trillion to \$5.7 trillion - up to 5 per cent of global GDP - due to reduced trade and cross-border capital flows as well as lost economic



efficiencies. It could also increase global inflation by more than 5 per cent in a very high fragmentation scenario, it added. The report, developed in collaboration with Oliver Wyman, showed that the economic impact of rising geo-economic fragmentation could surpass the disruptions caused by the 2008 financial crisis or the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries have been increasingly using the financial system to advance their geopolitical objectives -

With a principled approach, policymakers can advance appropriate policies for their economies and societies while mitigating unintended effects on areas like cost of living and GDP growth, it added. In the most extreme fragmentation scenario, a full economic decoupling between Eastern and Western blocs would force unaligned countries to trade exclusively with their most significant economic partner, it cautioned. These nations could see GDP growth drop by over 10 per cent - nearly double the global average - with India, Brazil, Turkey, and emerging economies in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia bearing the greatest burden. "Fragmentation not only fuels inflation but also negatively impacts economic growth prospects, particularly in emerging markets and developing economies that depend on an integrated financial system for their continued development," said Matt Strahan, Private Markets Lead, World Economic Forum.

Sensex rises for second day on gains in IT

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets extended gains for the second day on Thursday helped by buying in IT, consumer durables and commodity stocks amid a largely positive trend in global markets. In a volatile trade, the 30-share index rose by 115.39 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 76,520.38. The barometer started on a negative note dropping by 202 points to a low of 76,202.12. The index pared losses later and climbed 338.55 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a high of 76,743.54. The broader NSE Nifty rose by 50 points or 0.22 per cent to end at 23,205.35. From the Sensex pack, UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharmaceutical, Zomato, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Titan, ITC and Bajaj Finance were the major gainers. In contrast, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HCL Technologies, PowerGrid, Reliance Industries, State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever, IndusInd Bank, Nestle India and Axis Bank were among the laggards. "Uncertainty lingers whether the trade tariff measures will affect global trade, instigate



higher inflation, and currencies volatility. The trend holds a declining momentum YTD with a pause today contemplating the upcoming 2025 budget, which has a muted expectation," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. Meanwhile in-line Q3 results showcasing QoQ growth to the indices suggesting that Q4 will be much better, Nair said. In broader markets, the BSE smallcap index rose 0.67 per cent and midcap gauge jumped 1.78 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, Consumer Durables rose the most by 1.95 per cent, Commodities by 1.86 per cent, Focused IT by 1.79 per cent, Information Technology

surrounding President Donald Trump's private-sector investment plan for AI infrastructure. "However, the gains experienced a holdback driven by concerns over moderation in earnings," Ameya Ranadive Chartered Market Technician, CFTe, Sr Technical Analyst, StoxBox, said. An overall positive trend was also seen throughout the broader market. Sectorally, IT remained the key gainer, led by a positive earnings outlook and optimistic sectoral view, Ranadive added. On the stock-specific front, UltraTech Cement gained approximately 6 per cent during the latter part of the trading session, led by positive earnings. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong were trading in positive territory while Seoul was quoting in the negative. US markets ended higher in overnight deals on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude fell 0.34 per cent to \$78.73 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,026.25 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Significant progress in talks on India-EU FTA: Official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is a significant progress in the negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and European Union (EU), an official said on Thursday. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal was in Brussels last week to meet European Commissioner for Trade Maros Sefcovic to take stock of the progress of the negotiations. "Good progress is there on India-EU FTA. There is a significant progress in talks," the official said, without divulging more details. During the meeting between Goyal and Sefcovic, the two sides agreed to build a commercially meaningful trade agenda and work towards a mutually beneficial trade pact. The two leaders have also outlined political directions for both the teams to develop a mutually beneficial agenda for trade and investment and a robust FTA in an expedited manner to meet global challenges. The meeting came ahead of the



10th round of talks between India and the EU, which is scheduled from March 10-14 in Brussels. In the ninth round, both sides discussed trade issues covering goods, services, investment and government procurement along with necessary rules such as rules of origin, SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary), and technical barriers to trade. In June 2022, India and the 27-nation EU bloc resumed the negotiations after a gap of over eight years. It was stalled in 2013 due to differences over several issues. The total trade stood at \$180 billion in 2023-24. India exported \$75.18 billion in goods and \$31.13 billion in services to the EU, while the EU exported \$63.44 billion in goods and \$31.35 billion in services to India.

Budget should announce tax cuts for individuals: Barclays

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government in FY26 Budget should announce an "effective" personal income tax cut to support consumption and demand, Barclays said on Thursday. In its FY25-26 Union Budget preview, Barclays said the key ask from the Budget, to be presented on February 1, is to support growth while adhering to fiscal consolidation path. Barclays, India Chief Economist, Aastha Gudwani said in a quest to support consumption, the finance minister should provide an effective personal income tax rate cut by further tweaking the tax slabs. This is unlikely to have a sizable fiscal cost. "That said, improved tax buoyancy will likely make up for revenue foregone under this announcement. We think a boost to consumption is needed, especially with private investment also now awaiting the increase in demand growth," Gudwani said. Barclays expects Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to announce



changes to the new tax regime, making it lucrative for more and more taxpayers. In the last Budget, the government had increased standard deduction for salaried taxpayer to ₹75,000, and deduction on family pension for pensioners to Rs 25,000 under the new tax regime, which offers lower rate of taxes. The new tax regime exempts income up to ₹3 lakh. Those earning annually between ₹3-7 lakh pay 5 per cent tax, Rs 7-10 lakh (10 per cent), ₹10-12 lakh (15 per cent), ₹12-15 lakh (20 per cent) and above ₹15 lakh (30 per cent). Barclays said another potential option to boost disposable income and purchasing power while containing inflation, could

be a reduction in excise duty for fuel.

FORM NO. IV (See sub rule (2A) of rule 5)

Debts Recovery Tribunal, Jabalpur

797- II, Shanti Kunj, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur, M.P. 482001
(Areas of Jurisdiction- Madhya Pradesh & Chatisgarh)

Original Application No. 1218/2024 FF. -
CANARA BANK, INDORE Applicant

Versus
RAGUNATH STEEL INDUSTRIES & OTHERS Defendant

To, 1. Shri Sharad Bajpai S/o Shri Prabhudutt Bajpai Partner of M/s Raghunath Steel Industries LLP R/o 74 Sindhu Nagar GPO Indore MP 452001 and R/o Flat No 201, Second Floor Nanak Regency On Plot No 148 T Palasikar Colony Indore MP 452007

2. Smt Jyoti Bajpai W/o Shri Mr. Sharad Bajpai R/o Flat No 201, Second Floor Nanak Regency On Plot No 148 Palasikar Colony Indore MP 452007

3. Shri Mohammad Sher Afzal Khan S/o Shri Khurasan Pathan Partner Of M/s. Raghunath Steel Industries LLP R/o 20/1, Shastri Colony Indore MP 452006 and R/o Survey No 137/2 PH No 05 RI Village Kabirkhedhi Tehsil & Distt Indore MP 452010

Whereas OA No. 1128/2023 was listed before the Hon'ble Presiding Officer on 25/11/2024.

Whereas, this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said application under section 19 (4) of the Act (OA) filed against you recovery of debts of Rs. 4,91,42,565.80/- (application alongwith copies of documents etc annexed).

In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the Defendants are directed as under:-

- To show case within thirty days of the service of the summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted.
- To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3-A of the application.
- You are restrained from dealing without disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties.
- You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the tribunal.
- You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank of financial institutions holding security interests over such assets.

You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear Hon'ble Tribunal before 22.04.2025 at 10:30 A.M failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the tribunal this 20th day of January, 2025.

By Order Tribunal.
Registrar

FORM NO. IV (See sub rule (2A) of rule 5)

Debts Recovery Tribunal, Jabalpur

797- II, Shanti Kunj, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur, M.P. 482001
(Areas of Jurisdiction- Madhya Pradesh & Chatisgarh)

Original Application No. 1128/2023 FF. -
CANARA BANK, PALASIA BRANCH Applicant

Versus
M/S VINAYAK ENTERPRISES & OTHERS Defendant

To, 1. M/s Vinayak Enterprises Prop Shri Anand Chimmanni R/o Shop No 321 Dawa Bazar 1st Floor, 13-14 RNT Marg. Distt Indore, MP 452012,

2. Shri Anand Chimmanni S/o Shri Balchand Chimmanni R/o Flat No 201, 338 Silicon City Sector A, Vardhmal Apartment, Distt Indore, MP 452012.

3. Mrs Deepan Chimmanni W/o Shri Anand Chimmanni R/o Flat No 201, 338 Silicon City Sector A, Vardhman Apartment, Distt Indore, MP 452012.

Whereas OA No. 1128/2023 was listed before the Hon'ble Presiding Officer on 02/11/2023.

Whereas, this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said application under section 19 (4) of the Act (OA) filed against you recovery of debts of Rs. 26,55,082/- (application alongwith copies of documents etc annexed).

In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the Defendants are directed as under:-

- To show case within thirty days of the service of the summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted.
- To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3-A of the application.
- You are restrained from dealing without disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties.
- You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the tribunal.
- You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank of financial institutions holding security interests over such assets.

You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear Hon'ble Tribunal before 23.05.2025 at 10:30 A.M failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the tribunal this 20th day of January, 2025.

By Order Tribunal.
Registrar

US sanctions hit Russian oil supply to India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wide-ranging sanctions imposed by the US on the Russian oil sector have started to dent near-term oil flows to India with state-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) saying not enough cargoes are available for March. The US on January 10 issued sweeping sanctions targeting the Russian energy sector. The measures include sanctions on Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas, the blacklisting of 183 vessels involved in Russian energy exports, and curbs on dozens of oil traders, oilfield service providers, tanker owners and managers, insurance companies and energy officials. The sanctions were announced at a time when Indian refiners had started to negotiate for March cargoes. BPCL Director (Finance) Vetsa Ramakrishna Gupta told in an analyst call on Thursday that Russian oil had been booked for January and February in the previous two months but for March "we are not getting sufficient cargoes". The company saw Russian oil in the overall basket of crude oil it processes into fuels like petrol and diesel, falling to 20 per cent in March from 31 per cent in the October-December quarter, he said. Russian oil made up for 34-35 per cent of all oil that BPCL processed at the start of the current financial year in April 2024. He said there is enough oil available in the market and the company would look at



alternatives such as the Middle East to replace the lost volumes from Russia. Russia made up for just 0.2 per cent of all oil imported by India in the year ended on March 31, 2022. India, however, became the second biggest buyer of Russian crude oil since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, with purchases rising to almost 40 per cent of the country's total oil purchases. The rise was primarily because Russian crude oil was available at a discount to other internationally traded oil due to the price cap and the European nations shunning purchases from Moscow. In 2024, Russian crude imports to India averaged 1.7 million barrels per day, making the OPEC+ producer its largest supplier. Gupta said the discounts on Russian oil have shrunk to \$3-3.2 per barrel from \$3.5-4 at the start of the fiscal and \$8.5 in fiscal year 2023-24. This month, India has decided to shun deliveries made by tankers that have been sanctioned by the US in the

latest round. Russia used these tankers to ship oil to countries like India and China after the Group of Seven (G7) countries in 2022 imposed a \$60 a barrel price cap on exports by the Kremlin. This cap, introduced to limit Moscow's revenues to fund its war in Ukraine, meant that Western shipping and insurance services were not available for any oil cargo that was priced more than \$60 per barrel. To circumvent that, Russia used the so-called shadow fleet, insured by its own companies. This fleet has now been sanctioned. There is a wind-down period until March 12, which will allow for existing contracts to finish. "For the first two months, there will be no disruption. Within two months we will probably see new arrangements emerging in terms of oil coming to India," a senior government source said. Sanctioned Russian tankers will not be allowed to dock at Indian ports, the source said, adding that the only exception

would be for Russian oil cargoes booked before January 10, provided they unload by March 12.

Public Notice

It is informed to the general public that my wife Nisha Jhoke, husband Lalit Kumar Jhoke, father Totaram Jhoke, ex-serviceman Indian Army number 6373473L, rank Naik (TS), retired Army unit ASC (Supply), my wife's name has been mistakenly recorded as Nisha in the discharge book, which is incomplete. The correct and full name of my wife is Nisha Jhoke, husband Lalit Kumar Jhoke, hence, my wife should be known and identified in future as Nisha Jhoke, husband Lalit Kumar Jhoke. Lalit Kumar Jhoke, Father Totaram Jhoke, House No. 10, behind Shiv Mandir, Narmadapuram Jaswadi Road, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh

Change of Name

I, Neetu Patel Katiyar, wife of Shri Neeraj Katiyar, resident of F-2 Phase-1, S.P.M. Tehsil and District Narmadapuram, Madhya Pradesh, being the swearer, hereby making the following statement that I am a resident of the above address, my Aadhaar number is 558663605358, before marriage my name was Neetu Patel, father Shri Mewaram Patel, which is recorded in all my pre-marriage documents and after marriage my name is now Neetu Patel Katiyar, husband Shri Neeraj Katiyar. The above affidavit should be known and written and read by my name along with my husband's surname Katiyar, in support of which I am presenting the affidavit. All the information given in this is true and correct, if any legal action is taken regarding the name, then the entire responsibility of this will be of the swearer.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No.802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V.Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400069
Vidisha Branch : 1st Floor, Gaurav Business Square, Opposite Adani Wilmar Plant, Sanchi Road, Vidisha-464001, MP
Authorised Officer : Lokendra Rathore, Mob.: 997783890

PROPERTY FOR SALE UNDER PROVISIONS OF SARFAESI ACT, 2002 THROUGH PRIVATE TREATY

Whereas the Authorised Officer, Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) has taken the Possession u/s 13(4) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The SARFAESI Act, 2002) of the property ("The Secured Asset") given below The Authorised Officer has received offer of Sale from some interested party against the above mentioned Secured Asset under the SARFAESI Act for recovery of the Secured Debt. Now, the Authorised Officer is hereby giving the Notice to Sale of the above said property through Private Treaty in terms of rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. The Details of the Account are as follows:

Loan Code No./ Branch	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrowers	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Reserve Price (RP)	Total Outstanding Loan Amount	Description of the Secured Asset
(Loan Code No. 0760000895/ Vidisha Branch)	Mahendra Singh Yadav (Borrower) Kiran Yadav (Co-Borrower)	15-11-2021 & ₹ 6,45,231/-	₹ 4,00,000/-	₹ 12,16,026/- as on date 20-01-2025	All that part & parcel of property bearing, P/O Survey No.516/Min-20, Ward No.02 Palival Colony Exchange Road Near Mata Mandir Sironj Vidisha Madhya Pradesh 464228 Boundaries: East: Road, West : Remaining Land of Seller, North : House of Anita Kewat, South : House of Rameshwar Yadav

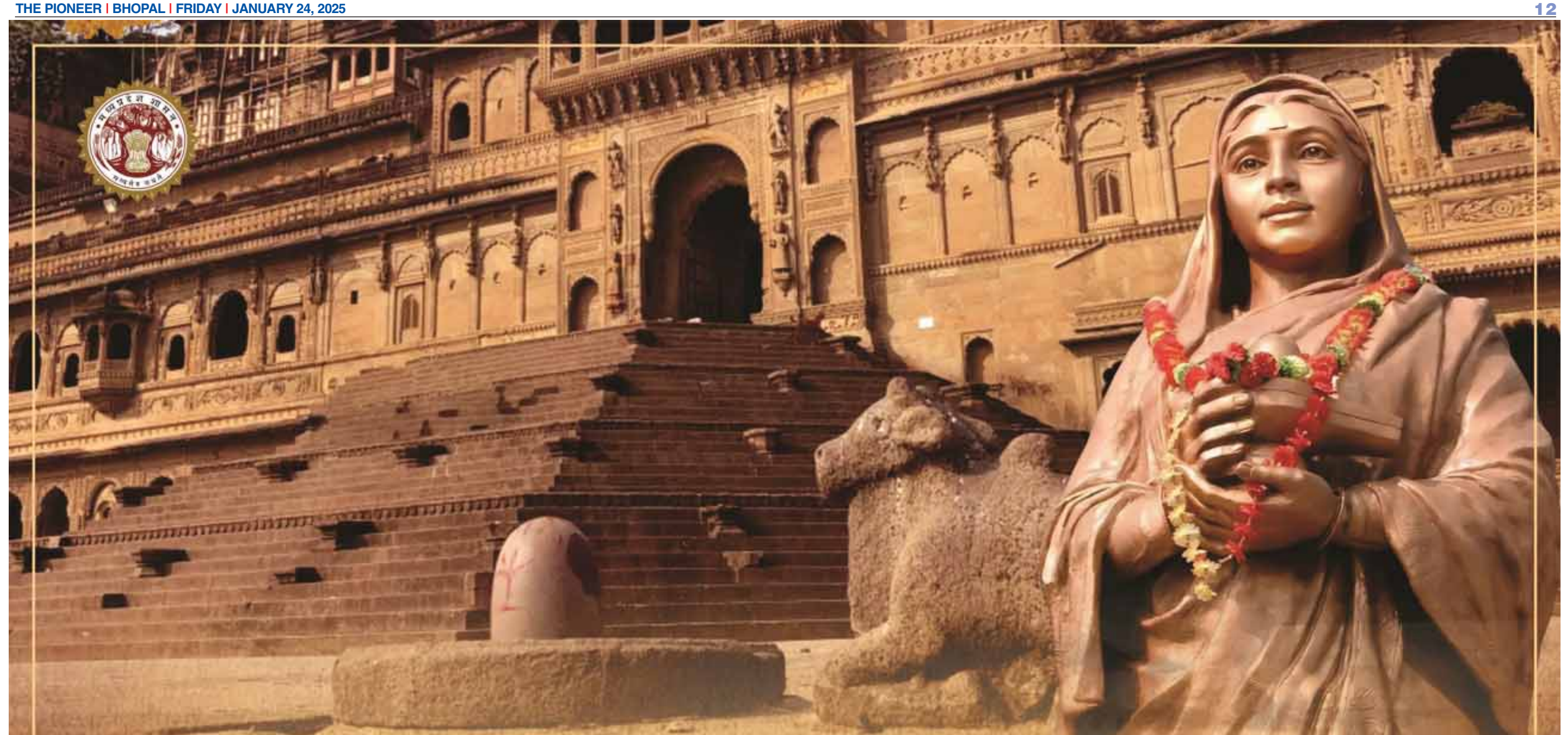
The Authorised officer will hold auction for sale of the Secured Asset on 'As is where is Basis', 'As is what is basis' and 'Whatever is there is basis'. AHFL is not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the said property. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to accept or reject the offer without assigning any reason whatsoever and sale will be subject to confirmation by Secured Creditor. On the acceptance of offer of proposed buyer, he/she is required to deposit 25% of accepted price inclusive adjustment of Earnest Money Balance immediately and the balance amount shall be paid by the purchaser within 15 (fifteen) days from date of acceptance of Offer by the Secured Creditor. The proposed buyer is to note that in case of failure of payment of balance amount by him/her within the time specified, the amount already deposited shall stand forfeited and property will be resold accordingly.

This is 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT, 2002 is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the above described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" and to the amount due to Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd., in full before the date of sale, auction is liable to be stopped.

If the Borrower(s), co-borrower(s) has any buyer who is ready to purchase the mortgage property/secured asset at price above the given reserve price then Borrower(s), Co-borrower(s) must intimate to AHFL on or before 10-02-2025 AHFL shall give preference to him. If Borrower(s), co-borrower(s) fails to intimate on or before 10-02-2025 the AHFL will proceed sale of property at above given reserve price.

The Date of Auction is fixed for 10-02-2025.
Place : Madhya Pradesh, Date : 24-01-2025

(Authorised Officer)
For Aadhar Housing Finance Limited



300वें जन्म जयंती वर्ष पर

नारी सशक्तिकरण की आलोक स्तंभ
लोकमाता अहिल्याबाई होलकर
के प्रति सम्मान स्वरूप पवित्र नगरी महेश्वर में

मध्यप्रदेश मंत्रिपरिषद की बैठक

अध्यक्षता

मुख्यमंत्री डॉ. मोहन यादव

एवं

₹983 करोड़ की
महेश्वर जानापाव उद्दहन
सिंचाई परियोजना का

शिलान्यास



डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री



नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

24 जनवरी, 2025 | पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे

लोकमाता अहिल्या देवी का जीवन धार्मिकता, त्याग और करुणा का प्रतीक रहा है। वह एक कुशल शासिका, आदर्श नारी और माता थीं, जिनकी कर्तव्यपरायणता, सुशासन, दानशीलता जैसे गुण हमें सद्मार्ग और सुशासन के जरिए लोक-कल्याण की असीम ऊर्जा और प्रेरणा देते हैं। उनके व्यक्तित्व की आभा से पूरा समाज आज भी उन्हें अत्यंत श्रद्धा से याद करता है।

-डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री