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INSIDE



**MONEY 10**  
INDIA'S ECONOMY TO  
GROW AT 6.4 PER CENT IN  
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DADLS-88



## Embarking on a New Journey for Accelerated Development of Skill and Industry

Odisha Extends a Warm  
Welcome  
to

His Excellency  
**Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam**  
President, Republic of Singapore

### Signing of significant MoUs

towards Samruddha Odisha@2036 for Viksit Bharat@2047

#### Skilling for the Future: Advancing the Skill Landscape in Odisha

(Skill Development & Technical Education Department, Govt. of Odisha and ITE Education Services, Singapore)

#### Skill Development in Semiconductor Sector

(Skill Development & Technical Education Department, Govt. of Odisha and ITE Education Services, Singapore)

#### New Energy

(Energy Department, Govt. of Odisha & IIT Bhubaneswar and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

#### Green Hydrogen Corridor

Industrial Promotion & Investment Corporation of Odisha (IPICOL) and Sembcorp, Singapore

#### Industrial Parks

Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) and Sembcorp, Singapore

#### Odisha Petro Chemical and

#### Petroleum Investment Region (PCPIR)

Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) and Surbana Jurong, Singapore

#### Development of New City

Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Surbana Jurong, Singapore

#### Strengthening Odisha's FinTech Ecosystem

Electronics & IT Department, Odisha and Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN), Singapore



Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha

# Woman beggar features with PM in calendar

Had donated life's savings to Lord Jagannath

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A 70-year-old beggar from Phulbani has earned a place in the Central Government's 2025 calendar where she features prominently on a page with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Tula Behera made headlines in December 2022 when she donated her life's savings of Rs 1 lakh to the Jagannath temple in Phulbani on the occasion of Dhanu Sankranti. She had reportedly collected the money through years of seeking alms near the temple. However, instead of using the fund for personal use, she contributed Rs 1 lakh towards the renovation of the very temple. Her selfless act of generosity was driven by her deep devotion to Lord Jagannath. Despite initial hesitation from the temple management to accept the money from a beggar, her persistence paid off and her wish became a reality.

# Baikuntha Dham to be demolished

BDA orders to vacate premises by today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Orissa High Court has paved the way for demolition of the controversial Baikuntha Dham Ashram in Khandagiri that recently made headlines after a man portrayed his minor son as 'Kalki', the tenth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) has set a deadline by noon on Friday (January 17) to vacate the ashram premises. Announcements about the eviction order were made via microphones in the area.

Following the eviction, the BDA plans to demolish the ashram.

Reports indicated that the ashram authorities had previously misled the High Court by submitting false information regarding the matter. However, the High Court has recently lifted the stay order, paving the way for demolition.

Notably, Baikuntha Dham Ashram owner Kashinath Mishra portrayed his then minor son as the "Kalki Avatar". He further hurt the religious sentiments of many when a picture of his son circulated where holy Tulsi leaves and garlands were placed on his feet.



Jindal Steel and Power Chairman Naveen Jindal pays a courtesy call on Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar on Thursday.

# Youth Cong to gherao CM house on Jan 20



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Mohan Charan Majhi government has failed to fulfil the promises, on the basis of which it came to power. It has been proved that the seven-month-old government is anti-people, said the Youth Congress on Thursday.

The Congress would hold a massive demonstration at Master Canteen Square here on January 20 on an eight-

point charter of issues which have arisen during the rule of the Majhi government. The agitation would be named 'Yuva Asantosh Samavesh'. Youth Congress members would march and gherao the Chief Minister's residence, said Pradesh Youth Congress president Ranjit Patra.

The main demands of the agitation are improving the State's deteriorating law and order situation, stopping

atrocities on Dalits, Christians and Muslims, stopping of loot of mineral resources, providing 300 units of free power, curbing the price rise, justice to the chit fund victims, resolving the unemployment issue and stopping patronage to blacklisted companies, said Patra.

Former Youth Congress president Yasir Nawaj said people have lost their faith on the Majhi government.

# Breakthrough in Talcher-Bimalagarh rly project

Tender issued for remaining 30.625-km stretch

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a significant development aimed at completing the long-awaited Talcher-Bimalagarh New Broad Gauge (BG) Rail Link Project, the Ministry of Railways has invited tenders for the balance stretch of the project.

The Talcher-Bimalagarh rail link was initially sanctioned in 2003-04 but has faced numerous delays over the years due to land acquisition issues, legal hurdles, and other challenges. Despite these setbacks, approximately 26% of the project has already been completed, with 20 km of the rail line constructed between Talcher and Sunakhani. Additionally, ongoing construction has extended the rail link by another 30.5 km towards Khamar in Angul district, with a goal of completing the project at the earliest.

In an effort to accelerate construction, work has been initiated from both ends of the rail line: Talcher and Bimalagarh. The Bimalagarh-Mahuldiha section is already under construction, and the recent floating of a tender for the remaining 30.625 km stretch

between Pallahara and Mahuldiha is expected to expedite progress significantly. The Talcher-Bimalagarh project, which has faced delays of nearly 12 years, is now gaining momentum with proactive measures taken by the East Coast Railway (ECoR) administration. These measures include close coordination with State and district authorities to resolve issues related to land acquisition and litigation. The Ministry of Railways has made the project a priority, with Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw personally advising officials to expedite the construction and ensure the project's completion. Recently, a key milestone

was achieved when the ECoR engineering team successfully carried out the final detonation in the 840-meter-long tunnel at Baruan Hill, located between Sunakhani and Samal stations. This breakthrough overcomes significant geographical challenges and is a crucial step forward in the project's progression. The East Coast Railway has also appointed dedicated Land Acquisition Officers to ensure the speedy completion of land acquisition and to maintain steady progress on construction. Regular reviews of the project's status at the highest levels are being conducted, with officials receiving instructions to meet critical deadlines.

# In Banki Youth brutally beaten to death; 6 held

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Youth was beaten to death by a group of persons late on Wednesday night in Cuttack district. The deceased was identified as Sumanta Sahu, a resident of Gobindpur village under the Banki police station. According to sources, after attending a fair at the Bada Bandiani Thakurani temple in Tigrira, Sahu was on his way home when he was attacked by the assailants. The assailants intercepted Sahu and severely thrashed him, following which he was critically injured. After the

attack, the assailants left him by the side of the road to bleed to death. Following the incident, the victim's mother and sister rushed him to the Cuttack's SCB Medical College Hospital. Unfortunately, the medical staff declared him dead upon arrival. After the postmortem, his body was handed over to his family for cremation. Sumanta's mother has filed a complaint at the Banki police station regarding the incident. Police have detained six of the 11 individuals implicated in the attack for interrogation to ascertain the motive behind the crime.

# Workshop in OES 'Solid waste mgmt a matter of serious concern'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) management in India has emerged as a critical issue due to rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and population growth. In such a scenario, effective waste management is very much essential for maintaining public health, environmental sustainability and improving the quality of life. In India, waste management process includes waste collection, segregation, transportation, processing and final disposal. But it faces significant challenges due to limited infrastructure, lack of awareness and improper disposal practices.

According to estimates, the country generates over 62 million tonnes of waste annually with an expected increase as urbanisation accelerates further. However, a large proportion of this waste remains uncollected or poorly managed, leading to various environmental problems such as land-fill overflow, water contamination and air and soil pollution. The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) introduced the 'Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules' in 2000, which laid out guidelines for the management of solid



waste in urban areas. The rules were revised under the 'Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016' aiming to make waste management more efficient and environment-friendly. The key provisions of the rules include waste segregation at the source, door-to-door collection, waste processing and recycling, extended producer responsibility and sanitary landfills for safe disposal of

residual waste. The Swachh Bharat Mission launched in 2014 aims to improve cleanliness and waste management in urban and rural areas which promotes creation of waste-to-energy plants. Despite these efforts, the success of MSW management in India is hampered by factors such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of enforcement

of rules and insufficient public awareness. Keeping these in view, the MoEFCC is now carrying out further improvements in the form of Rules 2025 and has invited suggestions from all stakeholders to make them more effective. The Orissa Environmental Society (OES) on Wednesday carried out a discussion on this theme for making submissions to the Ministry.

The programme organised under the chairmanship of OES president Dr Sundara Narayana Patro had Dr Veerendra Pratap Upadhyay, former advisor, MoEFCC; Dr Hadibandhu Panigrahi, former head of Bhubaneswar regional office, SPCC; and Dr Surjya Sankar Mishra, former chief environmental scientist, SPCC; and Dr Jaya Krushna Panigrahi, OES working president; as panelists. They discussed about the existing rules, various provisions, proposed amendments and finally made certain suggestions that will be submitted to the ministry for inclusion in the final amendment.

# SOCIAL CANVAS

# Climate change denies tribals, Dalits of social justice

Gabesana Chakra, an academic initiative of scholars and social activists interested in the study of Odisha, is holding its 32 annual conference in collaboration with PG Department of Political Science, Berhampur University, on January 18 and 19. This year's topic is Climate change in Odisha: Impact, responses and future pathways.



MANAS JENA

The climate change discourses encompass concerns beyond the wider environment by integrating economic and political issues, envisioning the future of the planet earth. It is questioning political ideologies, economic systems, prevailing human values, life styles, livelihoods and consumption choices. The many challenges of climate change may lead to reshaping our hegemonic understanding and re-orienting the dominant value system towards building our common future. Any discussion on climate change must focus on the people and specially the marginalised

communities, farmers, sharecroppers, fishers folk, Adivasies and Dalits in Odisha, who also must get a prominent place in all our alternative discourses towards future pathways. The State of Odisha has been prone to many forms of climate induced disasters impacting its ecosystem, economy, social envi-

ronment, human health and food securities of people on margin who are mostly dependant on nature for survival. Historically, majority of people/communities living in various regions of the State such as coastal plains, central river basins, eastern hills and northern plateau are dependent on agriculture and forest based economy. The farmers in coastal Odisha have been frequently suffering due to continuous visits of flood, cyclone, erratic rainfall, untimely rains and extreme cold weather. This time, the huge loss of paddy crop has led to a rise in farmer suicide cases. The unequal access to land resources has deprived communities of small land holding and sharecroppers of many benefits. Especially, they are not even covered by any Government schemes against any eventualities in farm sector. The fisher folk in the coast forms a major part of the marine ecosystem in the coast line. With climate change, these major coastal com-

munities are losing their traditional livelihood. More than 12 lakh people depending on inland and marine fishing from the coastal districts are getting affected. Corporate investment, vessel fishing, hotel-tourism, industry, natural disaster, vanishing of mangrove forest are the reasons that are impacting these traditional fishing communities who are also petty traders of fish and dry fish. The corporate investment in coastal areas does not follow the environmental regulations and rehabilitation of affected communities while changing the whole ecosystem of the coast. It is found that the land-less sharecroppers and fisher folks are most visible among migrant workers to other States in search of livelihood. The same situation is also happening with fishing communities in the central river basin of Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani etc. The northern plateau and eastern hills are the areas largely dominated by the Adivasi population. These areas have mining operations by extractive industries have had the most damaging impact over the lo-

cal ecosystem and survival of the communities. The economic growth induced by industrial economy is not inclusive of communities on the margin; rather it is taking away their traditional livelihood by rendering them jobless. Historically because of social and educational barriers the communities have been deprived of their human rights and the persistent changes in the economy further are pushing them to the periphery. Social development indicators do not reflect inclusive growth even though some of the basic amenities are not available to the poorer section in mining and industrial areas. The protective laws, pollution control mechanism and regeneration of forest and ecosystem are largely dysfunctional. The mining and industrial areas of Odisha are the most polluted. Last hundred years of mining have produced many small and large abandoned mines. Mining does not mean unending loss of land as the mineral conservation and development rules say miners

must do back-filling, land restoration of abandoned mines and handing over the land. The way we recognize the value of minerals in the same way we must recognize land, water and forest as equally valuable resources and above all the human beings are also precious resources and they must be treated with care and dignity. Unfortunately people specially the marginalized sections in Odisha are not being treated with dignity. The Prime Minister's vision for a developed India by 2047 demands more steel to meet the growing need for core sectors like infrastructure, construction and automobiles etc. The mining industry in Odisha has been moving at a high volume, with almost fifty percent of the share in total mineral production of the country. The central government opposed the plea to cap iron ore extraction in Odisha in a Supreme Court affidavit to meet the vision of 2047 aims to achieve global standard of per capita consumption of steel.

Unfortunately, when there is a move to phase out coal burning in a number of countries, the union government has expanded thermal power plants in Odisha to supply power to other States. The pit-mouth based thermal industries have impacted hugely on the local population's life and living environment. Odisha has a natural advantage of foremost deposits of strategic major minerals; so the State can be the country's aluminium capital, thermal power hub and South Asia's steel hub by utilizing the investments. But in the context of climate change issues the whole of Odisha has more challenges to its environment and ecosystem, especially for the livelihood of the communities deprived of justice. Their right to development and fair share of natural resources available in their locality is a natural right that must be recognized and the approach of development must be environmentally sustainable and inclusive.

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**INSIDE**

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## MURDEROUS ATTACK ON SAIF ALI KHAN

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan sustained six stab injuries, including one to his spine, in a knife attack by an unidentified intruder. The attack is suspected to have been part of a burglary attempt at his 12th-floor residence in a posh building in Bandra (West), north-west Mumbai, in the early hours of Thursday.

Shortly after the attack, a bleeding Saif was rushed to the nearby Lilavati Hospital, where he underwent surgery to remove the knife and address the leaking spinal fluid.

"The actor was brought to our hospital with six injuries, two of which were deep. We performed surgery near his spine and removed a 2.5-inch piece of the knife from the spine," said Dr. Niraj Uttamani, the Chief Operating Officer of Lilavati Hospital.

Dr. Nitin Dange, a colleague at the same hospital, elaborated: "The actor sustained a major injury to his thoracic spinal cord due to the knife piercing his spine. We performed surgery to remove the knife and plug the leaking spinal fluid. We also treated two other deep wounds—one on his left hand and another on his neck. He is completely stable now and recovering well. He is out of danger."

Known for his roles in films like Dil Chahta Hai, Kal Ho



Bollywood actor Kareena Kapoor at the Lilavati Hospital where actor Saif Ali Khan was admitted after he was injured in an attack by an intruder with a knife, in Mumbai

Naa Ho, Omkara, Parineeta, and Hum Tum, the 54-year-old Saif is the son of legendary cricketer Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, popularly known as Tiger Pataudi, and actress Sharmila Tagore. He is also the 10th Nawab of Pataudi.

"Saif Ali Khan has come out of surgery and is out of danger. He is currently in recovery, and doctors are monitoring his progress. All family members are safe, and the police are investigating the incident. We would like to thank Dr. Niraj Uttamani, Dr. Nitin Dange, Dr. Leena Jain, and the team at Lilavati Hospital. We also thank all his fans and well-wishers for their

prayers and support during this time," Saif's family said in a statement issued to the media. The incident took place around 2 a.m. at the 12th-floor flat of Saif's "Satguru Sharan" building, located at the junction of 29th and 24th Roads in Bandra (W). Saif and his family occupy the top four floors of the 12-storey building.

A housemaid, identified as Eliyama Phillipas alias Lima, was the first to spot the intruder and raised an alarm, prompting Saif to rush out of his bedroom. Upon seeing the actor, the knife-wielding intruder, who is suspected to have broken into the house

for a burglary, pounced on him. The actor attempted to resist, resulting in a scuffle. The intruder stabbed Saif multiple times before fleeing the scene.

Taking the attack seriously, the Mumbai police formed seven teams to investigate the incident and arrest the assailant. Former encounter specialist Daya Nayak is one of the key investigators.

Investigators are reviewing CCTV footage from the "Satguru Sharan" building and its vicinity to determine how the intruder gained access to Saif's flat.

## Hindenberg winds up political turmoil

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON

Hindenberg Research, the US investment research firm known for short-selling, which primarily targeted Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and created a flutter in the Indian political system by holding hostage the functioning of the Parliament for multiple sessions in last three years, has shut down its operations.

Announcement of the closure by Hindenberg Research founder Nate Anderson, who started in 2017, came just days before Donald Trump's inauguration as the new President of the United States. Adani Group CFO Jageshinder Robbie Singh in a cryptic social media post: "Kitne Ghazi Aaye, Kitne Ghazi Gaye". Adani group always denied the allegations.

The announcement of disband of Hindenberg once again ignited political duel between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Congress said its closure does not mean a clean chit for "Modani" and asserted that without a Joint Parliamentary Committee, the "already-compromised" institutions of the Indian state will continue to act only to protect the powerful.

The BJP alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is in the "complete grip" of the thinking process of "urban naxals", and asked if he has now got the "contract" for the Hindenberg Research's closed "shop". Former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said US-based short-selling firm Hindenberg Research "shut its shop" the day the Congress inaugurated its new headquarters building.

The sudden and surprising announcement by Anderson comes within days of a Republican Congressman, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, asking the Department of Justice to preserve all the documents and communications related to the investigations of Adani and his companies.

"As I've shared with family, friends and our team since late last year, I have made the decision to disband Hindenberg Research. The plan has been to wind up after we finished the pipeline of ideas we were working on. And as of the last Ponzis cases we just completed and are sharing with regulators, that day is today," Anderson announced according to the PTI from Washington.

40 years old Anderson said he looks forward to taking up hobbies, travelling and spending time with his fiancée and their child, adding



that he has earned enough money to provide for them in the future.

BJP said it seems the "shop" of US-based billionaire investor George Soros is also going to close down with new administration under President-elect Donald Trump set to take over. Soros, he said, funds Hindenberg.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said the closure of Hindenberg Research does not, in any way, mean a clean chit for Modani." The Hindenberg report of January 2023 proved serious enough to compel the Supreme Court of India to set up an Expert Committee to probe the allegation made in it against the Adani Group "whose prime patron is none other than the present Prime Minister of India", he said in a statement.

"However the Hindenberg Report covered only one part of securities laws violations - of the hydra-headed Modani MegaScam. Out of the 100 questions on the Adani Mega Scam that the Congress party had asked of the PM in the Hum Adani ke Hain Kaun (HAHK) series during January-March 2023, only 21 questions related to revelations made in the Hindenberg report," Ramesh said.

"The matter goes far deeper. It involves the abuse of Indian foreign policy to enrich the PM's close friends at the expense of the national interest. It involves the misuse of investigative agencies to force Indian businesspersons to divest critical infrastructure assets and help Adani build monopolies in airports, ports, defence and cement," Ramesh alleged.

The Swiss Public Prosecutors Office has frozen several Adani-linked bank accounts operated by Chang Chung-Ling and Nasser Ali Shaban Ahli that are "suspected of engaging in illicit activities, including money laundering and embezzlement", Ramesh claimed, citing a Swiss Federal Criminal Court order.

## Government to constitute 8th Pay Commission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday approved setting up the 8th Pay Commission to revise salaries of nearly 50 lakh central government employees and allowances of 65 lakh pensioners. The chairman and two members of the Commission will be appointed soon, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters here.

"Prime Minister has approved 8th Central Pay Commission for central government employees," the minister said. The term of the 7th Pay Commission will end in 2026. Since 1947, seven Pay Commissions have been constituted, with the last one implemented in 2016.

As the 7th Pay Commission's term concludes in 2026, initiating the process in 2025 ensures sufficient time to receive and review recommendations before its completion, the Minister added. He said the setting up of the Pay Commission in 2025 will ensure that its recommendations are received before the completion of the term of the seventh pay panel.

**MARKETS**

SENSEX 77,042.82 ↑ +0.42%

1 US\$ = 86.56 INR

## Ceasefire deal hangs in balance in Gaza

PTI ■ TEL AVIV

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that a "last-minute crisis" with Hamas was holding up Israeli approval of a long-awaited ceasefire that would pause the fighting in the Gaza Strip and release dozens of hostages.

Israeli airstrikes, meanwhile, killed at least 72 people in the war-ravaged territory. Netanyahu began signalling there were issues with the deal just hours after US President Joe Biden and key mediator Qatar announced it was complete.

The objection created a dual reality: War-weary Palestinians in Gaza, the relatives of hostages held there and world leaders all welcomed an agreement, expected to begin Sunday, even as Netanyahu said it was not yet finalised.

It was not yet clear if Netanyahu's statements merely reflected jockeying to keep his fractious coalition together or whether the deal was at risk. Netanyahu's office said his Cabinet won't meet to approve the deal until Hamas backs down, accusing it of renegeing on parts of the agreement in an attempt to gain further concessions, without elaborating.



Izzat al-Rishq, a senior Hamas official, said the militant group "is committed to the ceasefire agreement, which was announced by the mediators."

The deal announced Wednesday would see a scores of hostages held in Gaza released and a pause in fighting with a view to eventually wind down a 15-month war that has destabilised the Middle East and sparked worldwide protests.

Hamas triggered the war with its October 7, 2023, cross-border attack into Israel that killed some 1,200 people and took 250 others hostage. Israel responded with a fierce offensive that has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not distinguish between civilians and militants but say women and children make up more than half of those killed. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence.

## Delhi residents suffer fluctuating GRAP restrictions

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Residents of the National Capital have no respite either from the hazardous air pollution or from the sudden revocation and imposition of different stages of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the recent past, leaving common people to suffer due to the restrictions imposed.

Narrating their ordeal, many question the government's action plan, stating that only ordinary people are harassed by this flip-flopping. The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Thursday revoked curbs under stage 4 of the GRAP amid dip in pollution levels following its invocation on Wednesday as the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi crossed 400.

However, stage 3 of GRAP is still in force which prohibits BS-III and BS-IV vehicle from plying on the roads.

Moreover, the invocation happens with immediate effect, leaving many office-goers and regular citizens to face fines repeatedly. People say that the constant removal and imposition of GRAP stages causes significant problems in their daily lives.

In several instances, people who book a cab in Delhi before boarding a flight from a different city are left in the



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

lurch after receiving a message that the taxi service they hired a few hours ago has been canceled due to GRAP in the city. "I booked a day-long cab service for an official visit to Delhi and boarded my flight early in the morning. The moment I switched on my mobile network, I received a message from the travel service regretting the cancellation of the service due to GRAP implementation overnight," said Ankit Guleria, a media professional who came to the Capital from Chennai.

"I drove to my office in my private car in the morning. In the evening, when I was leaving, I heard that GRAP Stage-IV had been implemented. In such a

**WEATHER**

AQI 302

MAX 10.3°C(+2.7)

MIN 19.6°C(0)

situation, what can we as ordinary citizens do? While this is far from reducing pollution, it creates so much chaos. If I get fined because they implemented it while I am on my way, who will pay for that? What is my fault if they keep switching from one stage to another?" said a 30-year-old woman who uses her private vehicle to commute to and from the office.

GRAP Stage-III has been implemented three times since last year, and Stage-IV

was enforced after 22 days. It was last enforced on December 16 last year and withdrawn on December 24. The most recent enforcement of Stage-III was on January 9, and it was withdrawn on January 12.

People add that they remain unaware of these implementations, questioning the poor dissemination of such news by the CAQM. "How do they expect us to know or keep track minute by minute of these developments? Do you think ordinary people have so much time to keep reading the news to know if this stage of GRAP has been invoked or that stage has been revoked?" said a 35-year-old office-goer, advising the authorities to focus on effectively spreading these updates so people can be aware and plan accordingly.

The city has been seeing Stage-I and Stage-II measures since October 14 and October 21, 2024, respectively. The measures under Stage-I and Stage-II include augmenting public transport to reduce the use of private vehicles, impounding or imposing heavy penalties on vehicles with visible emissions, and enhancing vehicle parking fees to discourage private transport, among other restrictions.



## Centre keeps NEET-UG in pen-paper format

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has decided against conducting the medical entrance exam NEET-UG in online mode for now, and announced on Thursday it will continue to be conducted in pen and paper mode.

The decision comes after detailed deliberations between education and health ministries on whether to conduct the NEET-UG in pen and paper mode or online mode.

"As decided by the National Medical Commission(NMC), the NEET-UG shall be conducted in Pen and paper mode (OMR based) in a single day and shift," a senior National Testing Agency (NTA) official said on

Thursday. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) is the largest entrance exam in the country in terms of number of candidates appearing for the test. In 2024, a record more than 24 lakh candidates took the exam.

The NTA conducts the NEET every year for admission into medical colleges. A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for MBBS course. Of the seats available for the MBBS course, approximately 56,000 are in government hospitals and about 52,000 in private colleges. Admissions to undergraduate courses in Dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha also utilise the results of the NEET for admission.



Governor Dr Hari Babu Kumbhampati and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attend a farewell meeting for Chief Justice of Orissa High Court Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh at the Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar on Thursday.

## Who is fraudster Hansita's husband?

Conflicting statements make case murkier

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The controversies surrounding fraudster Hansita Abhilipsa refuse to die down. A bail application filed by her in Bhubaneswar's Additional District and Sessions Judge Court has brought forth a glaring inconsistency in her statements to police.

As per reports, on December 31, Abhilipsa and her aide Anil Mohanty were arrested by police in Bhubaneswar for siphoning off funds by posing as the daughter and son-in-

law of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Secretary PK Mishra.

At that time, she had stated to the police that Anil Mohanty was her husband. However, in her bail application, she has mentioned Saroj Sahu as her husband.

The bail application cited Hansita Abhilipsa seeking interim relief from police custody to take care of her ailing husband, explicitly mentioned as Saroj Sahu.

The discrepancy was presented to the court by the government's lawyer, opposing the bail plea on grounds of narrative inconsistency.

Meanwhile, police were aware of the possibility of

Saroj Sahu being the fraudster's real husband and had subsequently nabbed him on January 7 from the Khandagiri area of Bhubaneswar.

As such, according to police records, Abhilipsa's husband is Anil Mohanty, and this is supported by documents that include her signature. However, her conflicting claims regarding Saroj Sahu have now become a matter of scrutiny.

In recent developments, an alleged pre-wedding photo featuring Hansita Abhilipsa with Manoj Acharya, a Congress leader from Kandhamal district and a former MP candidate, has further complicated the case.

## In Sundargarh Workers trapped in cement plant mishap

Rescue operations ON

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

Several workers are feared trapped after a coal hopper collapsed at a cement plant in Sundargarh district on Thursday. The incident took place at the Dalmia Cement Factory at Rajgangpur.

The coal hopper collapsed while around a dozen workers, including a few women, were working at the site.

All the workers got trapped under tonnes of coal. On be-

ing informed, a rescue team with earthmovers and other heavy equipments rushed to the spot and launched an operation to rescue the trapped workers.

Police also reached the scene and assisted in the rescue operation.

Hundreds of workers gathered at the main gate of the factory and blamed the factory authorities for the mishap. The workers alleged that they had urged the authorities to evaluate the structural status of the coal hopper, but no steps were taken.



# MAHAKUMBH 2025: SPECIAL COVERAGE

## International delegates take a dip at Triveni Sangam

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

A 21-member delegation from 10 countries, on Thursday, visited the various Akhadas in the Sangam region during the ongoing Mahakumbh and took the holy dip at Sangam. The representatives not only gained an understanding of the religious significance of the Kumbh but also experienced the extraordinary elements of Indian culture. After taking a dip at the Triveni Sangam, the delegation toured the vast Mahakumbh area, witnessing the immense scale of the event. The international visitors lauded the Uttar Pradesh government for the grand arrangements made for the world's largest religious gathering. They said that the Mahakumbh sends a powerful message of unity to the world and encouraged people from all nations to visit Mahakumbh Nagar to witness and understand Indian culture. Sally Al Azab, a



representative from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), shared that she has come from the Middle East to India for this remarkable

event. She described it as an extraordinary moment, highlighting that the Kumbh Mela is the world's largest religious gathering.

She praised the event's organization and emphasized that it not only spreads a message of unity within India but also to the

entire world. Witnessing millions of devotees and the meticulous security arrangements, she felt deeply moved by the

greatness of Indian culture. The international delegation also toured various Akhadas during the Kumbh Mela, meeting saints and learning

about the historical, religious, and cultural significance of the event. The saints shared insights into the ancient traditions of

the Kumbh, the role of the akhadas, and the glory of Indian culture. The international representatives were profoundly impressed by the saints' teachings and expressed their admiration for Indian religious traditions. This gathering of representatives sent a powerful message to the world, showing that people from different cultural backgrounds can come together in harmony. This included representatives from Fiji, Finland, Guyana, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The international delegation experienced the diversity of Indian culture and the unity in religion during their visit. They were deeply moved by the culture and traditions on display. For them, the trip was not just a religious experience but also a precious opportunity to be part of a historical and cultural heritage.



### Wife of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, abruptly returns from Maha Kumbh due to health issues

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■**  
MAGAKUMBH NAGAR

Lauren Powell Jobs, wife of Apple co-founder and billionaire entrepreneur Steve Jobs, unexpectedly cut short her visit to the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj after experiencing allergic reactions. Powell Jobs, who had planned a ten-day stay, left just three days into her trip. She is reported to be staying in Bhutan for the next few days. Lauren Powell Jobs arrived in Prayagraj on January 13 to participate in the grand spiritual event. During her visit, she stayed at the camp of Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Kailashanand Giri of the Niranjani Akhara. Her initial plan included taking a holy dip during Makar Sankranti, but she was unable to do so due to health issues. On Wednesday, Powell Jobs

received a spiritual initiation from her guru, Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Kailashanand Giri, who imparted the Mahakali Beej Mantra to her. She has been instructed to chant "Om Kroom Mahakalika Namah" as part of her spiritual practice. Acharya Kailashanand Giri praised Powell Jobs for her humility and simplicity, emphasizing that despite being one of the wealthiest and most famous individuals in the world, she remains free of ego and does not indulge in pretentiousness. He described her as very gentle and kind, adding that her quest for spirituality led her to the Maha Kumbh, where she was given the name "Kamala." He noted her low-key approach to life, often wearing simple clothes and interacting with others in a modest manner. In her journey before the

Maha Kumbh, Powell Jobs visited the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, where she performed a boat ride on the Ganges and received blessings from the temple's outer sanctum, adhering to the traditional practice of not touching the Shiva Lingam as a non-Hindu. The Maha Kumbh also saw a historic milestone on Wednesday with the launch of an international flight from Prayagraj Airport, marking the first such departure in 93 years. The flight, which carried Powell Jobs to Bhutan, was part of a growing trend, as international visitors, including expatriate Indians and foreign nationals, can now travel directly to Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh. This development also led to the deployment of immigration officers at the airport for the first time.

## Data says devotees spend an average of 45 minutes at ghats during Maha Kumbh

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■**  
MAGAKUMBH NAGAR

Data from Radio Frequency (RF) wristbands used at the Maha Kumbh has provided critical insights into crowd behavior, revealing that, on average, each devotee spent 45 minutes at the bathing ghats during significant festival days like Makar Sankranti and Paush Purnima. This duration accounts for the time from a devotee's arrival at the ghat to their departure after performing the ritual bath. The data was collected through wristbands equipped with RFID chips, which were distributed to devotees as part of an effort to better manage the massive influx of visitors to the event. This technology not only helped calculate the average time spent at the ghats but also assisted in accurately counting the total number of visitors at the Maha Kumbh. SSP Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi emphasized the importance of this data for effective crowd management. "The average time spent by devotees at the ghats is invaluable for planning crowd flow and ensuring safety. By understanding how long people spend in the area, we can determine the best times for implementing regular traffic plans or



shifting to emergency measures if needed," he said. Dwivedi further explained that the data will also help in the logistics of entry and exit points. "With this technology, we can better manage when and

where devotees should enter or exit, reducing congestion and improving the overall experience for everyone," he added. The RF wristbands have been a part of the authorities' strategy to

utilize technology for a smoother and safer Kumbh experience. "This year, we are using three different methods to track and monitor the number of devotees, and RF wristband data analysis is a

key part of this," said an official overseeing the event. The information gathered will continue to play a crucial role in managing one of the world's largest religious gatherings.

## Devotees flock to Ayodhya and Kashi while taking part in Mahakumbh

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

After attending the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, devotees from across the country and abroad are now flocking to other sacred sites in Uttar Pradesh. In the past three days alone, around 10 lakh devotees visited Ayodhya, 7.41 lakh paid their respects at the Kashi Vishwanath temple, 5 lakh visited Vindhyavasini Dham, and more than one lakh devotees visited Naimisharanya Dham in Sitapur. As over seven crore devotees have bathed and prayed at the Mahakumbh so far, the devotees, following their ritual baths, have visited places like Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Kashi, Maa Vindhyavasini Dham, Naimisharanya, and Ayodhya for darshan and worship. This surge of devotees is also boosting local employment in these regions. More than 7.41 lakh devotees visited the Kashi Vishwanath temple from January 13 to 15, with 2.19 lakh arriving on the 13th, 2.31 lakh on the 14th, and over 2.90 lakh on the 15th. Meanwhile, over 5 lakh visited Vindhyavasini Dham, and more

than one lakh visited Naimisharanya Dham. Ayodhya, also known as Ramnagari, has seen an overwhelming influx of devotees, radiating a palpable sense of faith. Thousands are gathering to witness the darshan of Ramlala and Hanumangarhi. Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the district administration has ensured all necessary arrangements for the visitors. Over 10 lakh devotees have arrived in Ayodhya in the past three days, drawn by the historic occasion following Ramlala's enthronement after 500 years. A long line of devotees continues to form as they wait to pay their respects. CM Yogi Adityanath has instructed top officials, including Commissioner Gaurav Dayal, IG Praveen Kumar, District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh, SSP Rajkaran Nair, and Municipal Commissioner Santosh Sharma, to oversee the administration of key routes such as Dharmapath, Rampath, and Bhaktipath, ensuring that people in need are provided shelter and support.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Hope and dread

The Gaza truce between Hamas and Israel may be fragile but it is still welcome as it offers some relief to beleaguered people

The recent announcement of a potential truce between Israel and Hamas has brought a mix of cautious hope and lingering fear to those on both sides of the conflict. After months of violence and suffering following the devastating events of October 2023, which saw Hamas's deadly incursion into Israel and the subsequent retaliatory offensive, the prospect of a ceasefire offers a moment of relief. However, the road ahead remains fraught with uncertainty. The conflict has left deep scars on both Israeli and Palestinian communities. For Israelis, the abduction of hostages—including women, children, and elderly civilians—has been a source of immense anguish. The release of 33 hostages as part of the initial phase of the ceasefire would bring some relief, but many fear the fragile agreement could collapse, leaving their loved ones in limbo. In Gaza, the humanitarian crisis is dire. The death toll exceeds 46,000, with women and children accounting for over half of the fatalities. Massive displacement has left 90 per cent of the population—approximately 2.3 million people—homeless. Entire neighbourhoods lie in ruins, and the lack of basic necessities has pushed residents to the brink of famine.



The proposed truce, brokered by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar, outlines a three-phased agreement. The first phase involves the exchange of hostages and Palestinian detainees, with the release of women, children, and the elderly prioritised. Subsequent phases would address the release of soldiers and other male captives, along with broader discussions to halt hostilities. A crucial component of the ceasefire includes a surge in humanitarian aid to Gaza. This would enable displaced Palestinians to return to their homes and help rebuild critical infrastructure. Yet, the long-term success of this agreement hinges on both sides' willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations during the second phase. The fragile nature of previous ceasefires—such as the one in November 2023 that lasted only a week—underscores the difficulty of achieving lasting peace. Key obstacles include Hamas's insistence on maintaining its military capabilities and Israel's objective to dismantle Hamas's governing structures. Both sides are under immense domestic and international pressure, but deeply entrenched mistrust makes compromise elusive. For hostages' families, uncertainty looms large. Many remain haunted by the possibility that their loved ones may not survive captivity if the truce fails. Meanwhile, Palestinians fear that a breakdown in talks could trigger renewed violence, exacerbating an already catastrophic situation. If the ceasefire holds, it could mark the beginning of a much-needed reprieve for Gaza's beleaguered population. Immediate priorities include addressing food insecurity, medical shortages, and the rebuilding of homes and infrastructure. International aid would play a critical role in alleviating the humanitarian crisis, but long-term recovery would require substantial investment, political stability and lasting peace.

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### PICTALK



People try to tame a bull as they participate in the 'Jallikattu' event as part of 'Pongal' celebrations, in Tiruchirappalli

# Diplomacy: The pillar of India's global aspirations



SANTHOSH MATHEW

To fulfill its aspirations as a global leader, India must urgently bolster its diplomatic infrastructure by expanding and modernising the Ministry of External Affairs

India, the world's most populous nation and the largest democracy is emerging as a pivotal force in global affairs. As a leader of the Global South, its growing economic might, strategic autonomy, and commitment to peace have positioned it at the centre of international diplomacy. However, despite these achievements, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)—the critical institution shaping and executing its foreign policy—remains under-resourced. With only about 850 diplomats, the MEA is inadequately equipped to handle the complexities of a rapidly evolving global landscape. For India to realize its potential as a global leader, it must significantly expand its diplomatic infrastructure, scaling the MEA to at least 5,000 personnel. Such an expansion would align with India's ambitions and its stature as a major international power. India's diplomatic requirements have grown substantially alongside its global ambitions.

As the world's largest democracy and one of its fastest-growing economies, India's foreign policy must address a wide range of global issues. From trade negotiations and climate change to digital diplomacy and global security, the MEA serves as the nerve center of India's international engagements. India's foreign policy has traditionally been guided by strategic autonomy and a commitment to peace, rooted in the Nehruvian tradition of non-alignment. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and VK Krishna Menon laid the foundation of an independent foreign policy that prioritized non-violence while asserting India's sovereignty. This legacy of non-alignment, which positioned India as a bridge between competing superpowers, remains a cornerstone of its diplomatic approach. However, the global order is shifting, and India must adapt its foreign policy apparatus to meet modern challenges. Strengthening the MEA is vital not only for safeguarding India's interests but also for crafting a vision capable of influencing global politics. With a population



exceeding 1.4 billion and leadership roles in key international forums, India's current diplomatic infrastructure is insufficient for the demands it faces. Countries like the United States, China and Russia deploy thousands of diplomats and foreign policy experts to maintain their global influence. In contrast, India's diplomatic corps, though skilled, is a fraction of the size required. This gap underscores the urgent need for a larger, more specialised MEA capable of shaping global discussions and providing strategic depth across multiple domains. Expanding the MEA to 5,000 personnel would ensure that India's foreign policy is both proactive and comprehensive. Such an expansion is not merely about increasing numbers; it is about cultivating strategic expertise across diverse fields. India's diplomacy must address trade, defense, environmental sustainability, cybersecurity, humanitarian aid, and more. To achieve this, the MEA must recruit specialists who can navigate these complex issues. During the Cold War, figures like US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger demonstrated the transformative power of strategic brilliance in diplomacy. Similarly, India needs diplomats capable of long-term thinking and crafting policies that reflect its evolving global role. India's for-



THE NEED FOR A DIPLOMATIC CORPS THAT CAN SHAPE GLOBAL DISCUSSIONS AND PROVIDE THE INTELLECTUAL AND STRATEGIC DEPTH REQUIRED IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE URGENT

ign policy must anticipate global trends rather than merely react to events. To compete with global powers like the US, Russia, and China, India requires a diplomatic team adept at building alliances, leveraging emerging opportunities, and addressing global challenges. This necessitates investments in strategic thinking and specialised knowledge. The MEA must develop expertise in fields such as space diplomacy, climate change negotiations, global trade, and defense strategy. Moreover, diplomats must engage with governments, businesses, think tanks, and civil society to shape decisions in India's favour. A well-staffed MEA would enable India to better engage with key global issues and deepen its relationships with major powers. Just as the US relied on figures like Robert McNamara and John Foster Dulles to shape its diplomacy, India must nurture a generation of visionary diplomats. These individuals should possess deep understanding of global security, international law, multilateral organisations, and global trade—qualities exemplified by VK Krishna Menon, who championed India's interests on the international stage during the 1950s. Expanding the MEA is not just about addressing immediate challenges but about aligning India's diplomatic capabilities

with its evolving priorities. Experts in climate change, energy security, trade relations, and technology diplomacy are essential to ensuring a forward-thinking foreign policy. The expanded MEA must also prioritise collaboration with think tanks, academic institutions, and media professionals. These partnerships can provide the intellectual foundation for strategic decisions and help India anticipate emerging global trends. Think tanks and universities—both domestic and international—can offer critical insights into shifting geopolitical dynamics, new economic policies, and other global developments. Engaging with these institutions will ensure that India's foreign policy remains agile and informed. Public diplomacy is another critical component of modern foreign policy. Beyond government-to-government negotiations, India must focus on shaping global perceptions and building relationships with international audiences. The MEA should work closely with media professionals to effectively communicate India's vision and policies to the world. Leveraging India's soft power—its rich culture, democratic ideals, and values—can amplify its global influence and ensure its voice is heard. (The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### RUPEE LOSING SHEEN

Madam — There is an ongoing concern over the rupee sharply losing value against the dollar. But then a nation's currency intrinsically represents two notions of value: one for the purchaser and seller in the domestic market and the other for the external one. China, in its monetary parlance, has the yuan and the renminbi. In layman's terms, the domestic standing of the rupee is broadly propped up by an incremental rise in GDP and per capita income, with the purchasing power sustained by low inflation. Compared to most economies, we are far better placed. Our current concern would be more reining in inflation and fiscal deficit to retain the value of the rupee. The exchange value of the rupee with other currencies is a matter of the difference between the inflow and outflow of foreign currency for our external buying or selling, be it products, commodities, or services. The crux lies in developing our niche in any one of them to reverse the trade deficit. China found it in manufacturing and commodities and dares to keep its currency highly depreciated. The US despite its huge debt has the privilege of printing the dollar, the global currency. We must find it in diligence, research, and human potential.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

### NGO SUSPECTED FOR BOMB THREAT

Madam—Apropos of the headlines 'Police find NGO, political ties in Delhi bomb threats', it is imperative to dig deeply into the conspiracy of scaring 400 Delhi schools with bombing. The 16-year-old boy is only a juvenile shield to escape punishment. This is a heinous crime closely connected with the terrorist act perpetrated by the sympathisers of terrorist Afzal Guru, who had been hanged during Congress's tenure. Delhi CM Atishi is also a potential source of investigation because of her family's sympathy with the terrorist Afzal Guru. All those associated with the NGO should be slapped with NSA under the zero-tolerance policy of the Union Government. The

### Meta offers apologies on election remark



Mark Zuckerberg's controversial statement has sparked a new debate across India and the world. His remarks about the functioning of Joe Biden's administration and the 2024 Indian elections have angered the Indian Parliament. Now, Meta has publicly apologised following backlash over its CEO Mark Zuckerberg's comments on India's 2024 general elections. This issue raises critical questions about the responsibility of tech companies and the impact of their statements

on a global scale. Zuckerberg's comments on Joe Rogan's podcast regarding economic challenges and democracy in India are being seen as damaging to India's image. Particularly, the questions raised about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government's economic management and COVID-19 strategies are considered serious. India's IT Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, has responded strongly, stating that foreign companies must respect India's constitutional dignity. This incident not only scrutinises the social impact of social media giants but also questions their political interference. India's stance highlights that major tech giants are now being held accountable for their actions. This development sends an important message that strict action against misinformation is essential to upholding the dignity of democracy.

R K Jain | Barwani

Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist who carried out the Parliament attack in 2001 earned sympathy for those vying for Delhi rule. It is the most unfortunate for the country and the ugliest face of our political ecosystem. Hitherto, a part of the INDIA bloc, AAP must clarify the role of its Delhi CM. The Khalistani links of the Aam Aadmi Party and Arvind Kejriwal are already in public awareness. There seems to be no end to the revengeful acts of sympathisers of the terrorists, so the strongest punishment should be ensured against the culprits. We are aware that a team of leading advocates will protect the NGO behind the Delhi school bomb threats. Such an ecosystem should be exposed. Delhi has been targeted by the extremist forces; it is very obvious and evident.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

### B'DESH AG'S ANTI-SECULARISM PITCH

Madam — Bangladesh's Attorney General Mohammad Asaduzzaman has demanded the removal of the word secularism from the Constitution. He has said that 90 per-

cent of Bangladesh's population is Muslim, so it should be a Muslim country by removing the word secular. The Attorney General has said that words like socialism and secularism do not present the correct picture of Bangladesh. He has suggested making major changes in the constitution and removing 'secularism.' He will make these changes before the next elections. Because Yunus is an educationist later and is first a fundamentalist Muslim. Earlier, in the year 2010, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh had ruled that the removal of secularism in 1977 was illegal. The court had reinstated secularism in the constitution. Just as Bangladesh is attacking temples in its country, similarly in India too, deities are being searched for in mosques. The destination of both the neighbours is the same. Bangladesh wants to become an Islamic nation while preparations are on in India to make it a 'Hindu Rashtree'.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## India's projector demand soars with eco-friendly innovations



VIJAY SHARMA

These next-generation projectors not only offer enhanced energy efficiency and sustainability but also excellent output redefining the visual experience

India is rapidly becoming one of the fastest-growing projector markets globally, with an anticipated annual growth rate of 8.10 per cent over the next five years. This surge is driven by the increasing demand for projectors in both commercial and personal spaces. Technological advancements are playing a key role in this trend, as new, more eco-friendly projector alternatives are replacing traditional lamp-based models. These older models, while effective, had significant drawbacks such as high power consumption, reliance on hazardous materials, and limited recyclability. In contrast, modern projectors are designed with sustainability in mind, making them an attractive option for a wide range of applications. The rise in digitization across businesses and households further accelerates the need for effective display solutions. Eco-friendly projectors not only address this need but also offer a greener, more sustainable alternative to conventional options. With advanced production standards grounded in sus-



tainable development, these projectors are perfectly positioned to meet India's growing demand for high-tech, energy-efficient devices. Eco-friendly projectors are designed to tackle many of the issues associated with traditional models. They operate with much higher energy efficiency, significantly reducing power consumption. The manufacturing process also minimizes carbon footprints, with materials sourced responsibly. Innovations such as LED and laser light sources have significantly improved these devices' energy efficiency and lifespan, making them superior to traditional lamp-based projectors. These advancements appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and businesses alike, offering a more sustainable solution to their

display and entertainment needs. Compared to earlier generations, eco-friendly projectors offer several clear advantages. Their energy efficiency makes them much more cost-effective in the long term, as they consume far less power and do not require frequent replacements of parts like traditional bulbs. Additionally, the longevity of these projectors reduces waste, further decreasing their environmental impact. Importantly, many eco-friendly projectors do not contain harmful substances like mercury, which is found in conventional models, thus contributing to safer disposal practices. Furthermore, these projectors are built to last longer and require less maintenance, thanks to technologies like LED and laser, which do not degrade as quickly as traditional bulbs. As a result, maintenance costs are significantly lower, and users benefit from reduced downtime and increased durability. This is an appealing factor for both businesses and consumers, as it translates to lower total ownership costs

over the life of the device. Looking ahead, there are several trends that will further shape the future of eco-friendly display technologies. One of the most promising is the development of even more efficient light sources, such as OLEDs and advanced lasers, which will provide higher brightness while consuming even less power. Another exciting possibility is the use of solar-powered projectors, especially in rural or off-grid areas, which would reduce reliance on conventional power sources and minimize carbon footprints. Additionally, there is growing interest in integrating biodegradable materials into the production of projectors, which would reduce the environmental impact when the product reaches the end of its lifecycle. The future will also likely see the introduction of more smart projectors that can integrate seamlessly with smart home and office ecosystems, featuring energy-saving modes based on usage patterns. (The writer is MD Optoma Technology; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN

### US EXPORT CONTROLS: IMPACT ON INDIA'S AI

US export controls pose new challenges for India's AI and tech ambitions



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The Biden administration's Interim Final Rule (IFR), effective January 2025, introduces strict regulations on the export, reexport and in-country transfer of advanced computing integrated circuits (ICs) and artificial intelligence (AI) model weights. These measures aim to limit the proliferation of advanced technologies with potential military and intelligence applications, particularly in AI-driven systems. While this move marks a significant policy step from the outgoing administration, its future under the next presidency remains uncertain, as the new administration could pause the implementation for review. India, a nation rapidly advancing its AI infrastructure, faces significant challenges under the IFR. Here are the key implications:

The IFR enforces licensing requirements for exporting advanced computing ICs and AI model weights, particularly those integral to high-performance AI models. For India, which is heavily investing in AI research and infrastructure, these restrictions may hinder access to state-of-the-art U.S. technologies. A "presumption of denial" applies to licenses for advanced ICs used in training AI models, limiting India's ability to obtain cutting-edge hardware essential for its AI development.

The regulations impose stringent controls on advanced closed-weight AI models, while open-weight models are exempt. Since closed-weight models often drive groundbreaking AI research, this limitation could slow India's progress in leveraging advanced US AI models. Restricted access to these critical technologies could delay breakthroughs in AI-driven applications.



Although the IFR provides exceptions for low-risk destinations, India is not included in the list of preferred nations. As a result, Indian entities face capped allocations on advanced computing capacity based on total processing performance (TPP). Over the next three years, these limitations could restrict the computational resources available for Indian researchers and developers, potentially stalling AI initiatives.

Indian companies seeking US technology will face heightened scrutiny under the IFR, including stringent checks on supply chain security, personnel vetting, and cybersecurity compliance. These requirements will increase the complexity of partnerships with US firms and may delay India's efforts to scale its AI ecosystem.

India's plans to establish advanced data centers and high-performance computing clusters will be directly affected by the new regulations. The IFR mandates compliance with US security standards, such as NIST guidelines, adding operational costs and potential delays.

India's ambition to lead global AI collaborations, as demonstrated by its participation in initiatives like the Global Partnership on AI (GPAI), faces friction under these controls. With international partnerships playing a crucial role in India's technological growth, the restrictions on high-performance computing components and AI models could disrupt progress.

To mitigate these challenges, India must consider alternative strategies, including strengthening domestic research and development, partnering with non-US technology providers, and leveraging diplomatic channels to negotiate favorable terms with the US. The path forward will require Indian companies to adapt rapidly, focusing on self-sufficiency and fostering collaborations beyond traditional partnerships. While the IFR offers limited flexibility through license exceptions and potential adjustments, India's advanced computing and AI ambitions will require resilience and innovation to overcome the regulatory hurdles imposed by these new export controls.

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

# The war they waged, the price we paid



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

With Trump's return, the stage is set for continuation of the bloodstained legacy, with devastating consequences for the world's most vulnerable



The Vietnam War should have been the United States' breaking point—a humiliating defeat that exposed the futility of projecting brute force in a world that had long learned to resist imperialism. But instead of becoming a sobering moment of reflection, it ignited a chain reaction of conflicts, interventions, and proxy wars that would devastate nations and leave millions dead. From Ronald Reagan to Joe Biden, the American war machine has not only endured but expanded, thriving on chaos and suffering. With Donald Trump poised to return, his new administration promises to perpetuate this bloodstained legacy, consolidating power at home while unleashing destruction abroad. Reagan's tenure marked a revival of the Cold War mindset, framed by a simplistic, almost cartoonish view of global politics.

His administration orchestrated covert operations and military interventions with reckless abandon, leaving a trail of devastation across continents. In Grenada, a minuscule island nation, the U.S. flexed its muscle in a laughable display of overkill. Yet, the price for the people of Grenada was far from humorous—hundreds of civilians died in an operation sold as a "rescue mission." In Lebanon, Reagan's deployment of U.S. Marines ended in catastrophe, with 241 servicemen killed in a suicide bombing. The retaliatory shelling of Lebanese villages left countless civilians dead, their stories erased from the official narrative. George H. W. Bush brought the carnage to Panama and Iraq. Operation Just Cause in Panama left at least 3,000 civilians dead, according to independent estimates—numbers far higher than the official U.S. tally. The Gulf War of 1991 killed tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians, with entire neighbourhoods flattened by American airpower. The sanctions that followed—a form of economic warfare—led to the deaths of an estimated 500,000 Iraqi children, as reported by UNICEF. But these deaths were dismissed by then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as a price worth paying.

Bill Clinton's presidency, often remembered for its charm and centrism, was any-



THE GULF WAR OF 1991 KILLED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF IRAQI SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS, WITH ENTIRE NEIGHBOURHOODS FLATTENED BY AMERICAN AIRPOWER. THE SANCTIONS THAT FOLLOWED—A FORM OF ECONOMIC WARFARE—LED TO THE DEATHS OF AN ESTIMATED 500,000 IRAQI CHILDREN

thing but peaceful. Under his watch, NATO's bombing campaign in Kosovo killed an estimated 500 civilians, while strikes on critical infrastructure plunged the region into chaos. In Somalia, Clinton inherited and expanded a disastrous intervention that culminated in the infamous Black Hawk Down incident. The fallout was not limited to American soldiers—it cost the lives of an estimated 10,000 Somali civilians caught in the crossfire. The Bush-Cheney years saw the bloodbath reach industrial levels. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, based on falsified intelligence, unleashed a catastrophe of staggering proportions. By conservative estimates, 200,000 Iraqi civilians died in the war, though many argue the real number exceeds half a million. Afghanistan, initially framed as a righteous response to 9/11, turned into a graveyard for American credibility. The war cost over 70,000 Afghan civilian lives, with many more lost to starvation and disease caused by the destruction of infrastructure.

These numbers, while horrifying, barely scratch the surface. Barack Obama, heralded as a harbinger of change, instead became the drone king. Under his administration, drone strikes killed an estimated 3,800 people in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. These numbers include as many as 800 civilians, though independent investigations suggest the real toll is much higher. Libya, once a stable if repressive state, was reduced to a failed state after NATO's intervention, with Obama admitting it was his greatest foreign policy mistake. Yet his admission did nothing to rebuild Libya, now a haven for human traffickers and militia warlords. Donald Trump's first term shattered even the pretence of restraint. Civilian casualties from U.S. airstrikes in Syria and Iraq

soared, with independent monitors estimating at least 4,500 civilians killed in 2017 alone.

In Somalia, Trump's loosening of drone strike protocols led to a surge in civilian deaths, including women and children obliterated in remote villages. Yemen's civil war, fueled by U.S.-supplied bombs and logistical support to Saudi Arabia, created what the U.N. calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. By some estimates, over 377,000 Yemenis have died—many of them from famine and disease exacerbated by the relentless bombing campaigns. Joe Biden's administration, while promising a pivot to diplomacy, has only perpetuated the violence.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan, while ending America's longest war, was executed with callous disregard for human life. At least 170 civilians were killed in a single ISIS-K bombing during the chaotic evacuation. Biden's continued drone strikes and military presence in Syria ensure that civilians remain collateral in America's unending "war on terror." In Ukraine, US military aid fuels a war that has already claimed tens of thousands of lives on both sides, with no end in sight. Across these decades, the pattern is unmistakable: the United States does not fight wars for freedom or democracy.

It fights for hegemony, resources, and geopolitical advantage, with human lives as expendable currency. The statistics are staggering but fail to capture the depth of the tragedy. From Vietnam to Yemen, from Iraq to Libya, the human cost is always paid by those least equipped to bear it: the poor, the displaced, and the voiceless. In just days, Donald Trump will return to the White House, his second administration poised to escalate the already relentless machinery of American war. This time, the

gloves are off—his power more consolidated, his team of loyalists more ruthless, and his ambitions unrestrained. The team surrounding him will be battle-hardened ideologues with little patience for opposition.

Trump has openly embraced authoritarian impulses, and his foreign policy will likely mirror his domestic ambitions—unapologetic, ruthless, and geared toward consolidating dominance. For the impoverished, this is a death sentence. The costs will not be borne by those who plan wars from air-conditioned offices or justify them in press briefings but by the powerless: Yemeni mothers sifting through the rubble for scraps, Syrian children cowering as drones circle above, and Gazan families freezing to death amid the ruins of their bombed-out homes. These are not accidents of war; they are deliberate outcomes of a global system that treats human life as expendable in the pursuit of dominance over dignity.

The bombs will continue to fall, the starving will continue to die, and the architects of this destruction will dine in opulence, their hands stained with the blood of the voiceless.

We collectively absorb these atrocities—not with shock or outrage, but with numbed detachment, anaesthetised by the relentless churn of media cycles and the droning rationalisations of pundits. It is not that we do not care—it is that we have been conditioned not to. Once our souls have been amputated by decades of warmongering, by a system that normalises suffering as the cost of 'security', we survive in resignation, compelled by the machinery of indifference to keep moving forward.

*(The writer is a journalist and policy analyst. Views expressed are personal)*

# Uttarakhand's initiatives to strengthen climate resilience in the Himalayas

The State's efforts, encapsulated in the Dehradun Declaration, highlight the importance of collaboration and community empowerment

The Uttarakhand Council of Science and Technology (UCOST) recently organised a significant workshop in Delhi, focusing on climate resilience and disaster management, with a particular emphasis on Himalayan states. This workshop attracted eminent scientists, disaster management experts, and advocates of climate resilience, underscoring the pressing need to address environmental challenges in the region. This initiative follows Uttarakhand's landmark 2023 International Conference in Dehradun, which drew participants from approximately 50 countries.

The conference culminated in the adoption of the "Dehradun Declaration," a comprehensive action plan aimed at fostering collaboration, innovation and effective strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change and natural disasters in Himalayan states. Uttarakhand's proactive approach to uniting stakeholders on these critical issues is both commendable and necessary.

### Rationale Behind Uttarakhand's Initiatives

Uttarakhand's unique geographical and cultural significance drives its commitment to addressing climate resilience. With the second-largest Himalayan boundary after Arunachal Pradesh, the state plays a pivotal role in supporting Northern India's vast hinterland. The region's popularity as a hub for tourism, religious pilgrimages such as the Char



DINESH KUMAR TYAGI

Dham Yatra, and adventure activities exerts considerable pressure on its fragile ecosystem. The state faces recurring natural calamities, including forest fires, landslides, cloud-bursts, and glacier shrinkage. These disasters significantly impact local communities, strain state resources, and demand robust measures to minimise their devastating

effects. By organising international workshops and fostering collaborations, Uttarakhand aims to raise awareness, share best practices and leverage technology, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, to design both preventive and responsive strategies.

### Highlights of the Dehradun Declaration

The Dehradun Declaration lays out a comprehensive framework for building climate resilience and disaster preparedness in Himalayan states. Its key features include: **Strengthening Preparedness** Integrating disaster resilience into educational curricula. Framing regulations to protect vulnerable populations. Developing financial tools and frameworks to advance the "science of survival."



### Protecting the Himalayan Ecosystem

Merging indigenous knowledge with traditional community practices. Promoting nature-based solutions and active community engagement. Enhancing institutional collaboration for project monitoring and execution. **Empowering Communities** Establishing community-

based early warning systems. Educating and equipping communities to take local measures.

Strengthening livelihoods and building local networks of like-minded individuals.

### Policy Integration

Establishing an Institute of Disaster Management and a global center for climate resilience.

Formulating policies based on national and international best practices.

Coordinating among state, central, and international organisations.

### Promoting Innovation

Supporting startups and entrepreneurs in developing tools and technologies for climate resilience.

### The Delhi Workshop and Global Consensus

The Delhi workshop served as a follow-up to the Dehradun Declaration and brought together disaster management scholars, international organisations, and corporate representatives engaged in CSR activities. Participants praised Uttarakhand's efforts to convene diverse stakeholders, emphasising that protecting the Himalayan ecosystem is a shared responsibility.

The Himalayas, often referred to as the "Soul of India" and the "Third Pole," are crucial for maintaining ecological balance. Workshop attendees agreed on the need for collective action to address challenges such as unchecked tourism and resource exploitation. Recommendations included regulating plastic use, promoting organic farming,

imposing green taxes on vehicles, and training locals to mitigate post-disaster damage.

### National Perspectives on Climate Resilience

The recently concluded COP 29 in Baku included an agenda to establish a global fund for addressing climate change. Developed nations were urged to allocate higher budgets to support developing and poorer countries in reducing carbon emissions.

Training volunteers at the village level and connecting them through a centralised platform can foster trust and confidence in disaster preparedness efforts.

*(The writer is a retired IAS officer and president of Society of Digital Entrepreneurs; views are personal)*





Starmer in Kyiv pledges '100-year partnership' with Ukraine

PTI ■ KYIV
British Prime Minister Keir Starmer arrived in Ukraine's capital on Thursday with a pledge to help guarantee the country's security for a century, days before Donald Trump is sworn in as US president.

Monday, which is expected to bring a departure from the outgoing US administration's pledge to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes to defeat Russia. Trump has also indicated he wants Europe to shoulder more of the burden for helping Ukraine.

biggest military backers, has pledged 12.8 billion pounds (USD 16 billion) in military and civilian aid since Russia's full-scale invasion three years ago, and has trained more than 50,000 Ukrainian troops on British soil.

Britain says its 100-year pledge is part of that assurance and will help ensure Ukraine is "never again vulnerable to the kind of brutality inflicted on it by Russia", which seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and attempted a full-scale invasion in February 2022.

especially maritime security against Russian activity in the Baltic Sea, Black Sea and Sea of Azov — and on technology projects including drones, which have become vital weapons for both sides in the war.

the country. "Putin's ambition to wrench Ukraine away from its closest partners has been a monumental strategic failure. Instead, we are closer than ever, and this partnership will take that friendship to the next level," Starmer said ahead of the visit.

for the next century, bringing together technology development, scientific advances and cultural exchanges, and harnessing the phenomenal innovation shown by Ukraine in recent years for generations to come."

could see troops from France and other Western countries stationed in Ukraine to oversee a ceasefire agreement. Zelenskyy has said any such proposal should go alongside a timeline for Ukraine to join NATO. The alliance's 32 member countries say that Ukraine will join one day, but not until after the war.

Imran says he's no Nawaz Sharif, vows not to strike deal with military

PTI ■ LAHORE
Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has said he is not Nawaz Sharif that he would strike a deal with the military establishment to come out of prison.

ment. Several workers, including Sami Wazir, are faced brutal torture. "We demand that human rights organisations take action against these violations of law and human rights."

Pak soldier killed, 4 injured in rocket attack on aid convoy

Peshawar (PTI): One soldier was killed and four others were injured when a convoy of 35 vehicles carrying food and medical supplies to Pakistan's Kurram district, hit by sectarian violence, was attacked by rockets on Thursday, officials said.

After the attack, the militants also burnt some of the vehicles carrying the relief material to Parachinar in the Bagan Bazar area of the strife-torn district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Abhay Raj Singh Rawat S/o Late Shri Rampa Singh Rawat R/o: D-961, Gali No.6, Nathupura, Delhi-110084.

I, Sudha Devi M/o- Service No.15786716Y HAV (DMT) Ranjan Kumar, R/o- Vill-Balua, Post- Lagma, Teh-Dumra, Dist- Sitamarhi, Bihar- 843323, have changed my name from Sudha Devi to Sudha Singh, vide affidavit dated 10/09/2024 before Notary Tezpur, Sonitpur, Assam.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the general public that I Sandeep Talwar Son of Late Sh. Baldev Raj Talwar permanent resident of 2852, New Housing Block, Sector 13, Bhiwadi, Haryana is absolute owner and in undisputed possession of property bearing No. 5, road No. 26, Punjabi Bagh, Delhi 26 having acquired the same from my late mother Smt. Pustipa, who prior to herself had purchased the same from its previous owner namely C S Ahluwalia and Jagjit Kaur in late 90s. The said property is lying in unattended condition from some time with my vehicle and some articles parked in it from last few years.

INTERNAL CLEANING OF RADIATORS OF POWER CAR
E-Tender Notice No. EL/29-104 2025/K/1144 Dated: 08/01-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. 04\_2025. Name of work: Internal Cleaning of Radiators of Power Car by using OG & ID27/Radiwash at Katihar and New Jalpaiguri Depot. Tender Value: ₹40,71,000/- Earnest Money: ₹81,500/- Date & Time of Closing of Tender: 15:00 hrs. of 31-01-2025 & opening at 15:30 hrs. of 31-01-2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the general public that I Sandeep Talwar Son of Late Sh. Baldev Raj Talwar permanent resident of 2852, New Housing Block, Sector 13, Bhiwadi, Haryana is absolute owner and in undisputed possession of property bearing No. 5, road No. 26, Punjabi Bagh, Delhi 26 having acquired the same from my late mother Smt. Pustipa, who prior to herself had purchased the same from its previous owner namely C S Ahluwalia and Jagjit Kaur in late 90s. The said property is lying in unattended condition from some time with my vehicle and some articles parked in it from last few years.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION CIVIL APPEAL NO. 4927 OF 2023
SATISH CHANDRA MEHTA
...Petitioner(s)/Appellant(s)
VERSUS
TDT COPPER LIMITED AND OTHERS
...Respondent(s)
To, TDT COPPER LIMITED. THROUGH AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE R(1) REGISTERED OFFICE AT NO. 512-512A, TOLSTOY HOUSE, TOLSTOY MARG, JANPATA, CONNAUGHT PLACE, DISTRICT-NEW DELHI, DELHI-110001 (PROX) ID:292075/2024 (C.A. NO.4927/2023/XV)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that my client Gopurpreet Singh is in process to purchase the Property bearing No. 256, area measuring 250 sq. mtrs. in Block B, situated in the residential colony known as "Sushant Lok I" in and around villages Sarhau, Chakarpur, Salokha, Kanhai and Wazirabad, District Gurugram, Haryana (availing loan from Kotak Bank) from Jyoti Sachdeva, having acquired the said property vide conveyance Deed dated 9/1/2004 (Document No. 83) executed by Mrs Ansal Properties & Industries Limited. He confirmed that his seller i.e. Jyoti Sachdeva is not having the below documents pertaining to the property in question for the said FIR has already been lodged on dated 14/01/2025 vide application No.2492561/2025 Original Plot Buyer's Agreement dated 15.07.1986 executed by Mrs Ansal Properties & Industries Pvt. Ltd. in favour of Lakshmi Devi (daily endorsed) in favour of Vishnu Kumar Sharma, thereafter endorsed in favour of Sunita Bhatia and further endorsed in favour of Jyoti Sachdeva.

GRADIENT VERIFICATION OF STATIONS YARD IN KATIHAR DIVISION
Tender Notice No.: KIR/Engg./02 of 2025, Dated: 09-01-2025; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: 1; Brief Description of Work : Gradient verification of stations yard and section using Lidar Survey technology in Katihar Division. Tender Value: ₹ 2, 18, 61, 953.30/-; Bid Security: ₹ 2, 59, 300/-; Date & time of closing at tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 05-02-2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform you that Mrs. Sarala had acquired Residential Plot area measuring 175 sq. yards, Kharsa No. 537/2M1, situated at Deepak Vihar Khora Colony, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. vide Sale Deed Dt. 24.01.2023 executed by Mrs. Shashi Bala Sharma, Mrs. Urmila Kaushik, Mrs. Nirmal Sharma, Mrs. Seema Kaushik and Mrs. Monika Sharma and Now Mrs. Sarala is the undisputed owner of the said property.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform you that Mrs. Sarala had acquired Residential Plot area measuring 175 sq. yards, Kharsa No. 537/2M1, situated at Deepak Vihar Khora Colony, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. vide Sale Deed Dt. 24.01.2023 executed by Mrs. Shashi Bala Sharma, Mrs. Urmila Kaushik, Mrs. Nirmal Sharma, Mrs. Seema Kaushik and Mrs. Monika Sharma and Now Mrs. Sarala is the undisputed owner of the said property.

PUBLIC NOTICE ON AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS
The borrower/s in specific and interested bidders in general, are hereby informed that on account of non-repayment of the Banks due by the borrowers as under despite the payment notice and recall/closure notice issued by the Bank, the gold ornaments pledged with the bank security by the respective borrowers for the loan availed by them will be sold in public auction on "as is where is" and "non-recourse" basis through e-auction portal https://csbgold.auctiontiger.net on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 10.30 AM. The auction may be adjourned to any other later date at the discretion of the bank upon publication of the same in the Bank's notice board. The borrowers are hereby further inform that the gold ornaments will be disposed of by private sale if the public auction is not successful and if there is a further balance to be recovered thereafter, legal action will be initiated against the borrower/s for recovery of the balance amounts due to the bank. In case of diseased borrower, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs.

Table with columns: S. No., Account Name, Client ID, No. Acc., Bal. Outstanding as on 15/01/2025, Weight (grams). Rows include GAUTAM NAGAR, JANAKAPURI, ROHINI SECTOR 7, SHALIMARGH.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Gopal Sharma S/o Late Jamma Sharma and Devanti Devi W/o Gopal Sharma R/o B-293 Gola Kuan, Shiv Mandir Tekhad, Okhla Phase-I South Delhi, Delhi-20 have severed all relations with their son Sanjay Sharma and his wife Uttam Kumar and disowned them from their all movable & immovable properties due to their disobedience. My clients shall not be responsible for their any civil and criminal acts. JASRAJ SHARMA (Advocate) Ch. No. 67, Lawyers' Block, Saket Courts Complex, New Delhi-110017.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Sh. Radhe Shyam S/o Sh. Ram Prasad (owner of Residential Plot No.25-A, area measuring 50.50 sq. mtrs. out of total Area 200.64 sq. mtrs. out of Kharsa No.27/19, situated in unauthorized colony, Bharat Vihar, A Block, Village at Karkola, New Delhi through Registered Conveyance Deed Dated 13.10.2023 executed by POI Vide Reg. No.12332 at SR-8, Delhi the above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Federal Bank Financial Services Limited. If any person/financial institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned, Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092; Mobile: 9811215181

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to all concern the original property document- Possession Letter (dated: 13.07.1987) of Flat No. 1876, 1st Floor, Sector-37, Arun Vihar, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201301, allotted to SI AK Chaturvedi R/O Police Station Sector-20, Noida G.B Nagar, has been Lost/misplaced.

Table with columns: Sr. No., Job Number, Name of Work, Amount (Rs.), Publishing. Row: (1) 21/GM/PE(PH-I)/E-T/2024-25, Construction of Dog Shelter in Sec-50 & 34, Noida.

Table with columns: S. No., Name, Amount, Publishing. Rows include KAWALJIT KAUR, SANGEETA KOMAL, YED PARKASH, PRABHA/VATS, GOPI SINGH, PATEL NAGAR, RAJOURI GARDEN, TRI NAGAR, NEW DELHI, SHYAM NAGAR - NEW DELHI, MODEL TOWN - NEW DELHI.

LOST AND FOUND
I, Anil Kumar S/o Ishwar Singh R/o Flat no 948, 2nd Floor, Akshardham apartment, Dwarka declare that my builder buyer agreement has been lost in Sector 21, Dwarka dated on 13-12-2024. LR no is 2498279/ 2025. If any person finds, please return at above address.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to all concern the original property document- Possession Letter (dated: 13.07.1987) of Flat No. 1876, 1st Floor, Sector-37, Arun Vihar, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201301, allotted to SI AK Chaturvedi R/O Police Station Sector-20, Noida G.B Nagar, has been Lost/misplaced.

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is here by Given to public at large that Mr. Ravi Kumar is purchasing property Plot area measuring 100 sq. yards, i.e., 83.61 sq. meters, out of Kharsa no. 2657/M1, situated in the village Karhera, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. from Arti Chauhan who is the owner of above said property is by Khatori year 1424-1429 issued by Patwari & Sale Deed dated 21.12.2020 and intend to get a financial Assistance from Aditya Birla housing Finance Ltd. If any person/institute have any objection or claim with respect to the right title or interest in the said property you may please contact with us within 07 days from the date of the notice on the address mention below failing which my client shall not be responsible in the manner whatsoever.

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.) Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & https://etender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

Table with columns: S. No., Job Number, Name of Work, Amount (Rs.), Publishing. Row: (1) 21/GM/PE(PH-I)/E-T/2024-25, Construction of Dog Shelter in Sec-50 & 34, Noida.

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**NEW LAUNCH**



# Honouring Legal Luminaries

Through its pages, the book recounts the lasting legacy of lawyers who championed justice and equality, says **ABHI SINGHAL**

The Society of Indian Law Firms (SILF) commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Republic of India with a memorable event that highlighted the significant contributions of lawyers to the nation's democratic journey. The occasion witnessed the launch of an extraordinary book titled *Lawyers of India in Freedom Struggle & in Independent India (1872-2022): 150 Years and Continued Glorious Contribution Toward the Centennial - 2047*. The launch brought together luminaries of the legal fraternity. The highlight of the evening was the book's formal launch by K.K. Venugopal, former Attorney General of India, who presented the first copy to his successor, R. Venkataramani, the current Attorney General of India. Addressing the distinguished gathering, K.K. Venugopal praised the legal profession's crucial role in shaping India's democratic ethos. "The contributions of lawyers have always transcended the courtroom. They have been instrumental in guiding India towards its democratic ideals, especially during times of struggle," he said. The comprehensively



researched book chronicles 150 years of the legal profession's impact on India's socio-political landscape, from the colonial era to the present day. It pays homage to legendary figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, whose advocacy during the independence movement laid the foundation for India's freedom. Equally, it sheds light on post-independence lawyers and educators who have fortified the country's legal framework. Dr. Lalit Bhasin, President of SILF, emphasised the book's significance in preserving the history of Indian legal professionals. "This book is an homage to the lawyers who



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
Compiled, Edited and Authored by Dr. Lalit Bhasin (President) Society of Indian Law Firms

have played a vital role in the independence movement and, more importantly, in the development of a legal system that is the backbone of India's democracy," he said. The book highlights Lala Lajpat Rai's leading advocacy for social reform and the rights of Indians and explores how post-independence legal professionals have upheld the principles of democracy, justice, and fairness in the evolving Indian Republic. As India approaches its centennial of independence in 2047, the book serves as both a historical record and a call to action. It underscores the continuing role of lawyers in addressing modern challenges and ensuring the rule of law prevails.

# A Literary Prelude

Curtain-Raiser for Jaipur Literature Festival 2025



By **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The curtain-raiser for the Jaipur Literature Festival 2025 at The Leela Palace New Delhi offered an engaging preview of what promises to be another remarkable edition of the world's most celebrated literary gathering. Hosted at one of Delhi's most prestigious venues, the event celebrated the enduring power of literature and its ability to spark meaningful conversations. This year marks the fourth consecutive partnership between the Jaipur Literature Festival and Teamwork Arts with The Leela Palace New Delhi. The event brought together distinguished authors, poets and intellectuals, creating an atmosphere filled with creativity and inspiration.

The evening featured insightful speeches by key figures associated with the festival, who reflected on the significance of literature in contemporary society. Their words highlighted the festival's mission to preserve cultural heritage and encourage dialogue through storytelling and ideas. The venue provided a fitting backdrop for discussions about the role of literature as a bridge between the past and the present. The event underscored the Jaipur Literature Festival's role as a global platform for literary excellence and its dedication to the written word. As a preview of the main event, the curtain-raiser successfully built excitement among attendees. It highlighted the festival's significance for readers and writers alike, continuing to inspire and promote intellectual exchange.



(Left to right): William Dalrymple, celebrated historian, author and co-founder & co-director of the Jaipur Literature Festival; Anupam Dasgupta Area Vice President (North India) and General Manager at The Leela Palace, New Delhi; and Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director, Teamwork Arts. In its fourth year of partnership with Teamwork Arts, The Leela Palace New Delhi hosted the curtain-raiser dinner for the Jaipur Literature Festival 2025, scheduled from January 30 to February 3. The collaboration culminates with the prestigious Writer's Ball at The Leela Palace Jaipur, showcasing The Leela's dedication to celebrating India's rich cultural heritage and traditions.

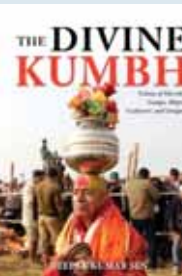
**JANUARY READS**



**Book:** Ananda: An Exploration of Cannabis in India  
**Author:** Karan Madhok  
**Publisher:** Alpha book company  
**Price:** ₹999



**Book:** Love in Action: Writings on Nonviolent Social Change  
**Author:** Thich Nhat Hanh  
**Publisher:** Alpha book company  
**Price:** ₹399



**Book:** The Divine Kumbh Echoes of Eternity: Ganga, Shipra, Godavari, and Sangam  
**Author:** Deepak Kumar Sen  
**Publisher:** Niyogi books  
**Price:** ₹695



**Book:** The Gown and the Gavel: Life Journey of a Former Chief Justice of India  
**Author:** G.B. PATNAIK  
**Publisher:** Niyogi books  
**Price:** ₹695



**Book:** Urban Leopards of Jhalana  
**Author:** Soham Chakraborty  
**Publisher:** Niyogi Books  
**Price:** ₹650

In *Contemplating Gandhi: Essays on Mahatma's Life and Thought*, Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari, a notable jurist and Gandhian thinker, presents a deeply reflective and insightful account of the Mahatma's life, philosophy, and enduring significance. The essays, thoughtfully compiled and expertly translated by Ramchandra Pradhan, present an intimate and vivid portrayal of Gandhi, seamlessly mixing historical insights with poignant personal reminiscences. This volume transcends the bounds of academic discourse, becoming a heartfelt and reverent tribute to a legacy that continues to inspire and guide generations, both past and present. Ramchandra Pradhan's preface is a heartfelt and expansive memoir detailing his serendipitous and deep association

with Justice Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari and the Institute of Gandhian Studies in Wardha. Through his reflective and eloquent writing, Pradhan reveals a deep and abiding respect for Dharmadhikari's unwavering dedication to Gandhian values and principles. Pradhan's preface is not merely an introductory passage; rather, it chronicles his decade-long journey of engaging with Gandhian thought, a journey characterised by mutual affection, intellectual camaraderie, and a shared reverence for the Mahatma's enduring legacy. Pradhan affectionately recounts Dharmadhikari's poignant anecdotes, including the inspiring words spoken by Dharmadhikari's mother to his father, Dada Dharmadhikari, during the pivotal Non-cooperation Movement. Such compelling narratives serve to enrich the book's historical context, offering readers a valuable glimpse into the familial and philosophical underpinnings that have so profoundly shaped Dharmadhikari's own work and perspective. Moreover, Pradhan's translation, which Dharmadhikari himself has described as enhancing the original text, underscores Pradhan's vital role in preserving the nuances and essence of Gandhian philosophy for a contemporary audience. The essays of this collection, written on various occasions, range from reflections on Gandhi's principles to portraits of significant figures in the Gandhian movement, including Jinnah's wife, Jankidevi. They explore themes like the Non-cooperation Movement, the challenges of India's independence, and Gandhi's response to partition. While Dharmadhikari's writings exhibit repetition, as acknowledged by the translator, this reiteration reinforces the profundity and timelessness of Gandhian ideas. Dharmadhikari emphasises the dynamic

# The Relevance of Principles

*Contemplating Gandhi* uncovers the depth of Gandhian philosophy, inspiring future generations, says **SHALEEN KUMAR SINGH**



nature of Gandhian philosophy. Drawing on his father's wisdom, he argues that ideas must evolve with the times to remain relevant. This approach challenges readers to engage critically with Gandhi's teachings, urging them to reinterpret his principles in contemporary contexts. The book's philosophical core lies in Dharmadhikari's insightful and nuanced reflections on the profound concepts of Anasakti Yoga and Karma Yoga, which Gandhi himself so eloquently embodied and exemplified throughout his life. These essays also powerfully highlight Gandhi's unwavering humanism, his inspiring ability to transcend personal sorrow during times of immense national crisis, and his steadfast commitment to living amidst and in service of the people. Dharmadhikari's deeply personal



recollections and experiences with the Mahatma himself, such as the cherished moments of walking alongside Gandhi and the profound anguish of mourning his tragic assassination, add an indelible emotional dimension to the essays. These poignant accounts elevate the book from a mere academic endeavour, transforming it into a living, breathing bridge that connects the revered past with the present day, allowing readers to forge a genuine, visceral connection to Gandhi's enduring legacy. Hence, the book titled *Contemplating Gandhi* is not merely a collection of essays; rather, it is a profound philosophical exploration and a heartfelt, reverent homage to the life and enduring legacy of the Mahatma. Through the insightful writings of Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari, enriched by the meticulous and evocative translation of Ramchandra Pradhan, this volume inspires readers to view Gandhi's teachings not as relics of the past, but as a living, dynamic philosophy that continues to guide and shape the present-day world. This book is a necessary read for scholars, students, and anyone deeply interested in Gandhian thought and principles. It challenges readers to think critically, to embrace the fluid and evolving interpretations of Gandhi's ideas, and to strive to embody his timeless values and principles in their own lives. Through this reflective work, Dharmadhikari and Pradhan remind us that the true relevance of Gandhi's legacy lies not in the provision of ready-made solutions, but in the offering of a transformative framework for ethical, purposeful and meaningful living in an ever-changing, dynamic global landscape. A book that deserves serious reading. — Shaleen Kumar Singh (shaleensingh.in) teaches English at Swami Shukdevanad College, Shahjahanpur, India, edits creativesaplings.in an online journal

**Contemplating Gandhi**  
Essays on Mahatma's life and thought  
Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari

**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
**Book:** Contemplating Gandhi: Essays on Mahatma's Life and Thought by Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari  
**Translated and Edited by** Ramchandra Pradhan  
**Publisher:** Anugya Books

# NCLAT admits Meta, Whatsapp pleas against CCI's ₹213-Crore penalty

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Appellate tribunal NCLAT on Thursday admitted the petitions filed by Meta Platforms and Whatsapp against an order passed by fair trade regulator CCI which imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore for abuse of market dominance.

After hearing the initial submissions from Meta and CCI (Competition Commission of India), a two-member bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) said the issue requires consideration.

"We find that the submission raised by the parties needs consideration. We admit both the appeals," said the NCLAT bench which also comprised its Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan.

However, over the interim relief to stay the CCI order, NCLAT said it will decide next week.

During the proceedings, the counsel appearing for Whatsapp and Meta Platform requested the appellate tribunal to stay the CCI order. However, this was opposed by the counsel appearing for the



Competition Commission of India. On November 18, the CCI imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore on social media major Meta for unfair business ways with respect to the WhatsApp privacy policy update done in 2021. Meta Platforms and Whatsapp have challenged this order before the NCLAT,

which is an appellate authority over the orders passed by the CCI. Senior Advocates Kapil Sibal and Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Meta and Whatsapp, contended that the CCI had overstepped its jurisdiction by ruling on WhatsApp's privacy policy as the matter is sub-judice before a Constitution Bench

of the Supreme Court. "CCI has gone into the entity's privacy policy. It is before 5 judges of the Supreme Court. It has no jurisdiction to deal with it," he said. Moreover, there is no complaint in this case and CCI has come to an "erroneous conclusion" on dominance but it did not take into account 'effect analysis' of

that. "Without an effect analysis, you cannot come to the conclusion," said Sibal, adding the CCI has not even examined what is the data that is being shared. He further said CCI has barred WhatsApp from sharing data collected on its platform with other Meta companies or Meta company products for advertising purposes for five years and alleged: "they are trying to destroy the business model." "No app can survive without monetisation," he said, adding the similar platforms as Telegram and Signal have their own models of monetisation. Moreover, search apps also monetise in their own ways. He further sought an immediate stay on the CCI order, which was directed to be implemented by February 19. Sibal said: "Let the Supreme Court decide on the privacy policy and let the statutory rules come, then you can (NCLAT) take up the matter and decide. Moreover balance of convenience in our favour as we have been operating this for years."



# Contractors responsible for accidents due to bad roads: Union minister Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said faulty road construction should be made a non-bailable offence and road contractors and engineers should be held responsible for accidents and sent to prison.

Addressing an event organised by industry body CII, Gadkari further said India is number one in road accidents in the world. "Faulty road construction should be a non-bailable

offence and road contractors, concessionaires and engineers should be held responsible for accidents and sent to prison," he said. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways aims to reduce road accident fatalities to half by 2030. According to the minister, the ministry data of road accidents in 2023 shows five lakh mishaps in the country resulting in 1,72,000 deaths. "Of this, 66.4 per cent, or 1,14,000, were in the 18-45 years age bracket while 10,000 deaths were of children,"

Gadkari said. He pointed out that 55,000 deaths were reported due to absence of helmets and 30,000 were due to non-use of seat belts. Gadkari also said the highways ministry is spending Rs 40,000 crore to rectify black spots on highways. Gadkari urged the industry and other stakeholders to partner with the government for setting up of driver training and fitness centres to address the acute shortage of drivers in the country.

# Sensex, Nifty extend gains for third day on strong global cues



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rallied for the third session on the trot on Thursday, helped by a rally in global markets after lower-than-expected consumer inflation in the US ignited hopes of more rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

Intense buying in Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank also boosted sentiments, traders said.

The 30-share BSE index climbed 318.74 points or 0.42 per cent to revisit 77,000 level at 77,042.82. During the day, it jumped 595.42 points or 0.77 per cent to 77,319.50.

On the similar lines, the NSE Nifty rallied 98.60 points or 0.42 per cent to 23,311.80.

As many as 2,778 stocks advanced, while 1,188 declined and 101 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Unabated foreign fund inflows, weakness in the rupee and elevated global crude prices continue to weigh on domestic equity markets, traders said.

"Benchmark indices continued to trade in the positive, albeit off highs, driven by positive investor sentiment following mild US inflation data, which raised hopes for a potential rate cut by the Federal Reserve.

"Additionally, favourable developments in the Israel-Hamas ceasefire and a reduced trade deficit further boosted the market's upward movement. However, weak economic growth data from the UK dampened some of this optimism," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30-share blue-chip pack, Adani Ports, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, Maruti, Reliance Industries and Axis Bank were the biggest gainers.

In contrast, HCL Tech, Nestle, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ITC and Tata Consultancy Services were among the laggards.

IT services major Infosys on Thursday reported an 11.46 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 6,806 crore in the October-December quarter of FY25. Shares of Infosys slipped 1.21 per cent to settle at Rs 1,926.20 apiece on the BSE.

Meanwhile, Adani group stocks rallied on Thursday after Hindenburg Research founder Nate Anderson announced that he would disband the firm, which made international waves with campaigns targeting billionaire Gautam Adani that wiped billions from the market value of his group companies. Shares of NDTV surged 9.15 per cent, Ambuja Cements jumped 3.88 per cent, Adani Green Energy rallied 3.35 per cent, Sanghi Industries climbed 3.34 per cent and Adani Power went up by 2.45 per cent on the BSE.

The stock of Adani Ports advanced 2.03 per cent, Adani Total Gas (1.78 per cent), Adani Enterprises (1.74 per cent), Adani Energy Solutions (1.54 per cent) and ACC (0.77 per cent).

Shares of Adani Wilmar, however, declined 1.19 per cent. "Nifty has regained momentum, closing at 23,312, buoyed by demand and reclaiming the 23,300 mark, as Wall Street's strong performance helped bulls take charge. Risk-on sentiments were sparked by cooler-than-expected US CPI inflation data for December, easing concerns about rising inflation and boosting expectations that the Fed might continue its rate-cutting cycle throughout the year.

# India's economy to grow at 6.4 per cent in current fiscal: FICCI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body FICCI on Thursday lowered India's growth projection for the current financial year to 6.4 per cent from 7 per cent estimated earlier.

According to FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey, the revised projection is in line with the broad expectations and reflect a notable slowdown vis-à-vis 8.2 per cent GDP growth recorded in 2023-24.

"...FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey projects an annual median GDP growth forecast of 6.4 per cent for 2024-25. The forecast in the current survey marks a moderation from 7.0 per cent estimate (for 2024-25) put out in the previous round conducted during the month of September last year," it said.

The survey was conducted in December 2024 and drew responses from leading economists representing industry, banking and financial services sector. The participating economists observed global economy in 2025 to present a reasonable growth trajectory, with an underlying note of caution. Sharing their perspective on the expected impact of US President Donald Trump's policies on the Indian economy, the economists indicated the possibility of short-term disruptions through channels like exports, foreign capital flows, and input costs for the US trading partners including India.

The likelihood of tax cuts (personal and business) could inflate the US fiscal deficit, while higher tariffs and stricter immigration norms could push up labour costs and inflation, they observed.

The Federal Reserve, in response, could cut the policy rates by less than what was anticipated. This may reduce capital inflows



into emerging markets, including India, causing rupee fluctuations. Trade tensions, including a potential US-China trade conflict, could disrupt supply chains and raise input costs in the short term. However, economists expect US to take a calibrated approach towards India, the economists opined. The Union Budget for 2025-26, set to be presented on February 1, arrives amidst global economic uncertainties and moderating domestic growth. Against this backdrop, economists shared their expectations that could shape the government's policy in the upcoming budget.

Reviving private consumption emerged as a key priority. A review of the current tax structure including rates (both direct and indirect taxes) in the Union Budget 2025-26 is called for with a view to enhance disposable income and stimulate consumer spending, they said.

Additionally, continued investments in welfare programmes such as MGNREGA, PMGSY, and PMAY were recommended. Further, the participating economists expect continued capex expansion, given its strong multiplier effects. An increase between 10-15 per cent in capex over 2024-25 is being looked at in the upcoming budget. Economists also

recommended initiatives to increase agri productivity, improve rural infrastructure, and strengthen agricultural value chains. Investments in cold storage facilities and supply chain efficiency were underscored as critical to managing inflationary pressures and minimizing food wastage.

According to the participants, India's economic outlook for 2025

presents cautious optimism, amidst the backdrop of persisting external headwinds. Consumer spending is expected to gain momentum, driven by an improved outlook for the agriculture sector, which is likely to bolster rural consumption and sentiment in the first half of the next fiscal year.

Food inflation which has remained elevated for over a

year and strained household budgets, is expected to ease. Furthermore, monetary easing by the RBI, resulting in lower interest rates, could also provide an additional impetus to consumption. To address risks and unlock opportunities, economists recommended that India should evaluate reducing tariffs on select and specific US imports while ensuring revenue stability and minimal domestic impact.

# DB Corp Q3 profit down 4.6 per cent to ₹118 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Media house DB Corp Ltd on Thursday reported 4.65 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 118.21 crore for the third quarter ended December 2024.

The company had posted a profit of Rs 123.97 crore for the October-December period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from DB Corp.

Revenue from operations was marginally down to Rs 642.65 crore from Rs 644.71 crore.

Total expenses were Rs 495.58 crore as against Rs 497.38 crore earlier. Revenue from Printing, Publishing and Allied



business was down marginally to Rs 594.17 crore in the quarter. However, revenue from the radio business was up 5.47 per cent at Rs 48.64 crore. Total income of DB Corp, which includes other income, was down 1.37 per cent to Rs 655.64 crore in

the quarter. Meanwhile, in a separate filing, DB Corp informed about management changes. It has appointed Runit Kishor Shah as an Additional Director and Vijay Kumar TV as Chief Operating Officer in Ad sales.

DB Corp is one of the largest print media companies and publishes five newspapers - Dainik Bhaskar, Divya Bhaskar, Divya Marathi, Saurashtra Samachar and DB Star. It also owns 94.3 MY FM radio station.

Shares of DB Corp Ltd were on Thursday trading at Rs 267.15 apiece on BSE, down 1.06 per cent from the previous close.

# Spencer's Retail Q3 loss narrows to ₹47.3 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spencer's Retail Ltd on Thursday reported narrowing of consolidated net loss to Rs 47.34 crore for the December quarter.

The company posted net loss of Rs 51.20 crore in the October-December period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Spencer's Retail, a RP Sanjiv Goenka firm. However, its revenue from operations was down 20.9 per cent at Rs 516.97 crore during the quarter under review. It was at Rs 654.01 crore in the year-ago period.

The company had a "soft festive quarter with respect to consumer spending," said Spencer's Retail in its investor presentation.

DSPL-326

ODISHA INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET

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# Australian Open: Iga Swiatek moves into third round against Emma Raducanu

**PTI ■ MELBOURNE**  
Iga Swiatek rushed through the first set in 26 minutes and completed her 6-0, 6-2 second-round win over Rebecca Sramkova in an hour at the Australian Open. The five-time Grand Slam champion makes a habit of advancing quickly through the early rounds at the majors. She's won almost 12% of her sets in Grand Slams by 6-0, which puts her in exclusive company. So when No. 49-ranked Sramkova ended a seven-game losing run by holding serve on Thursday, she raised her arm to acknowledge the applause from the Rod Laver Arena crowd. It was one of the few chances she had to celebrate. "It was good to play in such an efficient way and just finish it quick," Swiatek said. "Also, you know, just feel the court and how it is in RLA." Second-seeded Swiatek next faces 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu, who recovered from

an early break in the second set to hold off Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 7-5. Taylor Fritz hasn't wasted any time advancing to the third round, dropping just eight games across two rounds and spending just over three hours on court. The 2024 U.S. Open runner-up and No. 4 seed beat Cristian Garin 6-2, 6-1, 6-0 to move into a third-round match against 38-year-old Gael Monfils, who last week became the oldest player to win an ATP Tour title. Also advancing on the men's side were local hope Alex de Minaur, seeded 8th, No. 16 Lorenzo Musetti, No. 19 Karen Khachanov and No. 21 Ben Shelton, who beat Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-4. Raducanu has struggled with injuries since her breakthrough major in 2021, when she became the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam singles title. She didn't play a warmup tournament ahead of this year's Australian Open because of a muscle strain and needed time



during her match against Anisimova to get treatment on her back from a trainer. After advancing beyond the second round for the first time at Melbourne Park, the No. 61-ranked Raducanu was confident she'd recover in time for her next challenge against Swiatek. "It'll be a very good match for me, another opportunity to test my game," she said. "Going into it, I

have nothing to lose. I'm just going to swing." Swiatek is moving on from the doping infringement which led to her one-month ban last year. And she's not showing any signs of it being a distraction. She did everything at pace in the second round, including quick claps of her racket to acknowledge the crowd after her win. Swiatek didn't face a break point against Sramkova and converted five of the six she had. She finished off points with winners off both sides, and also hit some clean volleys on her ventures to the net. She's feeling slightly less pressure this year, too, after losing the No. 1 ranking to two-time defending Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka. "Yeah, there was a lot of pressure starting the year as No. 1, but I think overall last year I didn't think about it this much anyway," she said. "Also, I realized last year that I don't have 100% influence on what happens with my ranking sometimes. So now I just

focus on tennis." Emma Navarro, a U.S. Open semifinalist last year and seeded in the top eight for the first time at a major, was in trouble after two service breaks early in the third set before she reeled off four straight games to beat Wang Xiyu 6-3, 3-6, 6-4. She hopped from the baseline toward the net, and made a big, swirling swing of her arm to underline another tough, three-set victory. "It was really tough the whole time ... Super tough there at the end," Navarro said. "Found some good tennis there in the last games." She'll next play Ons Jabeur, a three-time Grand Slam runner-up, who struggled with asthma but held off Camila Osorio 7-5, 6-3. Sixth-seeded Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion and runner-up in Australia two years ago, registered her 50th win in a Grand Slam main draw singles match when she beat American qualifier Iva Jovic 6-0, 6-3.



## Barcelona reaches Copa del Rey quarterfinals with a 5-1 victory over Real Betis

**PTI ■ BARCELONA**  
Barcelona followed up its rout of Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup final with a comfortable 5-1 victory over Real Betis in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey. Koundé and Jules Koundé scored a goal each in the first half-hour and Raphinha, Ferran Torres and Lamine Yamal added to the lead in the second half to give the Catalan club the win and a spot in the quarterfinals. It was the fourth straight victory in 2025 for Barcelona, which on Sunday defeated Madrid 5-2 in Saudi Arabia to win the Spanish Super Cup. "We wanted to keep the momentum from the Super Cup here at home in front of our fans," Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsi said. "We continue like this and keep the foot on the throttle. The (Christmas) break did well for us, we were able to refresh." Barcelona had lost its last two games in 2024 before going on a winning streak against Barbastro in the Copa del Rey and Athletic Bilbao and Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup. Playmaker Dani Olmo, registered in the last minute after a long battle between Barcelona, the Spanish league and Spain's federation because of a missed deadline by the club, helped set up Gavi's opening goal in the third minute at Montjuic stadium. Yamal gave the pass for Koundé's goal in the 27th.

## India women must make this year their best in ODIs: Smriti Mandhana

**PTI ■ RAJKOT**  
Smriti Mandhana believes India's back-to-back 3-0 series wins against the West Indies and Ireland have provided the perfect momentum for making it their "best year in one-dayers" as the team gears up for the 50-over World Cup at home. India will host the women's ODI World Cup later this year and the team, which has been able to rediscover its form with six consecutive ODI wins, should drive home the advantage now, says Mandhana. "Two 3-0 sweeps are definitely really good in a World Cup year especially. We have to like keep going and have this for the best year for one-days (dayers)," Mandhana said in a video



shared by BCCI. Mandhana (135) and Pratika Rawal (154) put on 233 for the first wicket for the third highest opening wicket partnership for India in ODIs, setting up their highest ever total of 435/5 and eventually for their biggest ever ODI win by 304 runs on Wednesday. "I wanted to go out and bat with a lot of freedom. I said in the dugout before I went in about that you know, I'm going to try and play my shots because not many times you get an opportunity to do that," Mandhana said. Rawal, who notched up her first hundred to make 154 off 129 balls with 20 fours and

one six, admitted she slowed down nearing her century but gained pace of scoring once she was past the landmark. "As a batter I always wanted to score more runs and doing that for your country is actually a privilege and I am very happy," she said. "After (crossing) 70 (runs) I was a bit conscious that there was a hundred (on the cards). I was taking singles and going slow but when I got the hundred, I was like, let's just go for it. The 50 runs after the hundred came a bit quicker. I was able to score the way I score," she said. Talking about her 233-run opening stand with the senior batter, Rawal said, "It felt like that it was happening with the flow, we didn't think about it." "We got to know stats now, actually," Mandhana added.

## Leroy Sané answers critics by scoring two goals as Bayern routs Hoffenheim



**PTI ■ MUNICH**  
Leroy Sané answered critics by scoring two goals as Bayern Munich routed Hoffenheim 5-0 to restore its four-point lead in the Bundesliga. Sané is subject to increased attention with his contract due to expire at the end of the season. Pundits including former Bayern great Lothar Matthäus say he hasn't lived up to expectations since joining from Manchester City in 2020, making a contract extension unlikely. Matthäus was speaking to broadcaster Sky before kickoff. Sané wasted little time in responding with the opener in the seventh minute when he fired a fierce shot inside the far post after Thomas Müller laid the ball off. Sané's celebrations showed the criticism had perhaps taken its toll. "You always want to shake him, that he just does something and doesn't think too much. And today he did a lot and didn't think too much and he looked good," Müller said. Raphaël Guerreiro was celebrating five minutes later as a long evening beckoned for Hoffenheim. Guerreiro played a one-two with Harry Kane before scoring his first Bundesliga goal of the season. Kane made it 3-0 with a penalty in the 26th. It was his 16th goal of the season. Sané got his second after the break, set up by Mathys Tel, and substitute Serge Gnabry scored minutes after going on for Kane. Sané went off to applause from the Bayern fans after Gnabry's goal. "In the end, you get praised if you give a good performance and you might get a bit of flack if things don't go so well," Sané said. "I always try to help the team, to give a good performance. And I'm the first one who's unhappy when I don't give a good performance and can't help the team."

## India men, women hockey teams to commence season with Pro League matches next month

**PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Indian men's and women's hockey teams will commence their international assignments this year with the high-profile FIH Pro League matches here from February 15. The Indian men's team will face Spain, while their women counterparts will take on England on February 15 at the Kalinga Stadium. Most of the Indian men's and women's team players are currently playing in the Hockey India League (HIL) in Rourkela and Ranchi respectively. The Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League will be after the Australia leg (February 04-09) in Sydney. Between February 15 and 25, the men's teams of India, Spain, England, Germany and Netherlands," FIH said in a release. "With 24 matches over the 11 days, the action will be unceasing among the top ranked teams in the world,



which will be a true showcase of the 'League of the Best.' The FIH Pro League action this year will begin in Australia. The Kookaburras, who won the title in the previous edition, will start off their defence against reigning Olympic champions Netherlands, and Spain. The Hockeyroos will also start their 2024/25 campaign simultaneously, facing off against China and Spain. Both the Spanish teams will play their first matches of the season in the Sydney stage of the Pro League, with the women's team making their first appearance since 2020 having qualified for the current season by winning the FIH Hockey Nations Cup in 2024. China women will look to continue their strong start to the season after taking eight points from the opening four games of their season, played at home in Hangzhou. Netherlands men, meanwhile, will be hoping to return to their best, after an uncharacteristic start slow saw them pick up no wins in their opening four games, totalling six points through three draws and a loss. The FIH Pro League action will also simultaneously continue in Argentina as the Bhubaneswar stage goes on, with Santiago del Estero hosting the final stage from the first half of the season from February 19 to 24.

## Arsenal closes in on Premier League leader Liverpool after 2-1 win over Tottenham

**PTI ■ LONDON**  
Arsenal closed the gap on Premier League leader Liverpool to four points after a 2-1 victory over Tottenham. Mikel Arteta's team took advantage of Liverpool's draw with Nottingham Forest on Tuesday, with Leandro Trossard firing the winner in the north London derby at the Emirates Stadium. "Everybody knows you need to win these games, the fans are buzzing and it's a great night for us," Trossard said. "It's an amazing feeling, especially to get the winner as well, it had to come and now we need to look forward." Arsenal was runner-up to Manchester City in the last two seasons and is in contention for the title again this year. But it was given a fright by Spurs when Son Heung-min opened the scoring for the visitors in the 25th minute. A Dominic Solanke own goal when trying to defend a corner leveled the game in the 40th and Trossard struck low from just inside the box four



minutes later to put Arsenal ahead. Liverpool still has a game in hand on second-place Arsenal but has dropped points by drawing its last two league matches and is on a run of just one win in four in all competitions. That was against fourth-division Accrington Stanley in the FA Cup. Arsenal bounced back quickly after the disappointment of being knocked out of the FA Cup by Manchester United on penalties and opened up a two-point lead over Forest in third. "Less than 72 hours ago we played 120 minutes in another competition that we went out of — that is not easy psychologically. So the way we performed and played today was exceptional," Arteta said. Tottenham has won just one of its last nine games in the league. "The losses hurt me but they aren't acceptable. We have had too many losses this year and too many games that have got away from us. That needs to

stop," head coach Ange Postecoglou said. ISAK ON TARGET AGAIN Alexander Isak scored for the eighth straight league game to propel Newcastle into the top four. The Sweden international struck twice in a 3-0 victory over Wolverhampton to take his season total to 17 in all competitions. He became the fourth player to score in eight consecutive games in the Premier League, following Ruud van Nistelrooy, Jamie Vardy and Daniel Sturridge. Vardy scored a league record 11-straight games. "Like most strikers, Isak wants to practice his finishing. It is an art form. He is there after training every day trying to do more," Newcastle manager Eddie Howe said. Isak's form has pushed Newcastle into Champions League contention. He's scored 12 in his last 10 games in all competitions and Newcastle is on a nine-match winning streak. Isak opened the scoring in the 34th against relegation-threatened Wolverhampton at St James' Park. He got his second in the 57th and Anthony maintained his own scoring form with his fourth goal in successive games. Howe's team is now one point ahead of fifth-place Chelsea. U N H A P P Y H O M E C O M I N G F O R M O Y E S David Moyes' return to Everton didn't get off to the start he wanted after a 1-0 loss to Aston Villa. In his second spell at the Merseyside club, Moyes took charge of his 519th game as Everton manager and was welcomed by the Goodison Park crowd. But he couldn't inspire his relegation-threatened team to victory as Ollie Watkins' goal six minutes into the second half sealed Villa's win. Everton is 16th in the standings and a point above the bottom three. Moyes' immediate priority is to find goals from somewhere. Everton has failed to score in nine of its last 11 league games.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, JEYPORE

**e-Procurement for Road works**  
Bid Identification No: EERW/JYP - Online -10/2024-25

Letter No: 229 Date: 15.01.2025

01. Name of the work : Road works  
02. Total Number of works : 08 (Eight) Nos.  
03. Approximate Estimated cost : Rs. 1.26 Lakhs to Rs. 31.99 lakhs (approximately)  
04. Class of Contractor : "D" "C" & "B" Class  
05. Period of Completion : within 1 & 2 Months  
06. Other Details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Sl No. of work in notice	Availability of tender online for bidding		Last date and time of seeking tender clarification	Date of Opening
			From	To		
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Jeypore	Online Tender/01/RWD-JYP-2024-25	Sl No 01 to 08	21.01.2025 at 11:00 AM	27.01.2025 upto 2:00 P.M.	25.01.2025 at 01:30 P.M.	27.01.2025 at 5:00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
All amendments, time extension, clarifications etc. will be uploaded in the website only. Bidders should regularly visit the above website to keep themselves updated.  
\*N.B. Any Addendum or Corrigendum will be available in the Website only. Add. Chief Engineer, Rural Works Division: Jeypore. OIPR:2016/11/0119/2425

**Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice.**

**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER**  
DHENKANAL DIVISION, DHENKANAL

**E-Procurement Bid Identification No. - 10-DFO/DKL of 2024-25**

1. Name of the work: Construction of Main Gate at Dhenkanal Forest Division, Dhenkanal  
2. Estimate cost: Rs. 10,99,257/- (Approximate)  
3. Period of completion: 2 months  
4. Date & time of availability of the Bid documents in the portal: From 10.00 AM of 16.01.2025 to 5.00 PM of 24.01.2025  
5. Last date / Time of receipt of the bid in Portal: 24.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM.  
6. Date of Opening: 27.01.2025 at 11.00 AM.  
7. Class of Contractor: "D" & "C" Class Contractor  
8. Name and Address of the Office: Office of the Divisional Forest Officer Dhenkanal Division, Dhenkanal.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement Portal "<https://tendersorissa.gov.in>"  
Divisional Forest Officer, Dhenkanal Division

OIPR-08037/11/0119/2425

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,  
PURI (R&B) DIVISION, PURI  
WORKS DEPARTMENT  
**Short Tender call Notice**  
E-mail: [eerbipuri@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eerbipuri@yahoo.co.in)

Bid Identification No. SE (R&B) Puri-43/2024-25

The Superintending Engineer, Puri (R&B) Division, Puri on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in **Single cover** system in ONLINE MODE form the eligible class of contractors registered with the State Governments and contractors of equivalent Grade/Class registered with Central Government / Railways:

1. Nature of Work : Electrical Work.  
2. No. of Work : 1 No  
3. Tender Cost : Rs. 6000.00 (On-Line)  
4. Class of Bidders : "HT" Class  
5. Available of Bid document in the Website : From 10.00 AM of Dt.18.01.2025 to 03.00 PM of Dt.24.01.2025  
6. Last Date of receipt of tender : Dt.24.01.2025 up to 03.00 PM  
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.24.01.2025 at 4:00 PM

8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in> . Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

OIPR-34064/11/0119/2425

**Superintending Engineer, Puri (R&B) Division, Puri**