



the pioneer

Established 1865

INSIDE

MONEY 10
CHALLENGES GALORE AS
SITHARAMAN, TEAM
FRAME FY26 BUDGET

www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY JANUARY 31, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

MAHAKUMBH DECLARED NO VEHICLE ZONE



A panoramic view of vehicles stuck in a traffic jam at Jhusi Road during the ongoing 'Maha Kumbh Mela' festival, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh PTI

BISWAJEET BANERJEE
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Following the tragic stampede at the Sangam during the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh, which led to multiple casualties, the administration has taken strict measures to prevent such incidents in the future. As part of these efforts, the entire Kumbh Mela area has been declared a no-vehicle zone, barring all types of vehicles from entering the premises and has canceled all VIP passes till February 4. One of the most significant decisions includes the complete restriction on vehicle movement within the fairgrounds. No private or public transport will be allowed inside, ensuring a safer and more organized movement of pilgrims. Additionally, VVIP passes, which previously allowed certain vehicles access, have been revoked. No special passes will grant exemptions, making the rules uniform for

everyone. To facilitate smooth movement and prevent overcrowding, all major routes within the Kumbh area have been converted into one-way paths. This measure aims to streamline the flow of devotees and reduce the chances of congestion. Furthermore, vehicles coming from neighboring districts are being stopped at the district borders, preventing an influx of additional traffic into the city. The strictest measures will remain in place until February 4, with a complete ban on four-wheelers in Prayagraj. The administration has urged devotees to adhere to these guidelines to ensure a smooth experience at the Maha Kumbh. Authorities have also called for public cooperation in maintaining order and avoiding any further mishaps. Lakhs of devotees heading to Prayagraj for the Mahakumbh Mela are stranded in massive traffic jams but remain

resolute in their quest for a holy dip at the Sangam. Despite extreme congestion, freezing nights, and lack of basic amenities, their faith remains unshaken. The traffic congestion has reached alarming levels, with over 2.5 lakh vehicles stuck at multiple entry points, including Chitrakoot, Varanasi, and Rewa-Prayagraj routes. Traffic jams extend up to 25 kilometers in some areas, bringing vehicular movement to a near standstill. Many devotees, like Atmaram Patil from Maharashtra, have spent days in transit, only to be told to turn back. Others, unwilling to abandon their pilgrimage, have resorted to walking long distances to reach their sacred destination. The situation has been particularly grim along the Varanasi-Prayagraj stretch, where a 20-kilometer-long jam has left hundreds of buses stranded. Vehicles have been halted at key points such as Bhadohi, Gopiganj, and Aurai, with passengers left without

basic facilities. Many travelers, including Vasudev Bhalladwar from Chhattisgarh, have been forced to endure the bitter cold with no access to food, water, or toilets. The lack of arrangements for the stranded pilgrims has led to growing frustration, yet their devotion remains unwavering. Those approaching Prayagraj from Mirzapur and Bhadohi face similar hardships. Roadway buses have been turned back, and thousands of people are stranded at various points with little assistance. In some areas, local residents have stepped in to provide food and water, but the scale of the crisis has left many without relief. Some devotees have voiced their anger, alleging that VIP vehicles are being given priority while common pilgrims are left to fend for themselves. Despite these challenges, most remain firm in their resolve to reach the Sangam, refusing to consider alternate bathing sites offered to them along the way.

Train travel has also been severely affected, with several passenger trains, including the Allahabad-Prayagraj Passenger and Jaunpur-Bareilly Passenger, being canceled. The rerouting of other trains, such as the LTT Express via Varanasi, has further disrupted travel plans. At Pratapgarh and other key railway junctions, thousands of devotees are stranded, waiting desperately for alternate transportation. Meanwhile, along the Rewa-Prayagraj route, nearly 50,000 vehicles have been halted at the Uttar Pradesh-Madhya Pradesh border, with authorities struggling to manage the situation. Despite the severe hardships, the spirit of the pilgrims remains unbroken. Braving hunger, cold, and exhaustion, they continue their journey with unwavering faith, determined to take their sacred dip in the Ganga. For them, no hardship is too great in pursuit of this once-in-a-lifetime spiritual experience.



Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, JP Nadda, and Kiren Rijiju with MoS L. Murugan and Arjun Ram Meghwal during an all-party meeting, convened by the government, ahead of the Budget session of Parliament PTI

Modi 3.0 Budget session begins; Kumbh tragedy, Waqf on agenda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties at the all-party meeting on Thursday called for a discussion in Parliament on the Maha Kumbh tragedy and the UP government's alleged focus on VIPs rather than the common pilgrims, as Union minister Kiren Rijiju asserted that the Business Advisory Committee will decide on the agenda of the Budget Session starting from January 31. The session will commence with President Droupadi Murmu addressing the joint sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Union Budget will be presented on February 1. The first part of the session will conclude on February 13 and the second part will start on March 10. The session will conclude on April 4. The Session's legislative agenda has 16 bills, including the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the Immigration and Foreigners Bill. In the same all party meet BJP's allies in NDA Janata Dal (United) sought an extension in the tenure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee scrutinising the bills proposing simultaneous elections, while its another partner, LJP (Ram Vilas), demanded a "special industrial package"

for Bihar. Rijiju described the meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh as constructive and sought cooperation from opposition parties, adding that the customary discussions on the President's address to parliamentarians and the Union Budget are the main priorities in the Budget Session. "Rising" unemployment and farmers' "plight" will also be raised during the Session, several opposition leaders said. At the all-party meeting, sources said, JD(U) leader Sanjay Jha called for an extension in the tenure of the JPC, which was asked to submit its report by the first day of the last week of the Budget Session. Jha is a member of the 39-member committee formed to discuss what is often referred to as a One-Nation, One-Election (ONOE) proposal. The panel headed by BJP MP P P Chaudhary is scheduled to hold its second meeting on Friday. Jha also wanted Parliament to discuss India's current position in Artificial Intelligence as he pointed out the waves that the Chinese upstart DeepSeek has created in the field, so far dominated by US firms.

In Sambalpur Rehab centre secy booked for inmate rape, forced abortion

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU
SAMBALPUR

Secretary of a rehabilitation centre at Putiband under the Dhanupali police station in the district Harish Chandra Das, who was arrested on Tuesday on the charge of physical assault on the inmates of the centre, has again been framed under the charges of rape and aborting the child of a female inmate, and he would be brought on remand for investigation, informed Northern IG Himanshu Lal on Thursday.



Circle Jail are staying. Noted as per an RTI report, dix inmates have died in the year 2024 for unknown reasons. District Social Security Officer (DSSO) Thabira Mahananda said, "The deaths of inmates in the centre were not reported to us. The centre started in 2019, but it received government grants in 2023. I have been to the home for mentally ill persons three times and reported the unhygienic condition of the centre to the government. In the month of August, the government reduced the grant for the centre based on my report." A female inmate filed a

job and sent those videos to Rengali MLA Sudarshan Haripal. The MLA reported it to the Dhanupali police in the district who raided the place and arrested the secretary and the female caretaker Swagatika Pradhan, both found in the viral videos physically assaulting the inmates with water pipes and sticks besides using abusive language while serving food to the inmates. The bathing place videos also went viral, where the female inmates were naked in the open bathing place and coming outside to wear clothes. Sambalpur Sub-Collector Puspajali Panda said, "We have recorded the statement of the female inmate filing a complaint of sexual assault. The medical examination of her has also been done; the report is awaited. She looks fine, but doctors can only give the status of her mental condition. I have submitted the report of enquiry to the district Collector; action will be taken as per his instructions. We have suggested blacklisting of the organisation and legal action against the owner and the caretaker."

Dense fog warning issued till Sunday

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The capital city saw a slight dip in the night temperature in the last 24 hours with mercury levels dropping to 19.2 degree Celsius from 21.8 degree the previous day.

Cuttack recorded 18.5 degree compared to 20 degree the previous night. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday forecast a gradual rise in the minimum temperature by 2 to 3 degree Celsius across the State during the next four to five days. The IMD also warned of dense fog for three more days. Thick blankets of fog may engulf one or two places in Cuttack, Khordha, Dhenkanal, Boudh, Angul, Keonjhar, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, and Koraput districts till Friday morning. Dense fog warning continues for one or two places in Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jajpur, Boudh, Angul, Keonjhar, Kalahandi and Kandhamal during the subsequent 24 hours and in Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada and Koraput till Sunday morning.



The Union Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw announced various projects under IAIAI Mission PTI

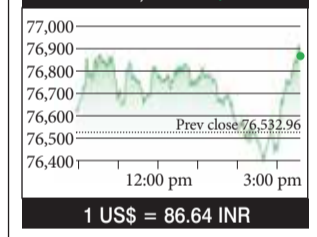
India prepares to take on ChatGPT, Deepseek

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

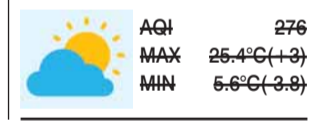
India on Thursday outlined global AI ambitions with plans to build its own 'foundational model' that could take on the might of ChatGPT, Deepseek R1 and others, as it lined up "most affordable" common compute facility powered by 18,693 GPUs to be used by startups and researchers. India's bold move comes at a time when Chinese company DeepSeek has turned heads after its AI model overtook ChatGPT as the top-ranked free app on Apple's appstore, challenging the AI dominance concentrated so far with the US firms, particularly Silicon Valley frontrunner Open AI. IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw exuded confidence that India will build a foundational

model that is world-class, and that it will be able to compete with best models across the globe. The government announced the next steps in its AI blueprint, among them, 18,693 Graphics Processing Unit or GPUs on offer by the empanelled bidders (a list that includes Jio Platforms, CMS Computers, Tata Communications, E2E Networks, Yotta Data Services, and others), and start of AI safety institution, with 8 projects approved under it. The government is also calling for proposals to develop India's own foundational models that would be aligned to Indian context, Indian languages, culture, basically where datasets are "for our country, of our country and for our citizens" and "biases are removed".

MARKETS



WEATHER



NEWS BRIEFS

BJP defeats AAP in Chandigarh Mayor poll
CHANDIGARH: The BJP on Thursday won the post of Mayor while AAP-backed Congress candidates registered victory in the poll for the senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor posts in the high-stakes Chandigarh mayoral elections that took place here. The contest for the mayoral polls was between the BJP and the AAP-Congress combine. AAP was fighting for the post of mayor while the Congress was contesting for the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor. In a jolt to the AAP-Congress combine, BJP's Harpreet Kaur Babla was elected as the new mayor of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation after she defeated AAP nominee Prem Lata.

Passenger jet collides with Army helicopter in US

ARLINGTON: An American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and four crew members collided with an Army helicopter while landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington, prompting a large search-and-rescue operation in the nearby Potomac River. There were multiple fatalities, according to a person familiar with the matter, but the precise number of victims was unclear as rescue crews hunted for any survivors. Three soldiers were onboard the helicopter, an Army official said.

'Bikashita Gaon Bikashita Odisha' launched

To boost rural infrastructure in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a bid to boost Odisha's rural infrastructure, enhance the quality of life in rural regions and foster economic growth for a holistic development, the State Government on Thursday launched a scheme named 'Bikashita Gaon Bikashita Odisha'. The scheme aims to bridge the critical gaps leading to accelerated and inclusive

growth in rural Odisha by taking up various sustainable developmental projects. This would substantially lead to development of varied forms of infrastructure and act as a gateway to fulfil the objectives of 'Bikashita Odisha'. The scheme highlights the significance of rural areas in the State's economic, social and cultural growth. It recognises that villages are the backbone of the State's economy with a majority of the population engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The development of rural

connectivity is critical for the economic development and social integration of a State. Therefore, the provision of road connectivity to unconnected villages, habitations to bridge the connectivity gap and development of both inter- and intra-village roads would be of prime importance under this scheme. The scheme also envisages taking up need-based projects to create durable assets for the community. Besides, construction of civic assets like Kalyan Mandap, community centre,

bathing ghat, changing room near ponds, riverbanks, market sheds, construction of drains, etc., will be taken up wherever required. Construction of Bhoga Mandaps, Bhagabata Tungis and Cultural Centres would also be taken up to provide basic amenities and services for devotees/pilgrims in the places of worship of all religions. Toilets and water supply facilities near such projects may be developed under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) wherever required.

Assets worth crores of ITDA PA detected

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Vigilance police on Thursday conducted simultaneous raids on the properties of Biswadarsi Sahoo, Project Administrator (PA), ITDA, Bonai in Sundargarh district, on the allegations of possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. During the raid carried out by the anti-graft agency at seven places in Bhubaneswar, Baleswar, Jajpur and Bonai, Sahoo was found in possession



of a significant amount of properties, including nine high-value plots. The assets detected in the names of Sahoo and his family members so far are a double-storied residential building of 3,600 sqft at Sriram Nagar, Old Town, Bhubaneswar, a flat in Bhagwan Tower, Laxmisagar,

Bhubaneswar, advance payment of Rs 82 lakh by Sahoo to a realtor to purchase a flat in EVOS Galaxy, Unit-3, Kharavela Naga, Bhubaneswar, nine high-value plots in and around Bhubaneswar and Puri, cash of Rs 4.51 lakh, gold jewellery weighing around 150 grams, a Ford Figo car and four two-wheelers, bank, insurance and postal deposits of Rs 61.42 lakh and household articles worth Rs 21 lakh. The measurement and valuation/assessment of the aforesaid buildings flats and plots were being carried out by the Vigilance Technical Wing.

Govt extends ration card e-KYC deadline to Feb 15

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Odisha Government has announced an extension to the deadline for completing the electronic Know Your Customer (e-KYC) process for ration cards. The deadline for updating the e-KYC details for ration cards has been extended to February 15, informed Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krishna Chandra Patra on Thursday.

Many residents had expressed concerns about meeting the earlier deadline, prompting the government to accommodate those who needed more time to complete the process. "The last date for ration card e-KYC was on January 31. However, a few of our friends have not been able to complete the process due to various reasons. I have got requests to extend the deadline. After much consider-

ation, we have decided to extend the deadline to February 15," said Patra. It has been reported that the verification process of approximately 4 million beneficiaries across the State is still pending. The e-KYC procedure is essential for beneficiaries to continue receiving their subsidies under various government welfare schemes. The extension provides some relief to ration cardholders who were con-

cerned about meeting the original deadline. However, the minister urged all beneficiaries to complete their e-KYC at the earliest opportunity to avoid disruption to their benefits. Ration cardholders can update their e-KYC details through designated government platforms or in person at authorised centres. They need to bring the necessary documentation for the verification.

IT payers to return ration cards: Minister

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
He further clarified that those who are liable to file Income Tax (IT) returns, particularly with monthly salaries ranging around Rs 25,000 to Rs 40,000, are required to relinquish their ration cards. He warned, "Failure to comply may lead to appropriate legal action being taken against those persons." "Ration cards are meant for poorer sections of society. I have appealed only to those persons belonging to the higher income groups to return their ration cards as soon as possible. In case they are found in possession of the cards at a later stage, we will not spare anyone," the minister reiterated.

ECoR launches drive to alert selfie takers on rly tracks

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has launched a campaign aimed at warning teenagers and college students about the dangerous habit of taking selfies near railway tracks. The initiative comes in response to a disturbing rise in accidents where young people have tragically lost their lives while attempting to shoot short videos and take selfies near railway tracks. Taking selfies at railway stations or on tracks may seem like a fun activity in social media, but it's a deadly risk. In recent years, many accidents have been reported where students or youth were mowed down by moving trains while taking selfies in unsafe locations. Many of these incidents occurred because people weren't paying attention to the dangers around them-like moving trains, overhead electrical power equipment and crowded station areas. To address the growing concern, the Indian Railways has implemented strict regulations. Under Section 147 and 153 of Railway Act, anyone caught taking selfies near moving trains or on railway tracks could face heavy fines, legal consequences, or even jail. It's a reminder that safety always comes first, and no photo is worth risking your life for. Official sources said the violators can be booked under sections 147 and 153 of the Railway Act that deal with trespassing and causing threat to public life.

Bhagwat arrives on 5-day visit

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat arrived in Bhubaneswar on Thursday on a five-day visit to the State, during which he would attend a memorial meeting and oversee the RSS' organisational activities. Bhagwat was accorded a warm welcome by RSS members soon after he arrived at the Biju Patnaik International

Airport. Amid tight security, the RSS chief proceeded to the Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti office in the Mancheswar area of the city. He also attended a memorial meeting of former Prant Sangh Chalak Shivram Mohapatra in Bhubaneswar in the evening. Bhagwat would also review organisational activities in the State and attend meetings on observing the centenary year of the Sangh, according to a senior RSS functionary..

Mosquito menace in city BMC to deploy 4 more fogging machines

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) will soon have four more fogging machines to tackle the mosquito menace in the capital city. This decision was taken at a recent high-level meeting held to address the increasing mosquito population. Minister of Housing and Urban Development Krishna Chandra Mohapatra said the mosquito population in the city has increased by many folds and it needs stronger control measures. "As fogging is currently conducted only in the evening and it takes two to three hours to complete a ward, the existing resources are insufficient. To address this, we have decided to procure four additional fogging machines," he said. He further stated that the meeting also highlighted a shortage of manpower for mosquito control efforts. "To

overcome this challenge, we have planned to increase recruitment within the next four months. Both fogging and mosquito oil spraying will be carried out as needed," he assured. There would be fogging once in seven days on both sides of the Daya West Canal, which is known as a mosquito breeding ground. The BMC would also identify mosquito-prone areas or 'hotspots' across the city and take targeted actions to stop mosquito breeding at those places, the minister said. With these steps, the authorities hope to curb the inflation of diseases such as dengue and malaria, which are greatly attributed to the mass breeding of mosquitoes. Besides, residents have been encouraged to do their part by keeping the surroundings clean and removing stagnant water sources.

SUM to set up hospitals in all dists

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Odisha Government has accepted a proposal of the SUM Health Care Services for setting up 50-bed multi-specialty hospitals in each district of the State to extend affordable and quality healthcare to the people at the grassroots level. The Rs 1,000-crore project aims to provide primary, secondary, trauma, emergency, diagnostic, geriatric care and physiotherapy facilities along with pharmacy outlets in each district headquarter town, said Anurag Nayak, Project Manager of SUM Healthcare Services. The investment would create direct employment for 900 people and indirect job opportunities for around 6,000 persons, he said. The acceptance of the proposal was announced at the Utkarsh Odisha Conclave here in the presence of Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mukesh Mahaling.

Dalmia Bharat honours young achievers



With the 'Prativa Samman Award'

PNS ■ CUTTACK
The Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF), the CSR arm of Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited (DCBL), hosted its annual "Prativa Samman Award-2024" to recognize the outstanding achievements of 15 high school toppers from the periphery villages of the Dalmia Cement - Kapilas Cement Works (KCW) plant. The initiative celebrates not only academic excellence but also accomplishments in diverse fields like sports, arts, social work etc. Among this year's awardees, ten were girls, highlighting the Foundation's focus on promoting gender

equity and encouraging female education as key drivers of community development. In recognition of their effort and dedication, the awardees were felicitated with a trophy, certificate, and a cash prize of Rs 2,500 by Unit Head, DCBL-KCW Pankaj Gupta. Speaking on the occasion, Gupta said, "Education is the cornerstone of progress, and through the Prativa Samman Award, we celebrate not only the achievements of these young individuals but also their resilience and commitment to excellence. It is inspiring to witness their journey, and we are proud to support them as they strive toward a brighter future. Heartiest Congratulations to all the awardees."

HC to oversee conservation of State's 6 Ramsar sites

PNS ■ CUTTACK
The Orissa High Court has scheduled February 12 to begin its overseeing of the conservation of six Ramsar wetlands in Odisha. This includes monitoring efforts around the Chilika lake, Bhitarkanika mangroves, Satkosia gorge, Tampara lake, Hirakud Reservoir and Ansupa lake, spanning a collective expanse of 345,628 hectares. This follows the Supreme Court's directive on December 11, 2024 when it ordered the State and Central wetland authorities to complete

ground verification and demarcation of wetland boundaries as identified by the Space Applications Centre Atlas (SAC Atlas) 2021 within three months. Additionally, the High Courts were instructed to ensure the protection of Ramsar sites under their jurisdictions. Led by Acting Chief Justice Arindam Sinha and Justice MS Sahoo, the High Court initiated a suo motu Public Interest Litigation (PIL) dedicated to these significant conservation efforts. The court has requested affidavits from relevant State authorities such as the State Wetland De-

B'pur scribe Choudhury honoured on R-Day

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The 76th Republic Day celebration in Ganjam district, held at Khallikote Unitary University Ground here, featured the recognition of animal lover and journalist Lalatendu Choudhury for his outstanding contributions to animal welfare. District Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida commended his efforts in promoting animal rights and fostering a compassionate community. The ceremony included the hoisting of the national flag by Additional District Magistrate Dr Pramod Kumar Parwari, who paid tribute to freedom fighters and emphasized the significance of unity and self-respect. Dr Parwari called for collective efforts to develop Ganjam district, highlighting its potential in tourism, art, culture and literature. A vibrant sub-continental parade, led by Commander RI of Police M Lakshmi Ranjan and Sergeant Prasanna Kumar Das, showcased the district's cultural heritage and discipline. The event saw participation from prominent figures such as Brahmapur Sub-Collector Dheenah Dastageer and former MLA Dr Ramesh Chandra Chyau Pattnaik. The day concluded with a pledge to uphold democratic values and work towards a united and prosperous Ganjam district, reflecting the spirit of India's progress and rich cultural heritage.

Wooing investors to Odisha

People on margin must get benefit from economic growth

The people of Odisha must take note of a series of events taking place in the State to attract investors for economic growth. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025, visit of President of Singapore, Utkarsh Odisha Conclave 2025 and many official visits of the Chief Minister of Odisha to meet the investors in the country and abroad are some of the events in this direction. What is notable in them is the active presence of PM Narendra Modi in most of them.



MANAS JENA

mining sector of the country in terms of production. The slogan by the Central government for a sunrise in East in matter of economic growth of the country mostly means the investment in mineral sector of the mineral resource rich zones of the country. The mineral zones in the East are also known for their persistent economic backwardness with high rate of poverty and distress migration. The eastern States are deprived of major infrastructure investment by the Union government.

It is important to note that these States are also having a sizeable ST and SC population who are very poor. The mining and mineral based industries have not impacted much in upgrading their livelihood and employment opportunities; rather a majority of them lost their traditional livelihoods. It is an irony that an MoU between the mining investors and government headed by a Chief Minister belonging to ST is taking place at a time while the locals in many parts of the bauxite reserve areas

are registering their protests against extractive industries and are not able to visualize a bright future of their children with mega investors entering to their area for growth. The STs are dying in hunger by consuming mango kernel

and distress migration is rampant in these areas. So while going for investment, there are many questions the people of Odisha, mostly the marginalized sections, must put before the government and investors, ie, how the growth will percolate down. How the new investment coming to the State in general and to their area in particular is going to generate employment for them in many ways is the moot point. It is observed that the top five countries of the world having highest GDP are USA, China, Japan,

Germany and India and among these countries India is the most unequal country having highest form of income and wealth disparities among its people and also its per capita income is lowest among the five countries. Specially the

marginalised sections in the bottom are in the worst position while the top few have all the powers and privileges and control over economic assets. They are the owners of the national wealth and enjoy all the benefits of the growth. The last 75 years of constitutional governance has not contributed much to change the traditional social and economic structure that has enforced extreme form of exploitation and inequalities in social life. The State of Odisha having deposits of strategic and critical mineral resources has not excelled much in comparison to other de-

veloped States of India in spite of presence of PSUs and private mining companies. The most striking issue is the condition of the marginalised section in mineral resource rich zone has not improved much. It was proved by the Saha Commission of inquiry on mining scam in Odisha that the mining companies are not honest in doing business while it comes to follow rules and maintaining transparency. Mostly, the NRO mining companies have no interest in development of Odisha; rather they have interest in their profit over the business. It is proved in a number of times that the mining companies are a violator of environmental and human rights laws and not concerned much about the development of the locals, its environment and ecosystem, and people at large. The mining areas of Odisha are also the most polluted area and the whole eco-system has been disturbed. The last fifty years of mineral industry in Odisha have contributed to the growth of a few families in

the name of economic growth of the State and accentuated the marginalisation process by alienating the locals from their traditional control over local resources such as land, forest, water and a living friendly eco-system. There must be a social and economic audit of the mineral sector in Odisha to assess the real growth and its impact on the economy, more particularly on the growth of local economy. Especially in the context of investment in mining sector, there is a point to mark how these investments are being helpful in overall growth of the State, especially in terms of giving a fair share to the marginalised sections and locals. We should not forget that our future generation has a right over our mineral resources. While encouraging unrestricted private investment, it is time to question the distribution aspect of the growth; otherwise in future the State will have no resources but will be left with more deprivations and inequalities in terms of economic assets. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)



Land oustees' stir at NINL Protestors removed from plant gate; force deployed

AKSHAY ROUT ■ JAJPUR

Police removed the protest-ors from Gate no. 4 of the Tata Steel-run NINL in Kalinganagar where the displaced families were protest-ing.

However, the protest was going on in front of other gates of the plant. Administrative talks with the protestors had failed.

Police personnel had been deployed in front of the Tata gate in view of the tense situa-tion. The district administra-tion made the transportation of employees and goods inside the plant normal. Besides the Jajpur Collector, DIG (Central) Charan Singh Meena, Jajpur SP Yash Pratap Shrimal



were present at the scene. More than 10 platoons of police were monitoring the law and order situation.

Meanwhile, Hira Munda, Sumitra Ghoi and Tuli Mahanat lodged FIRs against security guards of the plant at

investigating on the basis of CCTV footage.

According to sources, the displaced people staged a protest in front of the gate of Tata Steel-run NINL at Kalinganagar Industrial Complex, demanding jobs. However, the Tata Steel authorities ordered the security to lathi charge on them. Three persons including a woman were critically injured and hospitalized. "The people were displaced of their lands and the Industrial Complex was established in their lands. They were promised of employment in the NINL factory," said BJD leader Pritiranjan Gharai in a Press meet, condemning the atrocities by the Tata company against the agitators.

Kalinganagar police station alleging atrocities by the guards. They alleged that they were subjected to unspeakable torture. Based on the complaint, the police detained three security guards of Tata-run Nilachal Steel. They are

In Ganjam Political slugfest over finance workers' kidnapping

BJP, BJD accuse each other of links with kidnappers, ganja smugglers

PNS ■ BRAHMAMUR

The abduction of a finance worker in Chikiti area of Ganjam district has ignited a fierce political debate, with accusations flying between the ruling and opposition parties. Allegations of ganja cultivation linked to the arrested suspect have further fuelled the controversy.

Leaders from the ruling BJD alleged that Prithviraj Sahu, a suspect in the abduction case, has ties with Chikiti

BJP MLA Manoranjan Dyan Samanthara. However, BJP leaders have denied the claim, arguing that ganja cultivation in the area dates back to the tenure of the BJD government.

BJD MLA candidate Chinmayananda Srirup Dev accused the BJP of turning a blind eye to illegal activities. He accused the new government of negligence, which they claim has allowed illegal ac-tivities to thrive.

Notably, four finance workers were abducted on Sunday from Brahmampur and confined in a run-down house in Chikiti, where the kidnap-pers demanded a Rs 2 crore ransom. Following investiga-tions, police arrested

Prithviraj Sahu and uncov-ered ganja cultivation at the location.

SP Dr Saravana Vivek M stated that raids are ongoing to apprehend four other sus-pects, including Jak Maharana, Ayushman Subudhi, and Sagar Sahu. Police have also linked illegal li- quor trading to the suspects, pointing to a broader nexus of criminal activities in the re-gion.

In a related development, Sunita Kumari Behera was arrested on Tuesday for her alleged involvement in ganja cultivation. Police reported the destruction of a 4,000- square-foot ganja farm and have launched an in-depth

investigation to identify other parties involved.

The incident has intensi-fied a blame game on social media, with both BJD and BJP accusing each other of connections to the accused. Chinmayananda Srirup Dev has called for strict action against all culprits, empha-sizing that such incidents highlight the need for stricter law enforcement.

Meanwhile, the police have assured that the main accused and their accom-plices will be brought to jus-tice. Authorities are also in-vestigating the increasing prevalence of crimes such as kidnapping and illegal trade in Chikiti.

Brahmapur online trading scam 9 held for duping 150 investors of Rs 4 cr



PNS ■ BRAHMAMUR

Police on Wednesday ar-rested as many as nine per-sons for allegedly duping more than 150 investors of Rs 4 crore after luring them into an online trading scam here.

The fraudsters had col-lected Rs 4 crore from over 150 investors from Khaja Sahi and the surrounding areas of Brahmampur after promising to double their money in a short period through online trading.

The matter came to light when some victims abducted one of the scammers after the alleged fraudster failed to re-turn the money. Getting infor-mation, the Town police res-cued the abducted youth from

Digapahandi and arrested three suspects.

Not long after the arrest, reports of a dispute arose be-tween two groups marred with violent clashes over re-covering the lost money also surfaced.

Following this, police ar-rested six more individuals, bringing the total number of arrests to nine. Till the last re-ports came in, authorities were carrying out a detailed in-vestigation into the modus oper-andi of the group.

As per reports, over 59,000 persons were cheated over the past six years in various cyber crimes in the State. A massive rise in cases was seen in 2024 with 472 cases affecting more than 40,000 people.

Yet another Nuapada migrant dies in Telangana

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

Tripun Chinda, a resident of Talakot village in Sinapali block of Nuapada district, like many others from his village, migrated nearly 800 kilome-ters to Telangana in search of work. He tragically lost his life after falling from a kiln located in a village near Chintapalli town on Sunday.

Neither his 30-year-old wife Gauri nor anyone from his village knew the exact location of the kiln where Tripun worked. The only information came from other migrant workers who revealed over the phone that the kiln, named "CMR Factory," is located in Kurnel, roughly two hours by bus from Secunderabad.

Such is the plight of these workers. They labour in dis-tant, unfamiliar places, often without knowing the exact lo-cation of their worksites. They remain at the mercy of middlemen or "Labour



Sardars," whose details are equally vague. In Tripun's case, his elder brother Jethuram, working at another kiln in

Telangana, could only identify the Sardar as Supen from Boden, a large village 40 km from Talakot.

Tripun had left his home three months earlier, accept-ing an advance payment of Rs 40,000 from the Sardar. Half of this amount was paid to a brick maker in the village to buy bricks for constructing a pucca house. But fate had other plans. The employer sent his body back to the vil-lage after a postmortem, wrapped in white cloth. Their three-and-a-half-year-old son, and other family members re-ceived the lifeless body in tears. The young boy, sensing the pain of the moment, began crying in his mother's lap.

The money Tripun had left behind with his wife, meant to build a better future, was spent on his funeral rituals. After that the family is left with nothing but uncertainty. Gauri, who had dreamed of a stable home, must think of ways to survive. Her circumstances might force her to follow in her late husband's footsteps, joining the endless cycle of migration that traps so many like her.

Armed with HC order Nilgiri Tehsildar removes brick kilns from eco-sensitive zone

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The district administration has directed the tehsildar of Nilgiri to ensure no brick kiln exists within the eco-sensitive zone of the block.

The direction was given fol-lowing an Orissa High Court order which directed to re-move all illegal brick kilns under the jurisdiction of the eco-sensitive zone of Nilgiri.

According to reports, former MLA (Nilgiri) Sukanta Nayak had lodged several pe-titions against illegal brick kilns in the area with the dis-trict administration, urging their removal. He alleged the kilns polluted the environ-ment as a result of which the inhabitants became victims of various incurable diseases.

Citing the complaint, the district administration had

demolished two kilns and pro-mulgated CrPc 144 against another brick kiln. However, one of the kiln owners moved the HC against the action.

Later, a HC monitored team visited the block for as-sessment and submitted a re-port. On January 16, the HC disposing of the case directed the district administration to remove all illegal brick kilns in the eco sensitive zone within two weeks. District Collector SM Vikash stated that after receiving HC's order, the demolition drive was taken.

The owners of the kilns were informed about the order through the tehsildar and fur-ther they were told that stern action would be taken if any-one doesn't comply with the order of the HC within two weeks period latest by January 31.

In Brahmampur 4 including engineering student held for theft

Cash, gold ornaments seized

PNS ■ BRAHMAMUR

The Golanthara police in Brahmampur have arrested four persons, including an en-gineering student Silu Nayak (21), of Bhimagiri village un-der the Digapahandi police station in a burglary case.

The other three accused are Bikash Bisoyi (23), Kalina Behera (21) and Saras Kumar Nayak (32), who was also the receiver of the stolen gold or-naments.

According to police sources, one Surya Narayana

Achary (48) had lodged a com-plaint regarding the theft of gold, silver ornaments and cash from his house at Ralaba Road under Golanthara PS on December 18 night.

"The investigation led to the four persons and further revealed that the accused were also involved in such thefts in different areas of the district," said Brahmampur SP Dr Saravana Vibek M.

Besides apprehending the four, police seized Rs 1.40 lakh in cash, gold ornaments weighing 56 grams that were pledged at banks and four mobile handsets of the ac-cused persons

800 sr citizens embark on pilgrimage from S Odisha

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMUR

A total of 800 senior citi-zens, including 174 from Brahmampur, embarked on a spiritual journey to Shirdi and Nashik on Tuesday under the State Government's pilgrim-age scheme. Organized by the Tourism Department, the ini-tiative aims to fulfill the spiri-tual aspirations of senior citi-zens, especially those from economically weaker sections.

A special train departed from Brahmampur Railway Station at 11:45 am. The pilgrims included 442 from Ganjam, 72 from Gajapati, 88 from Kandhamal, 54 from Boudh

and 119 from Nayagarh, ac-companied by 25 escorts. The group is scheduled to return on February 2.

Brahmapur MLA K Anil Kumar, MLA Manoranjan Dyan Samantaray and Ganjam district Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida flagged off the journey. Other dignitaries present included Develop-ment Officer Madhumita, Tourism Secretary Bal Mukund Bhuyan and IRCTC official GC Nayak.

The pilgrims were provided with travel kits and tickets, and health checkups were con-ducted to ensure their fitness. Accommodation was ar-

ranged the previous night, and a cultural folk dance per-formance was held for their en-tertainment.

This initiative is part of the government's broader programme to facilitate travel for over 8,000 senior citizens to pilgrimage sites such as Haridwar, Rameswaram, Varanasi, and Kamakhya in phases this year.

Additional District Magis-trate Sudhanshu Kumar Bhoi, BEMC Assistant Commis-sioner Narendra Pradhan and Deputy Director (South) Rabi Narayan Behera were key fig-ures in coordinating the programme.

In Boudh Road workers stumble upon gemstones



Govt urged to take action against smuggling

PNS ■ BOUDH

A groundbreaking discov-ery of gemstones has been made in Boudh, near Khuntipada village under Baghiapada police station lim-its.

Workers engaged in road construction stumbled upon

the precious stones, which are reportedly being illicitly sold to stone mafia at Rs 2,500- Rs3,000 per kg. Now there is a question mark on the safety and ownership of the gemstones.

The locals, meanwhile, have appealed to the admin-istration to take immediate action to safeguard the pre-cious stones and ensure they are taken into government custody. It is essential that

the administration inter-venes promptly to stop the illegal sale of gemstones. Possession of the gemstones and their safety is needed now.

A thorough investigation is essential to determine the authenticity and value of the gemstones. Proactive mea-sures will prevent resource loss, ensure transparency, and generate revenue for the government, they opined.

Safety, pension for scribes raised at WJI meet

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Working Journalists of India (WJI) affiliated with BMS, held its Odisha State Executive meeting in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday.

The journalists and mem-bers of WJI from all 30 dis-tricts of Odisha participated in the programme. National President (Working) of WJI Sanjay Upadhaya attended the meeting and stressed on the need for unity of journalists. He said that journalists are mirror of the society. Their welfare should be prioritised.

Ashok Rath (Former Execu-tive Director, NALCO), Krushna Chandra Mishra (social worker), Sudarshan Das (Sahapranta Karjyabaha, Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangha, Odisha), Prithviraj Panda, general secretary (BMS) spoke about the chal-lenges being faced by journal-



ists while covering news and stories.

Prasanta Kumar Pathal (Pradesh Pramukha), Odisha said, "Journalists have been working relentlessly to provide information during disasters and other difficult conditions. But it is unfortu-nate that there is no provision for security and pension for

journalists. Hence, we demand that either the State govern-ment or any organisation should come forward to pro-tect the interests of journalists. Journalists should get pen-sion and protection."

On the occasion, several eminent personalities were fel-icitated for their contribution to the society. They are Sanjay

Kumar Nayak (environmen-talist, Ganjam), lawyer Priyadarshan Pattnaik (Puri), Chinmayee Behera (Shishu Pratibha, Jajpur), Engineer Rajendra Kumar Sethy (Su-pintendent Engineer, PhD), Dr Sarat Chandra Mohanty (Gruhodyog, Bhubaneswar),

Hadibandhu Panigrahi, (environment expert, Bhubaneswar), Ashok Rath (former Executive Director, NALCO), Sumitra Panda (social worker),

Indira Dash (social worker, Bhubaneswar), Abhimanyu Mishra (senior journalist, Jajpur), Sanjay Kumar Majhi (social worker), J Mina Acharya (social worker) and Dr Dinabandhu Mallik (social worker).

'Most villagers not allowed to Essar public hearing'

Petition seeks fresh option

RAJENDRA K SAHU ■ KEONJHAR

More than 500 people of three affected villages such as Tikarpada, Kadagarh and Dhatika under Sadar block of Keonjhar district have sub-mitted a petition to the district Collector, Keonjhar, alleging illegality and violation of rules in a public hearing of Essar unit iron ore beneficia-tion plant held on January 18. They have also sent a copy of the petition to the President, Prime Minister, Chief Minis-ter, besides Chairman, Na-tional Green Tribunal among others.

Their main allegation is that the police did not allow the affected villagers and ob-

structed them on their way to the venue of a public hearing. As a result, only 50 out of 2,500 villagers were allowed to partic-ipate in the public hearing. Three days before the public hearing the police created a panic in the area by detaining the villagers in the police sta-tion without any reason. When the police failed to in-fluence the villagers to speak in favour of the Essar com-pany, the police adopted force, they said.

President and secretary, Anti-Essar Forum Madhusudan Sahoo and Thakur Mardi respectively said that if the proposed plan is allowed then not only will it create pollution but also a large number of adivasi people who are dependent on the vast fertile agricultural

land for maintaining their family since generations will be displaced. Moreover, they also alleged violation of PESA Act as the area is coming un-der Shedule area for which gram sabha is mandatory for a project. In this case, the gram sabha was ironically skipped, the petition alleged.

The petition further said that Mohan Charan Majhi was supporting the cause of the villagers when he was the MLA, Sadar in opposition party but now after becoming the CM he is in favour of the Essar. The petitioners hoped that Chief Minister Majhi will definitely do justice to them and allow the villagers to have their opinion again by dismissing the last public hearing as illegal, unlawful and one-sided.

Army pension row: SC criticizes Centre for 'dragging' retired personnel to court, demands policy reform

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the Centre for "dragging" retired armed forces personnel to court and asked it to frame a policy on the issue.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said each and every member of the armed forces who was awarded relief of disability pension from the Armed Forces Tribunal need not be dragged to the top court and the Centre ought to exercise some discretion in filing appeals.

"There has to be some pragmatic view. An army personnel works for 15, 20 years and suppose there is some disability, and order of the Armed Forces Tribunal directs payment of disability pension. Why should these persons be dragged to the Supreme Court?" asked the bench.

It went on, "We are of the view that the Union govern-



ment must evolve a policy. There has to be some scrutiny before a decision is taken to drag members of the armed forces to the Supreme Court." Observing "frivolous

appeals" were being filed by the Centre, the apex court said the morale of the armed forces couldn't be let down by filing such pleas against the relief. "You say whether you are

willing to frame a policy. And if you say no then we will have to start imposing heavy costs whenever we find that the appeal appears to be frivolous," the bench cautioned the Centre's coun-

sel. The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the Centre challenging order of the tribunal, which granted disability pension to a retired radio fitter.

India to seal Rafale-M, Scorpene deals with France soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India is expected to seal in the next few weeks procurement of 26 naval variant of Rafale jets and three Scorpene submarines from France to further crank up its naval prowess, people familiar with the matter said on Thursday. It is expected that the procurement will be announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Paris next month to attend a summit on artificial intelligence. Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron are expected to hold bilateral talks on the sideline of the summit, being held on February 10 and 11.

The people cited above said all the two deals are in the final stage of finalisation and that the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) will have to look at them. In July 2023, the defence ministry approved the purchase of 22 Rafale (marine) jets from France, primarily for deployment on board the indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. The Defence Ministry had also cleared pro-



urement of three Scorpene submarines from France. Under the Indian Navy's Project 75, six Scorpene submarines have already been constructed in India by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in cooperation with the Naval Group of France. The procurement of the Rafale (M) jets along with associated ancillary equipment including weapon systems and spares would be based on an inter-Governmental agreement (IGA).

The Indian Air Force bought 36 Rafale fighter aircraft in fly-away condition. There is a

thinking in the IAF that it should go for at least two more squadrons of the Rafale jets. The defence and strategic ties between India and France have been on an upswing in the last few years. In July 2023, India and France announced a raft of ground-breaking defence cooperation projects including the joint development of jet and helicopter engines. The two strategic partners also had expressed commitment to cooperate in the co-development and co-production of advanced defence technologies, including for the benefit of third countries.

President Murmu, PM Modi lead nation in paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the nation in paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 77th death anniversary on Thursday. President Murmu laid a wreath at Mahatma Gandhi's memorial Rajhat.

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Modi and Union ministers Rajnath Singh and Manohar Lal Khattar, among others, also paid floral tributes to the Father of the Nation. A two-minute silence was observed in memory of Gandhi.

Earlier, Modi said in a social media post, "Tributes to Pujya Babu on his 77th Tithi. His ideals motivate us to build a developed India. I also pay tributes to all those martyred for our nation and recall their service as well as sacrifices." Gandhi, the most prominent face of India's freedom movement, was assassinated by Nathuram Godse on this day in 1948.

Parliament panel likely to take up issues of fake and paid news, neglect of serious news

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Issues of "rampant" paid news, fake news, many TV news channels focussing on sensationalism, and traditional newspapers' struggle due to digital disruption and declining readership are likely to figure in a parliamentary committee meeting on Friday, sources said on Thursday.

The standing committee on Communications and Information Technology headed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey is scheduled to "review implementation of laws related to all forms of media" in the meeting in which a host of factors related to the media will be discussed.

The panel may also highlight its concerns over disproportionate coverage given to crime and celebrity news at the cost of important and serious news as some channels turn to sensationalism in chasing TRPs, sources said. Media trials of sensational cases at times shape public opinion and affect their legal course, and the committee



cannot overlook it, they said. Issues like TV debates often turn into a platform for shouting matches and mudslinging are expected to figure in the meeting as well. A source said conflict of interests involving media owners, journalists and political entities affects credibility of the news and that

ethical boundaries are crossed many a time due to lack of strong regulatory mechanism. Among other key issues that may draw the committee's concerns is the expensive and long-drawn legal battles faced by journalists and media houses that discourage investigative journalism.

Severe financial crunch facing regional and vernacular media, and fake news is playing "havoc" in the country, especially during elections, a source said. Among other items likely to invite the panel's attention is the control of social media by big corporate firm based abroad as it can deliver an

irreparable damage to the society, political leaders, political parties and even to the country unless regulated properly.

Information and Broadcasting secretary, Prasar Bharti CEO, Press Registrar General and Press Council of India chairperson are among the important functionaries who are expected to appear before the committee.

The panel is also expected to traverse the journey of laws and other mechanism related to the media since the enactment of the Press and Registration of Books (PRB) Act, 1867, which was later replaced with the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023.

The functioning of the Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory quasi-judicial body which functions under the Press Council of India Act, 1978 is also likely to come up for discussion, the sources said.

The PCI's main objectives include preserving the freedom of press, and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and the news agencies in India.

NCW to celebrate 33rd foundation day, honour paralympians

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) will celebrate its 33rd foundation day on Friday and also honour four paralympians. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar will be the chief guest at the event with NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar leading the proceedings.

This year's theme, "Nari tu Narayani", underscores the resilience and strength of women, inspired by Ahilyadevi Holkar's legacy of leadership and justice.

The NCW will also honour four exceptional female paralympians for their perseverance and achievements, recognising them as symbols of empowerment and inspiration for future generations, according to an official statement.

Adding to the significance of the occasion, Rahatkar will present the first copy of her book, "Karamyogini Veerangna", to VP Dhankhar. The book celebrates the indomitable courage of former Queen of the Malwa kingdom



Ahilyadevi Holkar, highlighting her role in redefining leadership and governance. Speaking ahead of the event, Rahatkar emphasised the Commission's commitment to amplifying women's voices and ensuring their rightful place in society. "Women today are not just making strides, they are rewriting history. Our theme, 'Nari tu Narayani', encapsulates this transformation as women continue to lead, innovate, and uplift communities across the nation," she said. The event will also feature discussions on Ahilyadevi Holkar's life and her enduring influence on women's empowerment.

GMDA removes encroachments from 12 acres of green belt

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Enforcement Wing of the Gurugram Development Metropolitan Authority (GMDA) removed the illegal encroachment on GMDA green belts on 12 acres of land on Southern Peripheral Road (SPR) on Thursday. During this drive, a total length of 8.5 km from Vatika Chowk to Ghata on both sides across sectors -49,50,57,56,58,62 and 65 were covered. Almost 12 acres of Golf Course Extension Road were made encroachment-free. About 40 hutments, 55 nurseries, 12 Building material shops, 9 Scrap shops, 1 Washing station, 8 dhabas and 6 shops that were operating illegally were demolished. Additionally, 8 cranes that were illegally parked were also removed. Furthermore, GMDA also conducted a drive along

with MCG on sector 62 in front of Time Residency wherein 80 jhuggis, 12 scrap shops and 9 shops spread across an expanse of 1.5 acres were cleared. The drive was held by the Enforcement team led by Nodal Officer (Gurugram) DTP RS Bath, ATPs GMDA Mange Ram and Satinder, along with the Enforcement team of GMDA were present. 50 police personnel also participated in the drive and acted heavily on the encroachment. DTP GMDA also interacted with the supervisors and heads of the surrounding projects and asked them to come forward to develop the stretches of the green belt by partnering with GMDA. He also inspected that wherever MoU has been signed between the Authority and developers to develop green belts, the work has been taken up by the organisation.

Jaishankar hails Trump as 'American Nationalist', cites strong India-US ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Emphasising strong India-US bilateral ties, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday described US President Donald Trump as an "American nationalist". Speaking at an interactive session at Delhi University's Hansraj College, Jaishankar highlighted the evolving nature of global diplomacy and India's approach to it. "I recently attended his (Trump's) oath-taking ceremony and we received good treatment. I believe he is an American nationalist," Jaishankar said in response to a question about whether Trump is India's friend or enemy.

He acknowledged that Trump's policies could bring significant changes to global affairs but asserted that India's foreign policy would continue to be guided by national interest. "Yes, he (Trump) will change a lot of things, maybe some



things will be out of syllabus, but we have to conduct foreign policies out of syllabus in the interest of the country," he said, adding, "There

may be some issues where we differ, but there will be many areas where things will be in our shed." Jaishankar also stressed the

strong personal ties between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump, saying, "Our relationship with the US is strong and Modi has a

good personal relationship with Trump."

During the session, Jaishankar spoke about India's growing global influence and changing perceptions about the country. "Even non-Indians now say they are Indians, they think it will help them get a seat on a plane somewhere," he said.

Reflecting on his career, Jaishankar shared insights into his transition from academia and diplomacy to politics. "I never thought I would become a bureaucrat. My entry into politics happened by accident, or call it fortune, or call it Modi. He (PM Modi) pursued me in a manner that nobody could say no," he said. He highlighted that Indians living abroad still rely on their homeland for support and said, "Jo bhi desh ke baahar jate hain, woh hamaara paas hee aate hain. Baahar hum hee rakhwale hain (Those who leave the country turn to us only. We are their caretakers outside)."

ED cracks down on adulterated milk products manufacturer, freezes ₹6.26 Crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday said it has frozen fixed deposits worth crores of rupees, seized Rs 25 lakh in cash, a few high-end vehicles and property documents worth more than Rs 60 crore during raids against a Madhya Pradesh-based milk products manufacturing company.

The searches were undertaken on January 29 in Bhopal, Sehore and Morena as part of a money laundering investigation against Jayshri Gayatri Food Products Pvt. Ltd. And its key persons like Kishan Modi, Payal Modi, Amit Kuklod and others.

The ED alleged that the company manufactured "adulterated" milk products and used "false" laboratory certificates purportedly issued by BIS/NABL to secure certification from the Export Inspection Agency (EIA) located at Indore.

This certificate was used for export of the adulterated milk products, it claimed. The agency found that these certificates were either originally issued to other companies or obtained "fraudulently" by the accused. So far, 63 "forged" lab certificates have been identified which were used for the export of adulterated milk products to various countries as well as for domestic consumption, the ED said.

Anurag Thakur urges Delhi voters to 'link chains' with BJP, attacks AAP on women and Dalit rights

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Addressing a rally ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, former Union Minister Anurag Thakur urged voters to "link the two chains" -- the Centre and the Delhi government -- saying that just as Narendra Modi is the Prime Minister, Delhi will also have a BJP Chief Minister. The senior BJP leader further accused the Aam Aadmi



Party (AAP) government of being "anti-women and anti-Dalit." Speaking at a massive public rally in Mustafabad in support of BJP Assembly candidate Mohan Singh Bisht, Thakur, along with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, launched a sharp attack on AAP. "The insult of women has happened in AAP. This party is against women and Dalits. Two Dalit ministers from

their party have already resigned," he said. He also alleged that the AAP government had "broken the statue of Dr B R Ambedkar," while Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann "disrespected Ambedkar by removing his own garland and placing it on the statue." Calling for a change in Delhi, Thakur urged voters to bring the BJP to power. "We have to save Delhi and ensure the lotus blooms here,"

he said. He further claimed that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the BJP has worked for the welfare of the poor. "Women have been given free LPG gas cylinders, 60 crore people have received Rs 5 lakh worth of free treatment under Ayushman Bharat and 80 crore people have benefited from free rations. All of this has been done by Narendra Modi, the true

messiah of the poor," he said. He also urged people to "connect the links" and bring the BJP to power in Delhi, just as it is at the Centre. "Narendra Modi is the leader of the BJP government at the Centre, and Delhi will also have a BJP Chief Minister. Like in Maharashtra, we will work to serve the people here as well," he added. Delhi will go to the polls on February 5, and the results will be announced on the 8th.

Stampede at Maha Kumbh: Desperate search for missing devotees continues

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
PRAYAGRAJ

More than 36 hours have passed since the tragic stampede at the Maha Kumbh, but for Manoj Dubey, sleep remains elusive. He has been searching frantically for his 72-year-old mother, Kamla Devi, who has been missing since the chaos unfolded.

Kamla Devi had traveled from Jhansi with a group of 18 devotees for the auspicious Mauni Amavasya snan. "We have searched every hospital, every lost-and-found center, but there's no trace of her," said Dubey, his voice breaking. "She was wearing a saffron saree and had an identity card around her neck, but her phone is switched off. We don't know if she is safe or injured."

The tragedy struck between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. on Wednesday after a massive crowd broke through barricades at the ghats, triggering a stampede that left hundreds of devotees trampled. Witnesses described a chaotic scene, with people falling over one another in the dark,



Devotees search for their missing family members following a stampede on 'Mauni Amavasya', during the Maha Kumbh Mela PTI

Nearly 18 hours after the incident, the Mela administration confirmed at a press briefing that 30 people had lost their lives and at least 60 were injured. A judicial probe has been ordered to determine the cause of the mishap. Among those still unaccounted

for is Munni Devi from Fatehpur. Her son, Shivnath Yadav from Ballia, who had traveled with her extended family to Prayagraj, upon hearing the news. "My parents and uncle had come for a holy dip. After the snan, my mother got separated from the group. We have searched every possible place, but no one has seen her," he said, his face lined

with worry. Similar is the plight of Sunita Yadav from Ballia, who had traveled with her extended family to Prayagraj. "We all gathered at Sahso Chauraha after the dip, but in the rush, Sunita got separated," said her husband, Dinesh Yadav. "We have spent the past day searching and filing complaints,

but there's no information. The authorities are overwhelmed, and we are losing hope."

While many families continue their anxious wait, a few have been lucky to reunite with their loved ones. Among them is 65-year-old Annapurna Mishra from Odisha's Puri, who was found after being missing for nearly two days. "My mother disappeared after our evening bath at the Sangam. We feared the worst," said her son, Abhishek Mishra. "Finally, a volunteer spotted her in Sector 20, disoriented and exhausted but safe. We are relieved beyond words."

In another case, 70-year-old Tara Devi from Aligarh, who had traveled alone for the pilgrimage, lost her belongings and went missing. However, she managed to board a train home on Wednesday night. "She always undertakes religious trips alone," said her son, Ravi Sharma. "When she didn't call us after the snan, we panicked. But by some miracle, she found her way back. Her lost purse was recovered and is now at the Mela's lost-and-found center in

Sector 4."

Many stranded devotees are still trying to make their way home. Ram Pratap and his wife, Sumitra Devi, an elderly couple from Kushinagar, are among them. "We just want to reach the railway station and catch a train to Gorakhpur," said Pratap, adjusting his thick glasses. "But we don't know how to get there in this crowd." Authorities claim that the newly established digital lost-and-found center is helping reunite people. "Most missing persons are being reported there, and we are coordinating to track them down," said Umesh Tandon, who oversees the Bharat Seva Dal camp in Sector 4.

Yet, the scale of the crisis remains overwhelming. By Wednesday evening, hundreds of weary devotees were seen lying around the lost-and-found center, waiting for any information on their missing loved ones. Many were too exhausted to even ask for help, their silent despair a grim reminder of the chaos that had unfolded.



UP Government summons experienced officers for ongoing Maha Kumbh

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
PRAYAGRAJ

After a tragic stampede during the ongoing Maha Kumbh that left 30 people dead, the Uttar Pradesh government has summoned officers who had successfully conducted the 2019 Kumbh Mela.

IAS officers Ashish Goyal and Bhanu Chandra Goswami have been instructed to reach Prayagraj immediately to take charge. The duo had played a crucial role in organizing the 2019 Ardh Kumbh, along with Vijay Kiran. At that time, Bhanu Chandra Goswami served as the District Magistrate (DM) and Vice-Chairman of the Kumbh Mela Authority, while Ashish Goyal was the Commissioner of Allahabad and in charge of the Ardh Kumbh Mela. In addition to these two seasoned officers, five more Special Secretary-rank officials with prior experience in large-scale event management have been assigned to the Maha Kumbh. However, as of now, no additional officers from the police department have been officially deployed for the event. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducted a late-night video conference with senior government officials, district magistrates, and police officers from multiple districts,

including Prayagraj, Kaushambi, Varanasi, Ayodhya, Mirzapur, Basti, Jaunpur, Chitrakoot, Banda, Ambedkar Nagar, Pratapgarh, Sant Kabir Nagar, Bhadohi, Rae Bareilly, and Gorakhpur. He directed the ADG Zone Prayagraj and the Prayagraj DM to remain highly alert and ensure seamless arrangements for the fair.

With Basant Panchami approaching, the Chief Minister emphasized the need for stringent security and crowd management measures during the sacred bathing ritual. He instructed officials to ensure there are no traffic jams and to focus on security and convenience for the devotees. Adityanath also highlighted that a significant number of devotees traveling for Maha Kumbh are visiting other religious sites, such as Varanasi, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, and Mirzapur. He urged authorities in these districts to maintain special vigilance, particularly as the crowd is expected to swell in the coming days. He directed officials to set up designated holding areas to regulate the movement of pilgrims and prevent overcrowding. The Maha Kumbh, considered the largest religious gathering in the world, is expected to attract millions of devotees from across India and beyond.

Fire breaks out at Maha Kumbh, no casualties reported



BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
PRAYAGRAJ

A fire broke out in Sector 22 of the Mahakumbh Mela area on Thursday, January 30, engulfing several tents in flames. Fire brigade teams rushed to the scene and are actively working to control the blaze.

While the fire has caused significant damage, there were no casualties, as the affected area was unoccupied at the time. Senior officials have arrived at the site to assess the situation, but the cause of the fire remains unclear. Authorities have assured devotees that safety measures are in place and that efforts are being made to prevent further incidents.

This incident comes just a day after a tragic stampede on Mauni Amavasya, which resulted in the deaths of over 35-40 pilgrims. The large influx of devotees during the auspicious bathing period has created massive logistical

challenges, despite extensive preparations by the administration.

The Mahakumbh fairground has been equipped with over 350 fire brigades, more than 2,000 trained personnel, 50 firefighting centers, and 20 fire posts to ensure a fire-free environment. Additionally, fire protection equipment has been installed across Akhadas and tents to enhance safety and preparedness. This is not the first fire incident at the Mahakumbh Mela. On January 19, around 4:30 PM, a fire broke out at the Geeta Press camp in Sector 19 near Shastri Bridge, reducing 180 cottages to ashes. The recurring fires have raised concerns over the safety of pilgrims and the effectiveness of precautionary measures. Despite these challenges, the spirit of the devotees remains unwavering. Pilgrims continue to pour into Prayagraj in large numbers, determined to complete their sacred journey and take a holy dip at the Sangam.

Judicial Commission takes charge to investigate tragedy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
LUCKNOW

The three-member judicial commission, constituted to investigate the tragic stampede that occurred on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya during the Prayagraj Mahakumbh, has officially begun its work. The commission members arrived at their office in Janpath, Lucknow, on Thursday, and immediately took charge of the investigation. Commission Chairman Justice (Retd.) Harsh Kumar said, "Since the investigation is a priority, we have taken charge within hours of the announcement." He added, "Although we have a month to



UP Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh with state DGP Prashant Kumar during inspection of the site following a stampede on 'Mauni Amavasya', Prayagraj PTI

complete the probe, we will make every effort to conclude it as quickly as possible." Justice Kumar also confirmed that the commission would soon visit Prayagraj to assess the situation

firsthand. The incident, which occurred during the Mauni Amavasya bathing ritual on Wednesday, resulted in the deaths of 30 people and left 60 others injured. In response,

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath constituted a three-member judicial commission to investigate the causes of the tragedy. The panel is headed by retired Justice Harsh Kumar of the Allahabad High Court and includes retired IAS officer D.K. Singh and retired IPS officer V.K. Gupta as its members.

According to the notification issued in this regard, the commission has been tasked with examining the causes and circumstances that led to the stampede and will also provide recommendations to prevent such incidents in future. The investigation report must be submitted within one month of the commission's formation.

About 65 Lakh devotees flock to Ayodhya within 96 hours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
AYODHYA

Following a holy dip in Prayagraj on Mauni Amavasya, a massive influx of devotees began arriving in Ayodhya on the same evening, continuing uninterrupted until Thursday afternoon. The sacred city's streets were packed overnight, and as dawn broke, the air resonated with chants of "Jai Shri Ram." Experts estimate that approximately 65 lakh devotees have reached Ayodhya in 96 hours. With the swelling crowd, senior officials took command, personally inspecting arrangements throughout the night. Many pilgrims, carrying bundles on their heads and devotion in their hearts, made their way directly from Prayagraj to Ayodhya.



From 4 AM, ritual bathing commenced on the banks of the Saryu River, followed by pilgrimages to Hanumangarhi and the Ram Temple. The sheer volume of devotees transformed Rampath and Bhaktipath into a sea of pilgrims, with long queues stretching late into the night. Given the overwhelming turnout, temple authorities

have extended darshan hours to 18 hours daily, accommodating an estimated three lakh devotees visiting Ram Temple and Hanumangarhi each day. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath actively monitors the situation, issuing directives to ensure seamless management. As a result, officials and employees are working tirelessly to assist

pilgrims. To support the influx, police personnel stationed at the Ram Janmabhoomi complex provide water to devotees.

Additionally, medical camps have been set up within the temple premises for health assistance. Volunteers from the Ram Mandir Trust have also been deployed to serve the pilgrims. The estimated number of arriving devotees is being assessed with railway authorities and police checkpoints along key access routes to Ayodhya. Recognizing the growing numbers, extensive arrangements have been implemented to manage the rush. Holding areas have been designated along routes from Gonda, Ambedkarnagar, Sultanpur, and Lucknow to regulate the flow of pilgrims.

Large groups from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa, Maharashtra, and Gujarat continue to arrive in Ayodhya for darshan. Special rail services from Mahakumbh also bring in thousands of devotees daily. To ensure their comfort, Municipal Commissioner Santosh Kumar Sharma has made announcements via loudspeakers near Cantt railway station and Guru Govind Singh intersection, urging pilgrims to utilize nearby shelters for safe and convenient accommodation. A high-level administrative presence ensures smooth operations on the ground. Top officials actively oversee arrangements, including ADG Zone Lucknow S.B. Shirodkar, IG Praveen Kumar, Commissioner Gaurav Dayal,

District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh, and SSP Rajkaran Nair. SP Security Balramchari supervises security at the Ram Janmabhoomi complex, ensuring regulated darshan is followed under strict security protocols. Paramilitary forces, along with civil police and PAC, have been deployed for added vigilance. Additionally, ADG Zone, Divisional Commissioner, and IG Birla personally conducts security inspections, walking from Dharamshala to Lata Chowk, interacting with devotees, and reviewing arrangements. With unwavering faith and meticulous planning, Ayodhya continues to witness an unparalleled spiritual spectacle, reaffirming its status as a beacon of devotion and cultural heritage.

TMC fresh attack on Yogi administration

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as the anxious kin of the Prayagraj stampede victims waited for the bodies of their loved ones to arrive in Kolkata, the members of the Trinamool Congress Government on Thursday mounted fresh attack on the Yogi Adityanath administration for what they called "utter mismanagement" leading to the Wednesday's deaths.

Senior Bengal Minister Arup Biswas who had been liaising with the kin of the dead on behalf of the State Government asked the Uttar Pradesh Government to learn the art of controlling large crowds from the Mamata Banerjee administration. "It is not only all about advertising a religious fair to earn money... it is also about taking care of the visitors and not treating them like livestock," Biswas said. "They spent thousands of crore on a high tech system and will earn lakhs of crore from the highly publicized Kumbh Mela but now it all looks to be a system on paper the people who are returning are complaining of utter mismanagement," Biswas a senior Cabinet colleague of Chief Minister Mamata



Banerjee said. The minister who visited the house of Basanti Poddar - a middle aged woman from Kolkata's Aswhini Nagar - who died in the Wednesday's stampede complained how the dead bodies were being released with a plain piece of paper and no postmortem report and other formal documents. "Don't they have any responsibility towards the victims who lost their lives after all the money spent by the lakhs of people who have been visiting the Kumbh Mela is going to the Government

coffer, so they owe some duty towards the pilgrims like the way we do in Ganga Sagar Mela," the minister said. Another senior leader Kunal Ghosh slammed the UP Government saying, "they should learn from the Bengal administration, how we managed the Ganga Sagar Mela, this year more than one crore people visited the fair... and consider that we do not get any funds from the Centre... besides you have to cross a 3.5 km stretch of river on vessels to the mouth of Bay of Bengal... all these have to be meticulously planned and

the entire thing is continuously monitored by our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee... selling religion for earning money is not what you should do every time." Incidentally in a circuitous remark Mamata Banerjee too had said on Wednesday that large fairs should be meticulously planned and organised. She wrote on the X, "I am deeply saddened to learn of the tragic stampede at the Maha Kumbh, which has claimed at least 15 innocent lives. My thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved pilgrim families. My learning from our Ganga Sagar Mela is that planning and care must be maximal in matters relating to pilgrims' lives in vast assemblies of people. Prayers for the departed souls." Two persons so far have been reportedly killed in the Wednesday's midnight stampede in Prayagraj. Apart from Basanti Poddar a middle aged woman from Aswhini Nagar, Urmila Mahato a septuagenarian woman too from Salboni in West Mdinapore too died in the stampede. The victims' bodies had not yet reached Kolkata when reports last came in.

Crores of devotees took a holy dip as pilgrims express satisfaction with arrangements

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

On Thursday, during Maha Kumbh 2025, all permanent and temporary ghats, including the sacred Triveni Sangam, were teeming with devotees and pilgrims immersed in spiritual fervor. Many among them were those who had skipped their holy dip on Wednesday due to the heavy crowd and instead chose to bathe on Thursday, coinciding with the Pratipada of Gupt Navratri. Alongside performing rituals, devotees from across the world lauded the efforts of the local administration and the Yogi government for the well-organized and seamless arrangements at Maha Kumbh. Notably, the Mela administration has urged people to remain patient amid the anticipated large crowds on Basant Panchami, Magh Purnima, and Mahashivratri bathing days and to take necessary precautions during this period. Despite the exhaustion of their long journeys, the enthusiasm and devotion of the bathers on Thursday



remained undiminished. Along with Sangam Nose, a massive crowd gathered at the raw and paved bathing ghats on the Jhansi and Arail sides. The spiritual fervor was evident as devotees continuously chanted 'Har-Har Mahadev,' 'Jai Ganga Maiya,' and 'Jai Shri Ram,' with slogans of 'Modi-Yogi' echoing through the air. A common sentiment among the bathers was that the grandeur and divinity of the current Maha Kumbh are a testament to the efforts of the double-engine government.

They expressed that this government has upheld and elevated Sanatan values in a way no other administration could. Devotees credited this transformation to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the efficient execution by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Additionally, people widely praised the administration's meticulous planning and its swift response during emergencies, ensuring a seamless experience for all.

Mukesh Bhagat, who traveled from Nagpur with his family, shared that while he faced difficulty reaching Kila Ghat from the Arail side due to the heavy crowd, the moment he took a dip in the sacred river, he felt a surge of new energy. Similarly, Ghanshyam, who arrived from Panipat to bathe at Sangam Nose, expressed that participating in this holy event was not just the result of his own deeds but also the blessings and virtues of his ancestors. Ramavatar Chaudhary from Sikar, Rajasthan, echoed the same sentiment, saying that the instant the cold waters of the Ganga touched his body, all fatigue and worries seemed to vanish in an instant. On Thursday, a massive crowd of devotees from across the country and abroad, along with local residents, gathered to take a holy dip. Many arrived weary from their long journeys, with some even bearing blisters on their feet. Yet, after overcoming these hardships and immersing themselves in the sacred waters, their faces reflected deep faith, peace, and the profound joy of witnessing a truly divine moment.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Greenland gambit

Trump's attempt to acquire Greenland carries serious risks, threatening stability and undermining peace in the region

After assuming office, President Donald Trump has taken an aggressive approach, disrupting the global order—first economically and now through forceful tactics. His push to acquire the Danish island of Greenland by any means signals a potential standoff between the US and Denmark, and possibly even Europe. The push by the US President Donald Trump to acquire Greenland has led to tension between the United States and Denmark. While the idea was initially dismissed as implausible, Trump's administration has intensified efforts to assert influence over the resource-rich Arctic territory under Denmark though autonomous. Denmark has reacted with caution but with significant military reinforcements to protect its territory from any US misadventure. Greenland, the world's largest island, holds immense strategic value. With its rich reserves of rare earth minerals, vital for modern technology and defence systems, Greenland has become a focal point in the global competition. China dominates the rare-earth market, and the US sees Greenland as a potential alternative source to reduce its dependency on Chinese supplies.



Besides, Greenland's location provides a strategic foothold in the Arctic to dominate region. With climate change melting the Arctic ice and opening new shipping routes and exposing untapped resources, global powers, including the US, Russia, and China, have shown heightened interest in securing influence. The island is also home to the Thule Air Base, a key US military installation that plays a pivotal role in missile defence and early warning systems. Denmark has firmly rejected Trump's ambitions, reinforcing its commitment to Greenland's autonomy. In response to the escalating pressure, Denmark has announced a significant military expansion, allocating an additional 14.6 billion Danish crowns (\$2.05 billion) to enhance security in the region. The new military strategy includes the acquisition of three Arctic naval vessels, two long-range drones, and satellite surveillance systems. These enhancements aim to address the limited military presence in Greenland so far. While Greenland remains a semi-autonomous territory under Danish sovereignty, its growing geopolitical relevance has placed it at the center of international power struggles. The implications of US bid to take control over Greenland would be profound. Such a move would dramatically shift Arctic geopolitics, altering the balance of power and potentially heightening tensions between the US, Denmark, Russia, and China. The European Union has also expressed concerns over any potential shift in Greenland's status, as it would affect security dynamics in the region. It remains to be seen whether Trump's push to acquire Greenland will gain momentum or fade into history. Greenland has now become a pivotal battleground, and the Arctic, a once peaceful region, could soon become a new flashpoint the world can ill afford.

its commitment to Greenland's autonomy. In response to the escalating pressure, Denmark has announced a significant military expansion, allocating an additional 14.6 billion Danish crowns (\$2.05 billion) to enhance security in the region. The new military strategy includes the acquisition of three Arctic naval vessels, two long-range drones, and satellite surveillance systems. These enhancements aim to address the limited military presence in Greenland so far. While Greenland remains a semi-autonomous territory under Danish sovereignty, its growing geopolitical relevance has placed it at the center of international power struggles. The implications of US bid to take control over Greenland would be profound. Such a move would dramatically shift Arctic geopolitics, altering the balance of power and potentially heightening tensions between the US, Denmark, Russia, and China. The European Union has also expressed concerns over any potential shift in Greenland's status, as it would affect security dynamics in the region. It remains to be seen whether Trump's push to acquire Greenland will gain momentum or fade into history. Greenland has now become a pivotal battleground, and the Arctic, a once peaceful region, could soon become a new flashpoint the world can ill afford.

PICTALK



Students witness the launch of ISRO's GSLV-F15, marking ISRO's 100th mission, in Sriharikota

PTI

Challenging menstrual taboos in rural India

Cultural taboos and lack of awareness often confine girls and women to their homes, keeping them away from school, kitchens and religious spaces

In India, approximately 335 million women experience menstruation but the majority of them are uncomfortable about speaking about it or discussing their menstrual hygiene problems. Parents, especially in rural areas are often ignorant and unprepared to discuss this subject with their adolescent daughters. However, an ongoing campaign called 'Red Achcha Hai' (Red is Good) running in three states is breaking the silence around menstruation and debunking taboos and restrictions that confine girls and women to their homes and bar them from attending school, entering the kitchen and participating in cultural and religious events.



strip by the college authorities for breaking the hostel's rules for menstruating girls. This made CHETNA realise that they needed to accelerate and escalate their efforts. Thus, the Red Achcha Hai campaign. Started with a new vigour first in rural areas of Gujarat, and Rajasthan and later in Madhya Pradesh, the eye-catching Red Achcha Hai campaign tapped the power of drama and visual communication with the CHETNA team dressed in red explaining the menstrual process, the need for menstrual hygiene and breaking myths and taboos around menstruation. The positive impact of this awareness programme and distribution of 2199 menstrual hygiene management (MHM) kits containing three information booklets, a clothes brush, a nail cutter and a rope to dry the washed

cloth, led to its continuation in 47 schools of Sansad block of Ahmedabad since February 2024. Even while focusing on adolescents, the campaign continued to reach out to women too. In 2023, when the campaign was being conducted across 16 villages of Jhagadia block, Bharuch district of Gujarat, a woman sarpanch was invited as a chief guest for an event to celebrate nutrition week organised on the grounds of an adjoining temple. The sarpanch expressed her reservations as it was the fourth day of her period. However, after some discussions on the myths surrounding menstruation, the CHETNA team motivated her to come to the function. The sarpanch not only came for the function and sat on the temple steps but entered the temple. This act made her an icon for breaking the myths and taboos surrounding menstruation and helped to inspire other women shackled by societal barriers imposed by their families during their menstrual cycle. A mother of a malnourished child, who was also one of the partici-

pants, was menstruating on the day of the function and was reluctant to attend. However, when she was informed that the sarpanch, who was also menstruating, had entered the temple, she took courage and followed her. The sarpanch's actions challenged traditional taboos and set a powerful example. It highlighted the power of education and support in overcoming menstrual stigma. The campaign has reached more than 10,000 women and girls and many young people are coming forward to support the campaign. The students of Riverside School of Ahmedabad City supported the campaign by raising funds for the initiative to end discrimination against women and girls. Poor menstrual hygiene practices may lead to recurring reproductive tract infections which may increase the risk of cervical cancer. The 'Red Achcha Hai' campaign is changing mindsets and empowering women and girls to break free from restrictive cultural norms. (The author is a journalist writing on development and gender; views are personal)



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

pants, was menstruating on the day of the function and was reluctant to attend. However, when she was informed that the sarpanch, who was also menstruating, had entered the temple, she took courage and followed her. The sarpanch's actions challenged traditional taboos and set a powerful example. It highlighted the power of education and support in overcoming menstrual stigma. The campaign has reached more than 10,000 women and girls and many young people are coming forward to support the campaign. The students of Riverside School of Ahmedabad City supported the campaign by raising funds for the initiative to end discrimination against women and girls. Poor menstrual hygiene practices may lead to recurring reproductive tract infections which may increase the risk of cervical cancer. The 'Red Achcha Hai' campaign is changing mindsets and empowering women and girls to break free from restrictive cultural norms. (The author is a journalist writing on development and gender; views are personal)

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

Seed innovation: Key to agricultural growth

Unlocking India's full agricultural potential demands strong policies, industry collaboration and a commitment to technological advancements, especially in seed innovation



AJAI RANA

India stands at the cusp of a transformative shift in its agricultural landscape, driven by its growing population, expanding economy, and the mounting challenges posed by climate change. With the Union Budget 2024 allocating Rs 1.52 lakh crore to agriculture, the government's recognition of the sector's importance in ensuring India's economic future is clear. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for agricultural growth focuses on innovation, sustainability, and resilience. For India to realise its agricultural potential by 2025, however, clear policy frameworks and effective industry collaboration are essential.

At the core of this transformation is the need for a robust, resilient, and technologically advanced seed sector. As India transitions from a traditional, production-centric agricultural model to one that prioritises farmer welfare and income generation, there is a fundamental opportunity to improve livelihoods and promote sustainable agricultural practices. A critical aspect of India's agricultural future lies in scientific advancements, particularly in the development of genetically modified (GM) crops. Globally, GM crops have proven successful in increasing yields, improving pest resistance, and reducing dependency on chemical inputs. Yet, India has been cautious in adopting GM technology, and a transparent, science-based approach to its regulation could help unlock its potential. A national consensus on the safe deployment of GM crops would support the goal of reducing reliance on imports, especially in essential crops like oilseeds and pulses. The importance of collaboration between the private sector and public institutions such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) cannot be overstated. Such partnerships drive significant research and development efforts across key crops like oilseeds, cotton, and maize, while also protecting intellectual property rights (IPR) to incentivise further innovation. A strengthened IPR framework could position India as a global leader in agricultural research and technol-



ogy. Youth involvement is emerging as a critical force for revitalising India's agriculture. The average age of farmers in India is over 50, which highlights the need to encourage younger generations to enter the field. As of 2022, about 30 per cent of India's youth are employed in agriculture, yet a large proportion still view it as a last resort. Programmes targeting youth education and entrepreneurship in agriculture are gaining traction, with initiatives like the National Agriculture Market (eNAM) and various skill development programs helping young farmers access better technologies and market opportunities. Moreover, youth-led startups in agritech are making an impact in areas like precision farming, farm-to-table models, and sustainable agriculture practices, providing innovative solutions to long-standing problems. For example, the 'Agri-Startups' ecosystem is seeing rapid growth, with over 3,100 agritech startups currently operating in India (as of 2023), and an investment influx that has grown by 20 per cent annually. This demonstrates the growing interest among youth to innovate and lead the agricultural transformation. Furthermore, sectoral integration across the agricultural value chain is becoming more pronounced. India's agri-



FOR EXAMPLE, THE 'AGRI-STARTUPS' ECOSYSTEM IS SEEING RAPID GROWTH, WITH OVER 3,100 AGRITECH STARTUPS CURRENTLY OPERATING IN INDIA (AS OF 2023), AND AN INVESTMENT INFUX THAT HAS GROWN BY 20 PER CENT ANNUALLY

cultural ecosystem is complex, with each sector, such as poultry, dairy, horticulture, and rural development, playing a distinct yet interconnected role in the overall growth. The government is focusing on strengthening these individual sectors as part of a holistic approach. The GST framework currently presents challenges for the agricultural sector, particularly about the costs and complexities of compliance for farmers and seed companies. Simplifying the GST system could reduce operational burdens and make agricultural practices more sustainable and profitable. Additionally, targeted tax relief or incentives for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in agriculture, particularly in seed production, agro-processing, and machinery manufacturing, could support growth and job creation, especially in rural areas. Restoring the 200 per cent income tax deduction for research and development (R&D) expenditure could significantly boost innovation in the seed industry. By reducing the financial pressures associated with R&D, such a policy would incentivise greater investment in developing drought-resistant and higher-yielding crop varieties. This would be particularly important in critical sectors such as oilseeds and pulses,

where India faces challenges in achieving self-sufficiency. In addition, a unified national-level registration process for seeds, along with the "One Nation, One License" policy, would simplify operations for seed companies. The current multi-state registration process often leads to inefficiencies and delays, hindering the growth of the industry. A streamlined system would enable companies to operate more efficiently and ensure that high-quality seeds reach farmers promptly, fostering growth and innovation in the sector. Research Linked Incentive (RLI) schemes could further encourage innovation by offering financial incentives for successful R&D outcomes. This would accelerate the development of new seed varieties that are climate-resilient and high-yielding, reinforcing India's position as a leader in global agricultural research. Looking ahead, the future of seed research holds exciting possibilities, particularly in areas like biofortified crops, climate resilience, and hybrid development. Breeding drought-tolerant varieties of rice, oilseeds, and pulses will be essential to ensure food security in an era of unpredictable weather patterns. (The writer is the chairman of the Federation of Seed Industry of India and MD & CEO of Savannah Seeds; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CASH PROMISES TO WOO VOTERS

Madam — It is with reference to the news "AAP-BJP fight it out on social media over Guarantees" - January 30 While election debates are not a new trend in Indian elections, the issue has become hotly debated in recent months. Recently, AAP, BJP and Congress have announced schemes and cash benefits to woo voters in poll-bound Delhi. They have made tens of promises to fulfil the needs of the poor, the middle class, women, youth, priests, and other sections of society if they form a government in Delhi. When AAP announces Rs 2100 per month to every unemployed woman of Delhi resident, BJP promises Rs 2500 to those below the poverty line and Rs 21,000 to pregnant women, and Congress promises Rs 2500 to every woman under the proposed Pyari Didiyojana. Also, AAP promises full financial assistance to children from dalit families for pursuing higher education. When BJP promises Rs 15000 for up to two attempts for students preparing for competitive examinations, Congress promises Rs 8500 under the Yuva Udan Yojana apprenticeship scheme for a year. While RBI has warned that rising expenditure on subsidies, including cash transfers to women, could limit productive investments. Activists are yet to arrive at a consensus on whether such schemes actually empower women or not. There are so many cases in the Supreme Court about freebies and cash transfers to residents. A few months ago, SC has issued notices to some state governments and the central government, also to the Election Commission of India, on the plea seeking comprehensive guidelines to bar political parties from distributing cash and other freebies at the expense of taxpayers. A total ban on freebies should be implemented by enacting laws at the centre. P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

DeepSeek disrupts AI market



The global AI race has taken a dramatic turn with the rise of DeepSeek, a Chinese startup that claims to rival US industry leaders at a fraction of the cost. Its latest model, DeepSeek-R1, has ignited debate over China's growing AI capabilities, sending shockwaves through tech markets. DeepSeek's AI Assistant, powered by DeepSeek-v3, has surpassed OpenAI's ChatGPT as the top-rated free app on Apple's App Store. The company claims to have trained the model for under \$6 million, a stark contrast to the billions spent by US firms. Even more striking,

DeepSeek-R1 is said to be 50 times cheaper to operate than GPT-4. The impact has been immediate and severe. Nvidia, the AI chip giant, suffered the biggest single-session stock loss in history, wiping out nearly \$600 billion in market value. Investors fear that low-cost Chinese AI models could disrupt the industry, forcing a rethink of AI development strategies. US President Donald Trump called DeepSeek's rise a "wake-up call," urging American firms to stay competitive. However, concerns are growing over China's access to restricted Nvidia H100 chips, raising questions about how DeepSeek trained its models. The AI world now faces two possibilities: a new Cold War in AI, where the US and China develop separate ecosystems, or a global AI price war that democratises access to advanced AI. Either way, DeepSeek has proven that China is no longer playing catch-up—it's setting the pace. Gopalaswamy J | Myslapore

DRESSCODE FOR SIDDHIVINAYAK

Madam—The news that the Siddhivinayak temple trust, Mumbai, issued an advisory by barring devotees from adhering to dress sense and suggested avoiding torn jeans and prohibiting skirts and revealing clothes inside the premises. Having taken notice of the recent ghastly incidents at Govt RG Kar Hospital, Kolkata, and inside the Anna University campus, Chennai, there is an increase among perpetrators and wicked minds even when dressed properly. May be the reason that in order to bring good sense to prevail, the devotees, while praying before the lord, cross their arms and pull on their ears and also tap the temples gently not only to forgive and also to bless them with pious qualities. Dress to kill shouldn't end up otherwise in danger. A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

vening night of Tuesday and Wednesday as lakhs of devotees rushed to take the holy dip on the auspicious occasion (bathing in the river will cleanse their sins and help attain salvation) of Mauni Amavasya. Due to the stampede at the world's largest religious gathering in India, at least 30 people were killed, with many more injured, a doctor at the Kumbh Mela festival told AFP. As a result, the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad has postponed the Amrit Snan. Political leaders expressed concerns, demanding immediate action and better future arrangements for pilgrim safety and wellbeing. People come from different places, bound by their faith, and they end up paying with their lives. Mahamandleshwar Premanand Puri has blamed the administration for the deadly stampede at Maha Kumbh Mela, stating they prioritised VIPs over safety preparations. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

AT LEAST 30 DEAD IN STAMPEDE

Madam —A stampede broke out at the Sangam Nose area of Maha Kumbh, Prayagraj, at around 1 am on the inter-

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

TRUMPS INFLUENCE ON INDIAN ECONOMY

How India's digital economy could be shaped by his policies



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States, has left an indelible mark on both American and global politics. While much of the discussion about his policies and influence has focused on traditional industries like trade, defence, and foreign relations, Trump's impact could extend beyond these sectors — especially to economies like India. As the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest-growing digital economies, India stands to experience both challenges and opportunities in the wake of Trump's post-presidency actions and his political stances. Here's a closer look at how Trump could shape India's digital economy.

Trade Policies and Digital Tariffs - Trump's "America First" policy introduced a more protectionist approach to trade, focusing on reducing imports and ensuring favourable terms for US companies. India has seen its digital space expand rapidly, particularly with global tech giants and startups. However, if Trump or his political allies push for new tariffs or restrictions on foreign tech investments — or increase scrutiny on digital platforms operating in India — it could complicate business relations. While this may benefit India's indigenous tech sector and could leverage such scenarios to strengthen local supply chains and reduce dependency on US companies, it will certainly be bad for US India's bilateral trade. **Geopolitical Tensions and Digital Sovereignty** Another area where Trump's impact could be felt is in the realm of digital sovereignty. Trump's earlier administration frequently took stances against Chinese technology companies. India, too, has followed suit with actions



against Chinese apps, and the digital sovereignty debate is likely to continue. Should Trump's influence result in stronger US-India alliances in the digital space, it could accelerate India's drive for data privacy regulations, local data storage mandates, and greater control over its digital infrastructure. The US and India will have the opportunity to collaborate on setting global standards for cybersecurity, data protection, and artificial intelligence.

If the relationship between the two countries remains strong, it could also lead to joint ventures that power India's emerging tech ecosystem. US-India Strategic Digital Alliance - Under Trump, the US-India relationship generally saw an uptick in strategic collaboration, especially in defence, technology, and trade. Post-Trump, this alignment could be further amplified. As a leader in traditional and digital technologies, Trump's legacy of prioritising high-tech industries in the US could create opportunities for Indian companies to collaborate with American firms in research and development. For India, this could mean access to cutting-edge technologies in fields like AI, 5G, quantum computing, and blockchain. Such collaboration could increase India's digital infrastructure capabilities, making it more competitive in the global market. Promoting E-Commerce Growth - Trump's policies favoured business growth, especially in the private sector.

His approach to deregulation, tax cuts, and incentivising entrepreneurship could be leveraged by Indian businesses, particularly in the e-commerce space. While Donald Trump's influence on India's digital economy is not straightforward, his policies, legacy and post-presidency actions could create ripple effects across global digital markets, including India. Whether it's through tighter immigration restrictions, geopolitical positioning, or shifts in trade relationships, India's digital economy must remain agile, harnessing both challenges and opportunities. India's emerging tech scene is robust and well-positioned to adapt to global changes.

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

Freebies could push Delhi to fiscal disaster



UTTAM GUPTA

Despite repeated warnings from the Supreme Court about the detrimental impact of freebies on free and fair elections, political parties continue to offer them



In the din of blistering campaign in Delhi with the central theme of major political parties being on "freebies" - an acronym for 'something given free of charge' - it may be worthwhile to remind them about two observations made by the Supreme Court (SC). In an order in *S Subramaniam Balaji vs the Government of Tamil Nadu & Ors* given in July 2013, the SC had observed that the distribution of freebies of any kind influences all people. "It shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree." A decade later, hearing a PIL on 'freebies', on January 25, 2022, it observed "This is no doubt a serious issue, budget for freebies is going above the regular Budget".

But, all this seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The state elections held since 2022 have witnessed political parties intensely competing with each other to mesmerise voters with a deadly combination of free goods and services and cash assistance. These have played a dominating role in winning elections. In Delhi, the offers have reached their 'NADIR'. The starting point was an announcement by the finance minister Atishi in the budget for 2024-25 reg. The Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana (MMSY) under which, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government will give Rs 1000 per month to all the women above the age of 18 in the national capital. Meanwhile, the ex-Chief Minister and convener of AAP Arvind Kejriwal promised an increase in income support under the MMSY to Rs 2,100 a month for every woman.

AAP has also promised free medical services to all above 60 at all hospitals; financing foreign education for Dalit students; free bus travel for all students; 50 per cent concession on metro fares; life insurance cover of Rs 10 lakh, accident insurance of Rs 5 lakh for all auto-rickshaw drivers and e-rickshaw pullers; wedding aid of Rs 1 lakh for their daughters and free coaching for their children; Rs 18,000 per month for all pujaris and granthis etc.

Not to be left behind, the BJP has come up with a package that is far more lucrative. It has promised Rs 2,500 a



THE RECKLESS SPENDING OF THE TAXPAYER'S MONEY ON FREEBIES IS NEITHER A RECOGNISED POLICY NOR IS SANCTIONED IN A COURT OF LAW. IT IS BLATANT FINANCIAL IRREGULARITY THAT AMOUNTS TO BRIBING VOTERS USING PUBLIC MONEY SOLELY FOR GAINING ADVANTAGE IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

month to women under Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY); Rs 21,000 to pregnant women; LPG cylinders for Rs 500 and free cylinder on Holi and Diwali; a stipend of Rs 1000 a month to SC students pursuing technical and vocational courses; free education for needy students from KG to PG; free travel for students on Delhi Metro; Atal Canteens in Jhuggi Basti clusters providing nutritional meals for Rs 5 only; implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme and additional cover of Rs 5 lakh for senior citizens. BJP has vowed to continue all existing schemes.

The Union Government's standards of financial propriety lay down inter alia that "no authority shall exercise its powers of sanctioning expenditure to pass an order which will be directly or indirectly, to its advantage; and the expenditure from public moneys should not be incurred for the benefit of a particular person or a section of the people unless a claim for the amount could be enforced in a court of law or the expenditure is in pursuance of a recognised policy or custom".

The reckless spending of the taxpayer's money on freebies is neither a recognised policy nor is sanctioned in a court of law. It is blatant financial irregularity that amounts to bribing voters using public money solely for gaining advantage in electoral politics. Yet, the parties continue with it. What about the impact on the budget? Look at the BJP offer. The number of women above the age of 18 years in Delhi is around 67 lakh. @Rs 2500 per month under MSY or Rs 30,000 annually to each woman, giving assistance to them all will require Rs 20,100 crore per annum. According to an estimate, there are about 15 lakh pregnant

women. @Rs 21,000 per woman, the total outgo comes to Rs 3150 crore annually. As for subsidy on LPG, take consumption of 4 cylinders per household (HH). The cost supply is around Rs 1000 per cylinder, for two cylinders (Holi and Diwali), the subsidy will be Rs 2000 whereas for the other two @ Rs 500 each, the outgo will be Rs 1000 or Rs 3000 per HH. Taking a total of over 82.5 lakh HHs (current Delhi population of 330 lakh divided by 4 being the average HH size), the annual impact would be Rs 2500 crore.

Look at free education for needy students from KG to PG. According to the latest data available, around 9.91 per cent of Delhi's population was considered below the poverty line in 2011-12. The current population is 330 lakh, and the poor are 33 lakh. Of this, takes one-third or 11 lakh to be persons in the studying age 4 - 25 years. Taking the average expense of educating a child in India at the bare minimum of Rs. 20,000 per annum, the total expense on "needy students" in the city would be about Rs 2200 crore annually. The additional burden of these four guarantees alone on the Delhi government's budget is Rs 27,950 crore (20,100+3150+2500+2200).

Other freebies would bloat this figure by several thousand crore. Already, the finances of the Delhi government are in a precarious state. Against the total expenditure of Rs 76,000 crore during FY 2024-25, the total revenue is estimated at around Rs 58,000 crore. This leads to a fiscal deficit (FD) of Rs 18,000 crore which is 80 per cent higher than the FD for FY 2023-24 at Rs 10,000 crore. The surge in FD is despite a steep reduction of over 30 per cent in capital expenditure from the bud-

get estimate (BE) of Rs 22,000 crore for FY 2023-24 to Rs 15,000 crore for FY 2024-25.

The government's current debt is about Rs 40,000 crore. But, this is not all. We also need to add the loans taken by its departments such as Delhi Jal Board (DJB): Rs 70,000 crore and Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC): Rs 10,000 crore as the liability for servicing those debts is vested entirely in the NCT government. This takes the total debt of Delhi to Rs 120,000 crore.

The situation has come to such a pass that CM Atishi has approached the Centre seeking a loan of Rs 10,000 crore from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). The precariousness of the state's finances has a lot to do with the freebies which are estimated to cost about Rs 11,000 crore during 2024-25. Add to this at least Rs 30,000 crore being the impact of guarantees given during this election, freebies alone would dent the exchequer by Rs 41,000 crore annually.

Delhi government could be starting at an FD of close to Rs 50,000 crore. And, its debt would balloon to Rs 150,000 crore. The ball won't stop here. When used to doles, people will want more and more and parties can't say no. When, even a die-hard reformist and fiscal disciplinarian like Modi is forced to give way to freebies (courtesy, of Kejriwal's brand of politics), things will only worsen. What if people stop working (very likely when they get money sitting at home) and tax-payers stop paying taxes (likely when they see their earnings being frittered away in distributing doles to those who don't work)? The National Capital could be staring at fiscal disaster.

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

Neravu Scheme: A catalyst for social change

It is a transformative movement dedicated to changing lives through direct action, offering relief and assistance to bring about social and economic change

Philanthropy has always been a driving force behind social progress, bridging gaps and providing succour to those in need. Often, it is the initiative of an individual or an organisation that reaches out to support the underserved. Marginalised sections of society, often ill-equipped to fend for themselves, view such assistance in dire circumstances as a matter of life and death. Across the country, there are numerous examples of individuals and organisations stepping up to aid the needy. In southern India, Mangalore, Karnataka, the MRG Group - a prominent business conglomerate with interests spanning hospitality, real estate and finance - has taken a remarkable step in this direction through its transfor-

mative initiative, the "Neravu". **The Neravu Initiative: A Lifeline for Thousands** Launched in 2019 with an initial allocation of Rs 1.25 crore, the Neravu has grown significantly in scope and impact. It has reached a remarkable milestone, disbursing Rs 6 crore in financial aid to support 3000 families and 60 organisations, benefiting approximately 15000 individuals.

The assistance provided - ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 1 lakh for individuals and up to Rs 25 lakh for organisations - addresses diverse needs, including medical emergencies, education, sports, and social welfare. What sets the initiative apart is its scale and robust framework, ensuring that aid reaches thousands of households. The "Neravu" program is



B K JHA

underpinned by a rigorous selection process to ensure the most deserving candidates receive support. An impartial committee meticulously reviews applications, prioritising critical medical cases, disabilities, and exceptional achievements in academics and sports. The programme extends beyond Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Shivamogga districts to

Kerala's Kasaragod district, showcasing its inclusive approach.

What is Neravu? The word Neravu means 'support' in Kannada, and this initiative lives up to its name as one of the largest corporate-run financial assistance programs in India. Designed to address the immediate and long-term challenges faced by economically disadvantaged communities, the focus is on: **1. Education:** Scholarships ensure access to quality education for underprivileged students. **2. Healthcare:** Financial aid covers critical treatments and surgeries for those unable to afford medical expenses. **3. Livelihood Enhancement:** Vocational training and resources empower individu-



als to achieve self-reliance. **Impact of the Neravu** Mangalore, a thriving port city known for its cultural diversity and economic activity, has witnessed a profound impact from the "Neravu". **Educational Opportunities:** Many students from low-income families have pursued higher education, thanks to scholarships. **Healthcare Access:** Critical

medical interventions have been made possible for individuals lacking access to quality healthcare. **Empowerment:** Vocational training programmes have enabled women to contribute to their households. The MRG Group has expanded the reach of the "Neravu", demonstrating how corporate philanthropy can transcend geographical boundaries. Empowering Communities Through Philanthropy The "Neravu" initiative's impact goes beyond immediate financial relief, fostering self-reliance and community upliftment. Beneficiaries have shared inspiring stories of transformation. For instance, Raj Lakshmi, a graduate from a nearby village and the eldest among her sib-

lings, completed her studies with the Neravu's support. Now employed as a computer instructor, she supports her family of five. "I could complete my course because of 'Neravu', and today, I am able to earn a living and help my family," she shares. **Making a Difference** The Neravu exemplifies how corporate initiatives can address pressing issues while fostering inclusive growth. Neravu's structured approach ensures that aid reaches the right people. In a world grappling with economic disparities, programs like "Neravu" serve as a beacon of hope. By addressing the root causes of poverty and empowering individuals, the initiative has brought tangible change to countless families.

Dr K Prakash Shetty, Founder & Chairman MRG Group, the visionary behind this movement, emphasises that philanthropy is not merely about monetary aid but about fostering a culture of self-reliance and social participation. Under his leadership, the MRG Group has blended business success with meaningful social impact, setting a benchmark in corporate social responsibility. The "Neravu" stands as a testament to the transformative power of structured philanthropy. By addressing fundamental challenges and empowering individuals, it inspires a collective commitment to building a more equitable society.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views expressed are personal)

Hamas frees 8 more hostages

Israel puts prisoner release on hold

PTI ■ KHAN YOUNIS

Hamas-led militants freed eight hostages on Thursday as part of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, but the chaotic handover of some of the captives, who masked militants shuttled through a rowdy crowd of thousands, drew an angry protest from Israel.

Israel was supposed to release 110 Palestinian prisoners later in the day, including around 30 serving life sentences for deadly attacks against Israelis. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the move was put on hold until the "safe release" of hostages can be assured.



A crowd greets Islamic Jihad and Hamas fighters as they arrive for the hand-over of Israeli and Thai hostages to the Red Cross in the south Gaza Strip town of Khan Younis, Thursday. AP/PTI

Over six weeks, Hamas is to free 33 Israeli hostages — roughly one third of those held — in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. As part of the truce, Israel has also pulled its forces back from major cities and allowed hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians to return to their homes in war-torn Gaza.

gated to watch, some from the tilted rooftops of bombed-out buildings. Footage showed hostage Arbel Yehoud looking stunned as masked militants hustled her through the shouting crowd, sometimes pushing people back.

7 attack, hugging and crying with her parents. Earlier, people cheered, clapped and whistled in a square in Tel Aviv as Berger's handover unfolded on big screens next to a large clock that's counted the days the hostages have been in captivity. Some held signs saying: "Agam we're waiting for you at home."

Gaza when she was not. The United States, Egypt and Qatar, which brokered the ceasefire after a year of tough negotiations, resolved the dispute with an agreement that Yehoud would be released on Thursday. Another three hostages, all men, are set to be freed Saturday along with dozens more Palestinian prisoners.

The sides are also to begin talks on a second phase aimed at winding down the deadliest and most destructive war ever fought between Israel and Hamas, whose October 7, 2023, attack into Israel sparked the fighting. The hostages released Thursday included a female Israeli soldier, a 29-year-old Israeli woman, an 80-year-old Israeli man, and five Thai labourers who had been working in southern Israel when they were captured.

About 20 friends of Yehoud gathered in southern Israel watched as the tense scene unfolded on live television. Some cried. Others had their hands over their eyes or mouths. One friend yelled at the news anchor to "shut up" when she said the situation appeared dangerous. The crowd then burst into tears after she was taken over to the Red Cross. Netanyahu condemned the "shocking scenes" and called on international mediators to ensure the safety of hostages in future releases.

At the square, the White House's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, met briefly with families of hostages. "My message is that we're with the families and that we care for them," he told The Associated Press. A number of foreign workers were taken captive along with dozens of Israeli civilians and soldiers during Hamas' attack. Twenty-three Thais were among more than 100 hostages released during a week-long ceasefire in November 2023. Israel says three Thais remain in captivity, two of whom are believed to be dead.

On Monday, Israel began allowing Palestinians to return to northern Gaza, the most heavily destroyed part of the territory, and hundreds of thousands streamed back. Many found only mounds of rubble where their homes had been. In the first phase of the ceasefire, Hamas is set to release a total of 33 Israeli hostages, including women, children, older adults and sick or wounded men, in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israel says Hamas has confirmed that eight of the hostages to be released in this phase are dead.

Hours later, a chaotic scene unfolded at a handover of the other seven hostages in the southern city of Khan Younis, in front of the destroyed home of slain Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. Hundreds of militants from Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad group arrived with a convoy, and thousands of people

The other Israeli released Thursday was Gadi Moses, 80. Five Thai nationals were freed and identified by Israel as Watchara Srioum, 33, Pongsak Tanna, 36, Sathian Suwankam, 35, Bannawat Seathao, 27, and Surasak Lamnau, 32. The Israeli army confirmed all eight were brought into Israel. The government released footage of Berger, who was among five young, female soldiers abducted in the October

Among the people set to be released from prisons is Zakaria Zubeidi, a prominent former militant leader and theatre director who took part in a dramatic jailbreak in 2021 before being rearrested days later. Israel said Yehoud was supposed to have been freed on Saturday and delayed the opening of crossings to northern

The Israeli military says it killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence, and that it went to great lengths to try to spare civilians. It blames civilian deaths on Hamas because its fighters operate in dense residential neighbourhoods and put military infrastructure near homes, schools and mosques. The Israeli offensive has transformed entire neighbourhoods into mounds of rubble, and it's unclear how or when anything will be rebuilt. Around 90 per cent of Gaza's population has been displaced, often multiple times, with hundreds of thousands of people living in squalid tent camps or shuttered schools.

Jet with 64 aboard collides with US Army helicopter

PTI ■ ARLINGTON

An American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and four crew members collided Wednesday with an Army helicopter while landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington, prompting a large search-and-rescue operation in the nearby Potomac River. There were multiple fatalities, according to a person familiar with the matter, but the precise number of victims was unclear as rescue crews hunted for any survivors. Three soldiers were onboard the helicopter, an Army official said.

helicopter on a training flight while on approach to an airport runway. It occurred in some of the most tightly controlled and monitored airspace in the world, just over three miles south of the White House and the Capitol. Investigators will try to piece together the aircrafts' final moments before their collision, including contact with air traffic controllers as well as a loss of altitude by the passenger jet.

Washington, with temperatures registering as high as 60 degrees Fahrenheit, following a stretch days earlier of intense cold and ice.

There was no immediate word on the cause of the collision, but all takeoffs and landings from the airport were halted as dive teams scoured the site and helicopters from law enforcement agencies across the region flew over the scene in methodical search for bodies.

American Airlines Flight 5342 was inbound to Reagan National at an altitude of about 400 feet and a speed of about 140 miles per hour when it suffered a rapid loss of altitude over the Potomac River, according to data from its radio transponder. The Canadian-made Bombardier CRJ-701 twin-engine jet, manufactured in 2004, can be configured to carry up to 70 passengers. A few minutes before landing, air traffic controllers asked the arriving commercial jet if it could land on the shorter Runway 33 at Reagan National and the pilots said they were able. Controllers then cleared the plane to land on Runway 33. Flight tracking sites showed the plane adjust its approach to the new runway.

On Wednesday, the Potomac River was 36 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The National Weather Service reported that wind gusts of up to 25 mph were possible in the area throughout the evening. American Airlines CEO Robert Isom expressed "deep sorrow" for the crash and said the company was focused on the needs of passengers, crew, first responders and families and loved ones of those involved. Some 300 first responders were on scene. Inflatable rescue boats were launched into the Potomac River from a point along the George Washington Parkway, just north of the airport, and first responders set up light towers from the shore to illuminate the area near the collision site. At least a half-dozen boats were scanning the water using searchlights.

"We are going to recover our fellow citizens," District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser said at a somber news conference at the airport Thursday morning in which she declined to say how many bodies had been recovered. Sen. Roger Marshall of Kansas said, "When one person dies it's a tragedy, but when many, many, many people die it's an unbearable sorrow." President Donald Trump said he had been "fully briefed on this terrible accident" and, referring to the passengers, added, "May God Bless their souls."

Less than 30 seconds before the crash, an air traffic controller asked the helicopter if it had the arriving plane in sight. The controller made another radio call to the helicopter moments later: "PAT 25 pass behind the CRJ." Seconds after that, the two aircraft collided.

"It's a highly complex operation," said D.C. fire chief John Donnelly. "The conditions out there are extremely rough for the responders." The US Army described the helicopter as a UH-60 Blackhawk based at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. The helicopter was on a training flight. Military aircraft frequently conduct training flights in and around the congested and heavily-restricted airspace around the nation's capital for familiarization and continuity of government planning.

Passengers on the flight included a group of figure skaters, their coaches and family members who were returning from a development camp that followed the US Figure Skating Championships in Wichita. "We are devastated by this unspeakable tragedy and hold the victims' families closely in our hearts," US Figure Skating said in a statement.

The plane's radio transponder stopped transmitting about 2,400 feet short of the runway, roughly over the middle of the river. Video from an observation camera at the nearby Kennedy Center showed two sets of lights consistent with aircraft appearing to join in a fireball. "I know that flight. I've flown it several times myself," said Sen. Jerry Moran of Kansas. He said he expected that many people in Wichita would know people who were on the flight. "This is a very personal circumstance," he said. The collision occurred on a warm winter evening in

The crash is serving as a major test for two of the Trump administration's newest agency leaders. Pete Hegseth, sworn in days ago as defence secretary, posted on social media that an investigation has been "launched immediately" by the Army and the Defence Department. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, just sworn in earlier this week, said at a somber news conference at the airport early Thursday that his agency would provide all possible resources to the investigation.

ICC has Putin, Netanyahu in its sights, yet its courtrooms empty

PTI ■ THE HAGUE

For a few hours last week, the International Criminal Court looked poised to take a Libyan warlord into custody. Instead, member state Italy sent the head of a notorious network of detention centres back home. That has left the court without a single trial ahead for the first time since it arrested its first suspect in 2006. And it's now facing serious external pressure, notably from US President Donald Trump. Though its docket remains empty, the court still wields an USD 200 million annual budget and a large number of legal eagles keen to lay their hands on Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The point of the ICC is to investigate and prosecute those most responsible for international crimes." Empty courtrooms show how hard it is to end impunity. The only permanent global court of last resort to prosecute individuals responsible for the world's most heinous atrocities has not been in this position for almost two decades. Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga became the first person convicted by court in The Hague. In 2012, he was sentenced to 14 years in prison for conscripting child soldiers. Since Lubanga's trial began, the court has had a slow but steady stream of proceedings. To date it has convicted 11 people and three verdicts are pending. It has issued 32 unsealed arrest warrants. Those suspects range from Netanyahu and Putin to Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony and Gamlet

Guchmazov, accused of torture in the breakaway region of South Ossetia in Georgia. But it faces numerous challenges. Trump, on his first day in office, reinstated an executive order from his previous term sanctioning court staff. A more damaging piece of legislation, which would sanction the court as an institution, has passed one chamber of Congress but is stalled in the Senate for now due to opposition from Democrats. The previous chief prosecutor, Gambian Fatou Bensouda, described being the subject of "hug-style tactics" while she was in office. The court was the victim of a cybersecurity attack in 2023 that left systems offline for months and some technical issues have still not been resolved. In 2022, the Dutch intelligence service said it had foiled a sophisticated attempt by a Russian spy using a false

Brazilian identity to work as an intern at the court. The current prosecutor, British lawyer Karim Khan, has requested a record-breaking 24 arrest warrants. But many suspects — like Putin — will probably remain beyond the reach of the court. Neither Russia nor Israel are members of the court and do not accept its jurisdiction, making it highly unlikely those countries would extradite their citizens, let alone their leaders, to the ICC. "They haven't issued arrest warrants for people who they are likely to arrest," says Mark Kersten, an international criminal justice expert at University of the Fraser Valley in Canada. Ultimately, countries are responsible for physically apprehending people and bringing them to The Hague, says Chaikel, whose group oversees nearly 200 human rights organisations worldwide.

Bill introduced in US Senate to restrict birthright citizenship

Washington (PTI): A group of Republican Senators has introduced a bill in the US Senate to restrict birthright citizenship to the children of illegal immigrants and non-immigrants on temporary visas. According to Senators Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz and Katie Britt, who introduced the bill, the exploitation of birthright citizenship is a major pull factor for illegal immigration and a weakness for national security. The US is one of only 33 countries in the world with no restrictions on birthright citizenship, they said. The legislative move comes after an executive order on the matter, signed by President Donald Trump on the first day of his presidency, has been blocked by a federal judge in Washington state. The Center for Immigration Studies estimates that in 2023, there were 2,25,000 to 2,50,000 births to illegal immigrants, amounting to close to seven per cent of births in the US. It is long overdue for the United States to change its policy on birthright citizenship

because it is being abused in so many ways, said Graham. "One example is birth tourism, where wealthy individuals from China and other nations come to the United States simply to have a child who will be an American citizen. When you look at the magnets that draw people to America, birthright citizenship is one of the largest," he said. "I also appreciate President Trump's executive order to address birthright citizenship. It is time for the United States to align itself with the rest of the world and restrict this practice once and for all," Graham said. "The promise of American citizenship should not incentivise illegal migration, but that's exactly what has happened for far too long," said Britt. "Senator Lindsey Graham's and my Birthright Citizenship Act would codify President Trump's commonsense stance and end the abuse of birthright citizenship that I do not believe is consistent with the original meaning of the 14th Amendment's Citizenship Clause," she added. "This will protect our nation's sovereignty, disincen-

tivise illegal migration, and ensure America's citizenship practices are stronger and better aligned with peer countries around the globe," Britt said. The three Senators said in September 2024, two individuals from California were found guilty in a "birth tourism" scheme. Predominantly Chinese clients paid the operators of a "maternity hotel" tens of thousands of dollars to come to the US to give birth. Clients were coached on how to lie during the admissions process. A 2022 Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee report found a birthing company catering to the wives of Russian oligarchs, celebrities, athletes and public figures. The Birthright Citizenship Act of 2025 specifies who can receive citizenship by virtue of their birth in the United States, including children born to at least one parent who is either a citizen or national of the US, a lawful permanent resident of the US, or an alien performing active service in the armed forces. This bill only applies to children born after the date of enactment.



M23 rebels patrol in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Wednesday. PTI

Trump talks so much that WH stenographers, everyone else struggling to keep up

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The White House stenographers have a problem. Donald Trump is talking so much, the people responsible for transcribing his public remarks are struggling to keep up with all the words. There were more than 22,000 on Inauguration Day, then another 17,000 when Trump visited disaster sites in North Carolina and California. It's enough to strain the ears and fingers of even the most dedicated stenographer, especially after four years of Joe Biden's relative quiet. Now there are discussions about hiring additional staff to keep up with the workload, according to people with knowledge of the conversations who insisted in anonymity to discuss internal matters. The flood of words is one of the most visible — or audible — shifts from Biden to Trump,

who craves the spotlight and understands better than most politicians that attention is a form of power. He's been speaking nearly nonstop since starting his second term, drowning out dissenting voices and leaving his opponents struggling to be heard. Take Wednesday, for example. During a signing ceremony for legislation to accelerate deportations, Trump, a Republican, talked up his accomplishments, claimed Hamas was using US-funded condoms to make bombs in Gaza, defended his administration's efforts to freeze federal spending and reduce the government workforce, veered through descriptions of migrant violence and made the surprise announcement that Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, would be used as a detention centre for people who are in the US illegally. Trump's commentary remains

laden with falsehoods, including baseless allegations about voter fraud and assertions that California water policies worsened the recent wildfires. Sometimes he speaks off the cuff about consequential geopolitical matters, such as a recent suggestion that Palestinians should be displaced from Gaza while the enclave is rebuilt. It can be hard to know when to take him seriously, like when he muses about serving a third term, which the US Constitution does not allow. But now that Trump is back in the presidency, it's hard to ignore him. "He's dictating the news on his terms," said Michael LaRosa, who worked as a television producer before serving as a spokesperson for former first lady Jill Biden. "He's become America's assignment editor." Most presidents try to start their terms with a bang, seiz-

ing the moment when their influence could be at its peak. However, Trump is in a different league. Biden, a Democrat, spent 2 hours and 36 minutes talking on camera and used 24,259 words in his first week in office four years ago, according to numbers generated by Factbase. Trump's comparable stats: nearly 7 hours and 44 minutes and 81,235 words last week. That's longer than watching the original "Star Wars" trilogy back-to-back-to-back, and more words than "Macbeth," "Hamlet" and "Richard III" combined. It's also much more than when first Trump took office for his first term eight years ago. Back then, he was only on camera talking for 3 hours and 41 minutes and spoke 33,571 words. Trump has spent decades practising the best ways to get people to pay attention to him. As

Trump orders 30k migrant detention facility

Washington (PTI): US President Donald Trump has signed a presidential memorandum to set up a 30,000-person migrant facility at Guantanamo Bay to detain "high-priority criminal aliens." The Guantanamo Bay facility, which has so far been used to hold terrorists, will now also house illegal immigrants with criminal records. The signing took place on Wednesday, with Trump directing the Departments of Defence and Homeland Security to prepare the facility. According to the memorandum, he ordered the expansion of the Migrant Operations Center at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to accommodate "high-priority criminal aliens" and address related enforcement needs. "Most people don't even know about it."

B'desh minority rights group blames interim govt for neglect

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh's largest minority rights group accused the country's interim government on Thursday of failing to protect religious and ethnic minorities from attacks and harassment, a claim the government has denied. The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council said the government headed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus is also using state institutions to suppress minority groups. Yunus took over after a student-led uprising last year in which hundreds of people died forced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee to India on August 5, ending her 15-year rule. The council earlier said 2,010 incidents of communal violence took place across the Muslim-majority country between August 4 and 20. The Yunus-led government disputed the claim, saying that most of the incidents were caused by "political reasons" and not by communal issues. Traditionally, Hindus and other members of minority groups have been seen as supporters of Hasina's Bangladesh Awami League party. In a news conference on Thursday, the council reiterated its claim of earlier attacks and said 174 new incidents of communal violence had taken place between August 21 and December 31 last year in which 23 members of minority groups were killed and nine women were raped. It said other incidents involved arson, vandalism, looting and forcible takeover of property and businesses. It said at least 15 members of minority groups were either arrested or tortured for allegedly undermining Islam. Manindra Kumar Nath, the group's act-

ing general secretary, accused the government of manipulating state institutions to harass people from minority groups. "We have observed that the interim government has begun using various important state institutions to carry out discriminatory actions against minorities. This is unexpected and undesirable from a government that was established based on the anti-discrimination student movement," he said. The council said minority groups were being targeted in a systematic way, and called for the release of a jailed Hindu leader. Nath said the leader, Chinmoy Das Prabh, was being deprived of his legal right to bail in a sedition case. He is also known as Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari. Nath said many minority leaders had gone into hiding because of false charges against them. The interim government has said they face specific charges and were not targeted for any communal reason. Under Yunus, Bangladesh has been going through a tense period with Hindu-majority India over minority issues, sparking protests and counter-protests.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client S. Mahan Singh owner of the SECOND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHT AREA 7550 YARDS PROPERTY NO. 09-15, 5 VILLAGE BASA DARAPUR JANTA COLONY SHIVAJI VIHAR NEW DELHI and S. Mahan Singh purchase property from S. Mahan Singh Khurana vide Notarized GPA, ATS and will dated 12.01.2012. Now S. Mahan Singh wants to sell aforesaid property. And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void if any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and takeover the same and after his claim is understood within 15 days of this publication.
AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760, Anand Commercial Centre, New Delhi-75
Mobile No. - 9899013913

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi
TENDER NOTICE Date: 31.01.2025
Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following job from all bidders.

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of (₹) EMD	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/25-26/ RK/PR/SS/1240	SUPPLY OF 5680 NOS. 9M (160KG) PSC POLES & 2110 NOS. 11M (365 KG) PSC POLES.	4.24 Crore	8.48 Lakhs	20.02.2025 15:00 HRS	20.02.2025 15:15 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1180/-
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com Head (Contracts & Materials)
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Mehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527
Telephone No.: +91 11 4910 7235 | Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform general public that Mr. Ashish Rajpal & Mr. Kapil Rajpal have acquired Property Flaring No. B-153, area measuring 200 Sq. Yds., situated at Mahiya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017 by way of Relinquishment Deed dated 30.12.2024 as Document No. 559. Documents related to the above said property has been misplaced i.e. Sale Deed dated 16.12.1978 duly Registered as 4992. Anyone who find the said documents shall handover the same to the Manager of Axis Finance Ltd. Office No. F-3 Third Floor Sector-3, Noida 201301.
Now, Mr. Ashish Rajpal, Mr. Kapil Rajpal & Mrs. Phool Rajpal availing loan on above said property from Axis Finance Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised with 7 days of this publication to Mr. Pramod Kumar Singh (Advocate), AccuLaw Source LLP, Unit No. S-2, U-2, 2nd Floor, built on Plot No. 4 and 5, Anand Commercial Center, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110063 or contact: +91 9560399093 (M)

PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to Arbitral Award dated 10.02.2006 passed in arbitration proceedings among the legal heirs of Late Sh. Ram Singh Khurana R/O C-3/11, Ashok Vihar, Phase-II, New Delhi; legal heirs of Late Sh. Ajit Khurana R/O B-2/10, Ashok Vihar, Phase-II, New Delhi and Group of Sh. Gurcharan Singh, Late Sh. Bhagwan Singh R/O 125, Shree Punjabi Society, Andheri, Mumbai and A-28, Vishal Enclave, New Delhi all rights and entitlements in relation to Property in Khurana No. 93 at Pooval Thala, Adarsh Nagar ("Property") have vested in Group of Sh. Gurcharan Singh, comprising of ARINDER SINGH, GURINDER SINGH and PARVINDER SINGH. The public at large may take note that if any entry enters into any transaction for sale of the Property without the knowledge of the Undersigned, the same would not be recognized by the Group of Sh. Gurcharan Singh and will be construed unlawful and accordingly, will attract legal action, both civil & criminal which shall solely be at the risk and cost of such entry.
Sd/-
Date: 30.01.2025 Gurinder Singh, Parvinder Singh, Gurcharan Singh Arora

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that my client Smt Prabha Devi W/o Sh. Balam Singh is purchasing a property bearing No. C-23, Out of Khurana No. 407, Situated at Village Dayalpur Mazra Binahour, in the Abad of Gali No. 7, C-Block, Dayalpur extn., Village Shahdara, Delhi 110094, area measuring 56.1/2 square yards i.e. 47.48 Sq. Mtrs. The ownership of the said property is in the name of Sh. Ram chander alias Ram Chander yagi Sh. Sh. Mohan Ram Yogi and the same was transferred by Sh. Braham Singh S/o Nand Singh on behalf of Sh. Bhagwat Prasad through Notarized GPA etc. dated 18/01/2001. If anybody has any objection/s upon said property/its ownership and title/s and Mortgage/Litigation, kindly inform the undersigned in writing within 7 days of publication of the notice, failing which the property would be considered as unencumbered and no objection will be entertained thereafter.
Mahender Kumar (Advocate) Ch. No. 6-42, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi 110032, Mob. 9350101971.

Format C-1
DECLARATION ABOUT CRIMINAL CASES
(As per the publication dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No.536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)
Name and Address of Candidate: **RAGINI NAYAK W/O ASHOK BASOYA, IA-10C, ASHOK VIHAR, PHASE-I, DELHI-110052**
Name of Political Party: **Indian National Congress**
Name of Election: **DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTION-2025**
Name of Constituency: **WAZIRPUR-AC-17**
I, **RAGINI NAYAK**, a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

A) PENDING CRIMINAL CASES

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and Dated	Status of case (s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	JMFC-02, Central District, Tis Hazari Courts	119/M/2009 289901/2016 23/12/2024	Pending	U/S 147/148/427/186/332 IPC
2.	JMFC-07, PHC/ND	16471/2018 05/09/2024	Pending	U/S 186/188/353/332/34 IPC

B) DETAILS ABOUT CASES OF CONVICTION FOR CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of Order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment Imposed
1.	NA	NA	NA

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that Ishan Arora & Raj Kumar (hereinafter called the seller/s) claims to be owner and in possession of Second Floor of Prop. No. D5-164, Kharsa No. 1590/624, Chandrawali, Shandara, Bhola Nath Nagar, Gali No. 9, Ilaiga Shandara Delhi-32 (herein after called the said property) by virtue of sale deed dated 12.04.2023 Regd. Doc. No. 3544 executed by Deepa Sharma, said Deepa Sharma had inherited the said property after the death of Radha Sharma and said Radha Sharma was the owner of said property by virtue of sale deed dated 29.05.2003 Regd. Doc. No. 3696, said Seller/s have agreed to sell the said Property to Mohit Chopra and said Mohit Chopra has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients DFC FIRST BANK LTD., Rajendra Place Branch, any person's having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.
Vishal Diwan, Advocate
For Diwan and Company LLP
Advocates and Solicitors
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex, N.D.-19
Mobile No. 9813939999

Public Notice
This is to inform the general public that Mr. Ashish Verma is the owner of Plot No. 198, area measuring 58 sq. yards, i.e. 81.93 sq. meters, Two Floors Covered area 153.86 sq. ft. 1) out of Kharsa No.511K, situated at Mohalla Neeray Road in the village Dain, Pargana, Taluka, District, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. through Will dated 07.08.2020 executed by Mr. Ratan Lal in favour of Mr. Ashish Verma in respect of area measuring 49 sq. yds. and by Way of Succession after death of Pootan Chand and Giti Deed dated 21.01.2025 as doc. No. 3641 executed by Mrs. Rina Verma in favour of Mr. Ashish Verma in respect of said Plot.
Mr. Ashish Verma is in the process of mortgaging the said plot with Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 07 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of the 07-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-4/4A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-301683; e-mail: accounts@lvorth.in

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Poorima Chaudhary who is the owner of Western Side back Portion of Ground floor, measuring 142 sq.yds., entire upper ground floor and entire third floor with roof rights, both area measuring 284 sq.yds., of Property No.61, Kharsa No.39, Suraj Nagar Azadpur, Delhi who became owner vide Relinquishment Deed dated 08.08.2023 (Doc. No.13244) and same to be financed by Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company Ltd. That (1) Original Sale deed dated 20-02-1983 (Doc. No.2456) in favour of Mr. B.S. Mittal, (2) Death Certificate of Late Mr. B.S. Mittal, (3) Original Regd. GPA Dated 20-12-1982 (Doc. No.3991) in favour of Mrs. Asha Mittal & (4) Original Will in favour of Mrs. Usha Chaudhary has lost/significantly. If any person having any type of claim/right/ title/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, at the address mentioned below, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.
Lucem Legal LLP, B-83B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 2 Noida, UP-201301>Contact:0120-4269379

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that Sh. Yogesh Datta and Smt. Sudhanshu Datta are the owners of Flat No. A-16, on the 3rd Floor, without its roof rights, land area measuring 1630 Sq. Ft., i.e. 151.427 Sq. Mtrs., situated at Biji Apartments, Faridkot, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi-110033. Sh. Yogesh Datta acquired the said Flat vide GPA in Block Relinquishment Deed No. 2023 as Doc. No. 278 executed by Smt. Kamlesh Datta in favour of Sh. Yogesh Datta in respect of Flat No. A-16 and Shop No. 9F, area measuring 100 Sq. Ft. and WILL dated 20.05.2015 executed by Sh. Satya Sudhanshu Datta in favour of Smt. Sudhanshu Datta. Sh. Yogesh Datta in respect of Flat No. A-16, Biji Apartment and Shop No. 9F, Smt. Sudhanshu Datta acquired the 30% Share of the Said Flat vide Gift Deed dated 30.12.2012 doc. No. 2023/15/01/20453 executed by Sh. Yogesh Datta in favour of Smt. Sudhanshu Datta in respect of 2% mortgage Share of Property No. A-16, On Third Floor, without its roof rights, land area measuring 1630 Sq. Ft., i.e. 151.427 Sq. Mtrs. and Gift Deed dated 14.02.2024 executed by Sh. Yogesh Datta in favour of Smt. Sudhanshu Datta in respect of 2% mortgage Share of Property No. A-16, On Third Floor, without its roof rights, area measuring 12.115 Sq. Mtrs. Sh. Yogesh Datta and Smt. Sudhanshu Datta intend to transfer the ownership of Said flat by way of Sale Deed to Mr. Punit Malhotra. Subsequently, Mr. Punit Malhotra is in the process of mortgaging the said Flat with Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 15 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 15-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 15 days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-4/4A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-301683; e-mail: accounts@lvorth.in

ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
प्लॉट संख्या-01, सैक्टर-नॉलेज पार्क-4, ग्रेटर नौएडा सिटी, जिला-गौतम बुद्ध नगर (उत्तरप्र)
सार्वजनिक सूचना
ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अन्तर्गत Ms Rudra Buildwell Projects Pvt. Ltd. भूखण्ड संख्या-GH-2B, Sector-01, Greater Noida को दिनांक 12.12.2012 को मानचित्र स्वीकृति प्रदान की गयी थी। उपरोक्त विकासकर्ता द्वारा (Group Housing Project) का पुरोक्षित मानचित्र हेतु आवेदन संख्या-72553 दिनांक 04.11.2024 के माध्यम से आवेदन किया गया है। तत्कम में UP-Apartment Act-2010, Amendment 2016 in Section-4 Sub Section-B के अन्तर्गत परियोजना के आवंटियों से आपत्ति/सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने का प्रावधान है। इस संबंध में विकासकर्ता द्वारा प्रस्तुत स्वीकृति मानचित्र एवं Declarations as per UP-Apartment Act-2010 परीक्षण किसी भी कार्यदिनस में सुबह 9:30 से सायं 6:00 बजे के मध्य नियोजन विभाग में तथा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट पर किया जा सकता है।
अतः उपरोक्त परियोजना के आवंटियों द्वारा Sanction Map एवं Declarations as per UP-Apartment Act-2010 के संबन्ध में सूचना प्रकाशित करने के 30 दिनों के अन्दर आपत्तियाँ/सुझाव आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उपरोक्त के विहितार्थ अपनी आपत्तियाँ लिखित रूप में अपने आवेदन पत्र, नाम, पता एवं दूरभाष नम्बर के साथ कार्यदिनस समथ व कार्यदिनस में ग्रेटर नौएडा प्राधिकरण में सूचना प्रशासनिक कार्यालय, भूखण्ड संख्या-1, नॉलेज पार्क-4, ग्रेटर नौएडा में स्थित महाप्रबन्धक (नियोजन/वास्तु) को सन्बोधित करके हुए सूचना प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिनों के अन्दर जमा करायी जा सकती है।
महाप्रबन्धक (नियो/वास्तु)
ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mukesh Rani, Mother of No.10136983X Rfn Deepak, R/o- Vill- Bhambhewa, Dist-Jhajjar, Haryana- 124021, have changed my name from Mukesh Rani to Mukesh Kumari, vide affidavit dated 30/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1354)C
I, Dharendra Singh, Father Of- No.17007355M NK Amit Kumar, R/o- VPO- Gotka, Teh- Sardhana, Dist- Meerut, U.P.- 250344, declare that in my son's service records, my D.O.B. is wrongly written as 01/01/1964 whereas my correct D.O.B. is 01/01/1961.
PD(1355)C
I, Bimlesh Devi Mother Of- No.17007355M NK Amit Kumar, R/o- VPO- Gotka, Teh- Sardhana, Dist- Meerut, U.P.- 250344, declare that in my son's service records, my D.O.B. is wrongly written as 01/01/1962 whereas his correct DOB is 01 Jan 1953.
PD(1357)C
I, Hav Rajendra Sharma, R/o-Vill- Naredi, Post- Jindoli, Teh- Mundawar, Dist- Alwar, Rajasthan- 301404, declare that Sundar Lal Sharma is my father, in my Army records, his DOB is wrongly mentioned as 01 July 1956 whereas his correct DOB is 01 Jul 1963.
PD(1358)C

REPLACEMENT OF DEFECTIVE GLUED JOIN
E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/11 of 2025 Dated: 28-01-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Brief Description of Item:** Replacement of defective Glued Join in Lumding- Chandranathpur section under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/II Lumding (Total = 500 Nos). **Tender Value: ₹1,08,99,539.84/- Earnest Money: ₹2,04,500/- Date & Time of Closing of Tender: 15.00 hrs. of 24-02-2025 & will be opened at 15.00 hrs. of 25-02-2025.** The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. of 24-02-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in
DRM (W), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that Sh. Yogesh Datta and Smt. Sudhanshu Datta are the owners of Flat No. A-16, on the 3rd Floor, without its roof rights, land area measuring 1630 Sq. Ft., i.e. 151.427 Sq. Mtrs., situated at Biji Apartments, Faridkot, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi-110033. Sh. Yogesh Datta acquired the said Flat vide GPA in Block Relinquishment Deed No. 2023 as Doc. No. 278 executed by Smt. Kamlesh Datta in favour of Sh. Yogesh Datta in respect of Flat No. A-16 and Shop No. 9F, area measuring 100 Sq. Ft. and WILL dated 20.05.2015 executed by Sh. Satya Sudhanshu Datta in favour of Smt. Sudhanshu Datta. Sh. Yogesh Datta in respect of Flat No. A-16, Biji Apartment and Shop No. 9F, Smt. Sudhanshu Datta acquired the 30% Share of the Said Flat vide Gift Deed dated 30.12.2012 doc. No. 2023/15/01/20453 executed by Sh. Yogesh Datta in favour of Smt. Sudhanshu Datta in respect of 2% mortgage Share of Property No. A-16, On Third Floor, without its roof rights, land area measuring 1630 Sq. Ft., i.e. 151.427 Sq. Mtrs. and Gift Deed dated 14.02.2024 executed by Sh. Yogesh Datta in favour of Smt. Sudhanshu Datta in respect of 2% mortgage Share of Property No. A-16, On Third Floor, without its roof rights, area measuring 12.115 Sq. Mtrs. Sh. Yogesh Datta and Smt. Sudhanshu Datta intend to transfer the ownership of Said flat by way of Sale Deed to Mr. Punit Malhotra. Subsequently, Mr. Punit Malhotra is in the process of mortgaging the said Flat with Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 15 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 15-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 15 days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-4/4A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-301683; e-mail: accounts@lvorth.in

PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Undersigned are Directors and Shareholders of M/S R S Ajit Singh & Co. Private Limited ("Company") having its registered office at C-91/10, Wazirpur Industrial Area, Delhi. The Undersigned, the Undersigned, have received information that Mrs. Gurpal Khurana, acting on the instructions of one group of shareholders is seeking to transfer the Property from the Company to a third party on completed unconsolidable terms and in absolute contravention of the interests of the Company. The Undersigned in their capacity as Directors and Shareholders of the Company are taking steps to withdraw the Board Resolutions passed in favour of Mrs. Gurpal Khurana to take steps on behalf of the Company. The public at large may take note that if any entity/third party enters any transaction for sale of the Property with Mrs. Gurpal Khurana, the same would not be recognized by the Undersigned and the Company and will be construed unlawful and accordingly, will attract legal action, both civil & criminal which shall solely be at the risk and cost of such third party/entity.
Sd/-
Date: 30.01.2025 Gurinder Singh, Parvinder Singh, Gurcharan Singh Arora

Pune Municipal Corporation - Health Department
Tender Cell Department
Extend Tender Advertisement

Sr.	Particulars	Date
1.	Tender Form Sale Period	31/01/2025
2.	Tender Form Receiving Period	31/01/2025
3.	Bid Submission End Date	05/02/2025
4.	Tender Opening Date	06/02/2025

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE	CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / END (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	MODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	GURU JAMBHESHWAR UNIVERSITY HISAR	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF AIR CONDITIONERS AND STABILIZERS UNDER BUY BACK IN LABORATORIES OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, CUSST, HISAR	03.02.2025	17.02.2025	6.50 LACS	https://www.gust.ac.in	01662-263173 cse@gust.org

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO 32154-A-127-7

Pune Municipal Corporation - Health Department
Tender Cell Department
Extend Tender Advertisement

Sr.	Particulars	Date
1.	Tender Form Sale Period	31/01/2025
2.	Tender Form Receiving Period	31/01/2025
3.	Bid Submission End Date	05/02/2025
4.	Tender Opening Date	06/02/2025

GOVERNMENT OF GOA, OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WORKS DIVISION XVII (WS), PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, ALTO-PORVORIM, BARDEZ, GOA
e-TENDER NOTICE
No. PWD/DXVII/WS/ASW/F24-E/22/2024-25 Dated : 30/01/2025
1. The last date online submission is 07/02/2025 upto 15.00 hrs.
2. The date & time of opening of online tender is 10/02/2025 after 11.30 hrs. in the office of the Executive Engineer WDXVII (WS) P.W.D. Alto-Porvorim Goa.
For more details please contact the office of the Executive Engineer WDXVII (WS). PWD Alto Porvorim Goa.
(Website:-<https://eprocure.goa.gov.in>)
DI/ADVT/1866/2025

Tender No.	Department Name	Name of Work	Tender Fees	B1/B2	EMD Amt.	Period of Work	Contact Person Mobile No.
PMC/Health/CMS/11/2024-25	Health	For Pune Municipal Corporations hospitals and dispensaries to purchase medical equipment and instruments For a period of 24 Months	17987/-	B-2		24 Months	Rahul Namevd Wadgaye 9881190696

Sd/-
Dr. Sanjeev Vavare
Asst. Medical Officer of Health
Pune Municipal Corporation
Advt No. -3/1342 Date - 30/01/2025

Sd/-
Dr. Nina Borade
Medical Officer of Health
Pune Municipal Corporation

JITF INFRALOGISTICS LIMITED
CIN - L60231CT2008PLC016434
Regd. Office: A-11 (7), Udaya Society, Sector-3, Tatibandh, Dharsiya, Raipur- 492099, Chattisgarh
Corp. Office: Jindal ITF centre, 28, Shivaji Marg, New Delhi- 110015

EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 (₹ Lacs)

S. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended			Consolidated		
		31.12.2024 Unaudited	30.09.2024 Unaudited	31.12.2023 Unaudited	31.12.2024 Unaudited	30.09.2024 Unaudited	31.12.2023 Unaudited
1	Total Income from operations	80.54	113.43	81.77	277.74	245.18	320.81
2	Net Profit/(loss) before tax and share of profit/(loss) of joint venture and exceptional items	1.26	16.78	4.27	24.66	19.21	22.99
3	Net Profit/(loss) before tax and after share of profit/(loss) of joint venture and exceptional items	1.26	16.78	4.27	24.66	19.21	22.99
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional items)	0.39	12.88	3.19	18.23	14.37	17.19
5	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional items) (Discontinued operation)	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period/year (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period/year (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	0.63	13.12	3.19	18.94	14.37	18.14
7	Paid up Equity Share Capital	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07
8	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as at Balance Sheet date	-	-	-	-	-	31,528.69
9	Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 2/- each) (Not annualised)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Continuing Operation							
(1) Basic (₹)		0.002*	0.05*	0.01*	0.07*	0.06*	0.07
(2) Diluted (₹)		0.002*	0.05*	0.01*	0.07*	0.06*	0.07
Discontinued Operation							
(1) Basic (₹)		-	-	-	-	-	-
(2) Diluted (₹)		-	-	-	-	-	-
Continuing & Discontinued Operation							
(1) Basic (₹)		0.002*	0.05*	0.01*	0.07*	0.06*	0.07
(2) Diluted (₹)		0.002*	0.05*	0.01*	0.07*	0.06*	0.07

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Standalone and Consolidated financial results for the quarter and nine months ended on 31st December, 2024 filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Standalone and Consolidated results for the quarter and nine months ended on 31st December, 2024 are available on the websites of stock exchanges (www.nseindia.com), (www.bseindia.com) and on the Company's website (www.jindalinfra.com).

On behalf of Board of Director of JITF Infalogistics Limited
Sd-
Amarendra Kumar Sinha
Whole Time Director
Date: 08/19/2025

KOTAK MAHINDRA PRIME LIMITED
POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)
Loan Account Name: Shanti Devi, Loan Account No. K1AP18687
WHEREAS, the undersigned Officer of the Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd. a Non-banking Finance Company duly registered with Reserve Bank of India having its Registered Office at: 27BKC, C 27, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai 400051 and Branch office at: Plot No. 7, 2nd Floor, Sector 125, Noida 201313, under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under sections 13(2) and 13 (12) read with Rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 has issued a Demand Notice dated 18-11-2024 to, 1. M/S SHANTI DEVI PUBLICATION INDIA PVT LTD, SF 01 PLOT NO. 16 SECTOR 5 RAJENDER NAGAR, SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201005. 2. ANIL KUMAR, 3. SHAIKALI SINGH, Both R/o - H NO. 3 22, SECTOR2, RAJENDER NAGAR SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH 201005. ALL ALSO AT : COMMERCIAL HALL NO 1, FIRST FLOOR, FRONT SIDE PLOT NO. 16, SITUATED AT SECTOR 05, T.H.A. RAJENDRA NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201005. To repay total outstanding amount aggregating to Rs.1,02,23,309.89/- (Rupees One Crore Two Lakh Twenty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Nine and Eight Nine Paise Only), payable as on 13-11-2024, towards the outstanding amount for Loan Account No. K1AP18687, together with further interest and other charges thereon at the contractual rates upon the footing of compound interest from 13-11-2024, till it's actual realization ("outstanding amount") within 60 days from the date of the said Demand Notice.
The aforementioned Borrower/

Challenges galore as Sitharaman, team frame FY26 Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, set to make history with her eighth consecutive Union Budget, has worked tirelessly with key officials, including Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, to prepare a budget of over ₹50 lakh crore for FY26. The Budget will have to address several challenges, including decelerating economic growth, falling value of Rupee against the US dollar and moderation in consumption demand. The economic growth is estimated to slow to a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in FY25. This is the lowest growth since the outbreak of the COVID pandemic which hit the world in 2019. Sitharaman, who has steered the Indian economy through many difficult phases, including once-in-a-century pandemic, is again confronted with economic deceleration, moderation in consumption,

stagnant private investment, and an uncertain geopolitical situation. On account of various factors, the rupee plunged to an all-time low of 86.7 per US dollar earlier this month. The team, assisting the Finance Minister to frame Budget proposals for 2025-26, includes Revenue Secretary Pandey, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth, Expenditure Secretary Manoj Govil, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Arunish Chawla, Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju, and Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran. The uphill task before the Finance Minister and her team would be to bolster growth without sacrificing fiscal prudence. The government is also expected to stick to the fiscal glide path of reducing the fiscal deficit to below 4.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product



(GDP) in FY26 amidst various headwinds. Finance Secretary and Revenue Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey: The oldest hand at the finance

ministry who has been involved with the Budget making process since October 2019 when he joined DIPAM as Secretary.

In September last year, Pandey, a 1987-batch IAS officer from Odisha cadre, was appointed the Finance Secretary. The Finance Ministry has six

departments -- Revenue, Economic Affairs, Expenditure, Financial Services, DIPAM and DPE -- and the senior most bureaucrat

in the ministry is designated as the Finance Secretary. He has been credited with divestment of Air India and PSU dividend policy among others during his tenure as DIPAM Secretary. Before serving as Secretary in the DIPAM, Pandey held many significant positions in the Union government and the Odisha government, in addition to serving a stint in the Regional Office of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). Economic Affairs Secretary, Ajay Seth: The second oldest hand at the finance ministry who has in past handled four Budgets since 2021. The Budget division under his departments anchors the entire Budget making process. The balance sheet matching between revenue and expenditure and borrowings are all matched by the Budget division under him. Seth is credited with heading

initiatives such as India's first sovereign green bond issuance, and the creation of the Infrastructure Finance Secretariat. Ensuring that the economy stays on the fiscal glide path while charting out the new strategy of targeting the debt-to-GDP ratio will be some of the items that will be on top of Seth's agenda in the upcoming Budget. Expenditure Secretary Manoj Govil: A 1991-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, Govil took charge of the Expenditure department in August 2024. This will be Govil's first stint in Union Budget making and he will have a tough task in giving projections for subsidy in the Budget at a time when rupee is weakening. DIPAM and Department of Public Enterprises Secretary Arunish Chawla, a 1992-batch Bihar cadre IAS officer, took charge in DIPAM and DPE in December 2024.

Russia in talks with India for group visa-free travel

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Russia is in discussions with India for a 'group-free visa regime,' allowing a specified number of tourists travelling together in a group to enter the country without a visa, a Moscow City Tourism Committee official said on Thursday. "When there is a group of tourists travelling together to Russia, the particular number should be mentioned in the document for the visit to become visa free. For example, in the Chinese document, the group should be 10-20 people. The Russian government is in talks with the Indian External Affairs Ministry for a final agreement on the number of people comprising a group from India to avail this facility," Moscow City Tourism Committee Chairman Evgeny Kozlov told PTI. Kozlov further said India is an important country and ranks second in terms of source market among far abroad countries after China. "India is a priority market for us. For us among the far abroad countries, China ranks at the number one position, followed by India. Indians are also good spenders while travelling, spending around USD 2,000 per person per trip," he said on the sidelines of an event on Wednesday evening.



In the first nine months of 2024, January-September, Moscow received 19.7 million guests including 61,000 Indians, he said. By 2030 the number of foreign tourists in Moscow is expected to reach six million people, mainly due to travellers from the CIS countries (Commonwealth of Independent States), the Asia-Pacific region, India, the Middle East and other parts of the world, he stated. "In the last two years we made

the tourism image of Moscow our priority. There are three reasons for the increase in international visitors. First, we've been improving tourism infrastructure, second, actively promoting Moscow in our key countries like India. At the same time introducing e-visa regime," he added. Among segments, Kozlov said, Moscow City is focusing on Business, Wedding, Family and Film tourism. Meanwhile, he said, a

delegation of the Moscow City Tourism Committee is in talks with production houses to invite them to shoot in Moscow City. "We want to attract Indian visitors to Moscow through cinema, therefore, our delegates are meeting with production houses and film directors to invite them to showcase Moscow City in their films. We are planning to provide them with incentives, which is still under discussion," Kozlov added.

GAIL Q3 profit rises 36 per cent on compensation from LNG supplier

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
State-owned gas utility SGAIL (India) Ltd on Thursday reported a 36 per cent rise in net profit in the December quarter after a one-off gain from compensation received from an overseas LNG supplier for non-delivery of committed cargoes. It posted a standalone net profit of ₹3,867.38 crore in the October-December period of FY25 compared with ₹2,842.62 crore in the year-ago period, India's biggest gas transportation and marketing company said in a stock exchange filing. Revenue from operations was almost unchanged at ₹34,957.76 crore with all three major business segments - natural gas and LPG transportation services, natural gas marketing and petrochemicals-reporting nearly the same revenues as the previous year. The company had an exceptional income of ₹2,440.03 crore as compensation received from a former unit of Russian energy giant Gazprom. GAIL had in December 2023 initiated legal proceedings against SEFE Marketing and Trading Singapore Pte Ltd in the London Court of

International Arbitration for non-delivery of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) under a long-term contract. It sought USD 1.817 billion in compensation for the default in delivery of committed cargoes by SEFE. Earlier this month, it agreed to end the arbitration after SEFE paid USD 285 million (₹2,440.03 crore). GAIL had in 2012 signed a 20-year deal to buy as much as 2.85 million tonnes per annum of LNG with Russian energy giant Gazprom. The deal was signed with Gazprom Marketing and Singapore (GMTS), which at the time was a unit of Gazprom Germania, now called SEFE. The Russian parent gave up ownership of SEFE after western sanctions were imposed on Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. SEFE had stopped supplying LNG to the Indian company in June 2022 to meet its own demand. It resumed supplies in March 2023. GAIL had sought damages for the period of non-supply. "Consequent upon settlement agreement dated January 15, 2025 entered with one of the LNG supplier, which includes payment of USD 285 million by LNG supplier to the company towards settlement

of litigation for non-supply of LNG cargoes during FY 2022-23, the company has recognised ₹2,440.03 crore (USD 285 million) as an exceptional income during the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024," GAIL said. During the October-December quarter, GAIL's earnings before tax from gas transportation business rose to ₹1,370.29 crore from ₹1,402.81 crore a year back. Natural gas marketing saw a 53 per cent jump to ₹2,880.98 crore. Petrochemical margins, however, shrank to ₹4.68 crore from ₹61.94 crore in the October-December period 2023 and ₹157.49 crore in the preceding quarter of July-September 2024. For the first nine months of the current fiscal year, net profit rose by 39 per cent to ₹9,263.29 crore. The board of directors of the company in their meeting on Thursday declared an interim dividend of ₹6.50 per equity share, amounting to ₹4,273.81 crore. Later, GAIL in a statement said during the quarter under review, the average natural gas transmission volume stood at 125.93 million standard cubic meters per day as against 130.63 mmscmd in Q2 FY25.

SEBI imposes ₹7 lakh fine on Motilal Oswal Financial Services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Markets regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday imposed a penalty of Rs seven lakh on Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd for flouting stock broker and depository participant rules. It has been directed to pay the fine within 45 days, according to an order passed by the SEBI. This came after SEBI conducted inspection of the stock broker and depository participant, MotilalOswal Financial Services Ltd, jointly with stock exchanges and depositories for the inspection period from April 2021 to June 2022. In its probe, the regulator found that Motilal Oswal Financial Services did not resolve 26 complaints within a period of 30 days, transferred securities of credit balance clients to "client unpaid securities account", and incorrectly reported Margin Trading Funding (MTF) collaterals to the exchange. Additionally, it had done wrong reporting and short collection of margin on one instance in CM (capital market) segment, on one instance in FO (futures and options) segment and on five instances in currency derivative segment. The regulator noted that 39 clients had traded in June 2022 but these clients were considered as inactive by the broker and their funds were parked aside as on June 2022. "I find that the allegation that the Noticee (Motilal Oswal Financial Services) while setting aside funds of ₹3.50 crore belonging to 39 active clients, has shown incorrect reasons viz. Non-availability of client's bank account and non-traceability of client, stands established," SEBI Adjudicating Officer Amar Navlani said. The regulator said the "Noticee being a SEBI-registered stock broker and depository participant was required to comply with the applicable provisions of securities laws, which it had failed to comply with. Such failure and non-compliance accordingly needs to be dealt with suitable penalty".

Rupee falls nine paise against USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee depreciated nine paise to close at 86.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a strong US dollar amid a hawkish tone of the US Federal Reserve. Forex traders said the rupee continued to face pressure due to sustained foreign fund outflows and the broad strength of the American currency in the overseas markets. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a weak note at 86.58 and touched a high of 86.56 and a low of 86.65 against the American currency during the session. The local unit settled at 86.64 (provisional), registering a fall of nine paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee pared its initial losses to settle

on a positive note, higher by two paise to close at 86.55 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.02 per cent lower at 107.98. "US dollar gained on the hawkish tone of the US Federal Reserve. Fed kept interest rates unchanged at 4.25-4.5 per cent at its Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting on Wednesday," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. The US Fed kept rates on hold but was hawkish in its outlook as it said rates would be held higher for a longer period, downplaying expectations for future rate cuts. "We expect the rupee to trade with negative bias on strength in the US Dollar and selling pressure from FIIs. Month-end Dollar demand from

importers may also weigh on the rupee," Choudhary added. There is uncertainty over tariffs by the US administration, which may further pressure the rupee. However, any central bank intervention may support the rupee. Traders may take cues from GDP and weekly unemployment claims data from the US. Investors may remain cautious ahead of the Union Budget of February 1 and the RBI's bond buying on Friday, which may lead to volatility, Choudhary added. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.64 per cent to USD 76.09 per barrel in futures trade. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 226.85 points, or 0.30 per cent, up at 76,759.81 per cent, while the Nifty rose 86.40 points, or 0.37 per cent, to close at 23,249.50 points.

Markets rally for third day on buying in blue-chips

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Extending the winning run to the third day, benchmark indices - Sensex and Nifty - closed higher on Thursday on buying in heavyweight stocks Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank. The 30-share Sensex advanced 226.85 points or 0.30 per cent to settle at 76,759.81 in a volatile trade. During the day, it surged 429.92 points or 0.56 per cent to 76,962.88. The NSE Nifty went up by 86.40 points or 0.37 per cent to 23,249.50. From the 30-share blue-chip pack, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance, Nestle, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank, Hindustan Unilever and HDFC Bank were the biggest gainers. Bajaj Finance climbed nearly



two per cent after the company reported an 18 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹4,308 crore for the December quarter. Tata Motors tanked over seven per cent after the firm reported a 22 per cent fall in consolidated net profit to ₹5,578 crore for the third quarter ended December

2024, impacted by a decline in revenue from its passenger and commercial vehicles divisions. ITC Hotels, Bajaj Finserv, Adani Ports, Tech Mahindra, Zomato and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the other laggards. "The Indian markets concluded on a positive note despite fluctuating between gains and losses. The fall in oil

prices due to a rise in US inventories and an ease in US 10-year yield after the US Fed's hawkish view may decelerate FIIs outflow. "The upcoming budget may be seen as an inflection point, which is likely to reverse the current bearish trend if the policies restore growth and consumption," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. In Asian markets, Tokyo settled in positive territory. Markets in Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong were closed due to holidays. European markets were trading in the green. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹2,586.43 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.43 per cent to USD 76.25 a barrel.

TCPL Q3 net profit down 6.5 per cent, revenue up 16.8 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
FMC major Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) on Thursday reported a 6.5 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to ₹281.92 crore in the third quarter ended on December 2024. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹301.51 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from TCPL. Revenue from operations rose by 16.81 per cent to ₹4,443.56 crore during the quarter under review. It was at ₹3,803.92 crore in the year-ago period. TCPL's "India Foods and International business delivered another strong quarter of topline and market share", the company said in its



earning statement. Total expenses of TCPL in the December quarter was at ₹4,087.07 crore, up 22 per cent. Tata Consumer's total income,

which includes other income was at ₹4,495.16 crore, up 16.34 per cent. In the December quarter, TCPL's overall branded

business was up 18.3 per cent to ₹4,026.15 crore. It was at ₹3,403.31 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. TCPL's branded

businesses include tea, coffee, water and other various value-added businesses. Its revenue from the branded business in India was up 19.31 per cent to ₹2,833.68 crore in the December quarter. TCPL's international branded business was up 15.95 per cent to ₹1,192.47 crore. While, its revenue from non-branded business was at ₹446.12 crore, up 8.66 per cent during the quarter. This segment includes TCPL's plantation and extraction business of tea and coffee. Commenting on the results Managing Director & CEO Sunil D'Souza said, "We delivered a topline growth of 17 per cent in Q3 FY25, growth was broad based with strong performance in India Beverages and Foods.

"During the quarter, we recorded robust double digit growth in the India tea business, backed by strong volume growth. There has been continued momentum & market share gain in the India salt business and strong growth in Tata Sampann," he said. TCPL's recent acquisitions-Capital Foods and Organic India performed well and is expanding these businesses in the Food Service and pharma channels respectively. "In India, we continued to strengthen our Sales & Distribution infrastructure with the scale-up of split routes for our salesforce, resulting in significant improvement in range selling. Channels of the future i.e. E-commerce and Modern trade continue to fuel growth momentum," he said.

INBRIEF

REC LIMITED FLAGS OFF MOBILE MEDICAL UNITS FUNDED WITH ₹4.29 CRORE IN PUNJAB

CHANDIGARH: REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE, under its flagship CSR initiative Mobile Medical Units has committed ₹4.29 crore for the procurement and deployment of four Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) in four districts of Punjab.

IP UNIVERSITY ONLINE ADMISSION PROCESS TO BEGIN FROM FEBRUARY 1

NEW DELHI: Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) has announced the admission process for over 40,000 seats in various undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD programs in 106 affiliated colleges and 18 university schools for the academic session 2025-26.

JANUARY READS

EXPLAINING THE GRAND RITUAL OF MOKSHA



The book is a radical journey of the Naga sadhus, the traditions of the akharas, and the timeless practices of devotion, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

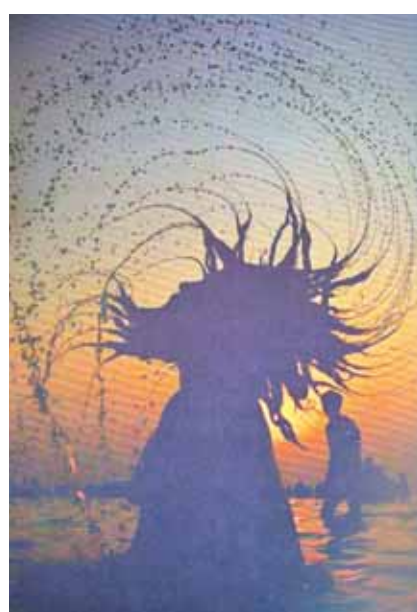


Taking you through the world's largest congregation of the Kumbh Mela, the book *The Divine Kumbh: Echoes of Eternity: Ganga, Shipra, Godavari, and Sangam* takes you through the different mythologies, meanings, and history that revolves around this biggest Hindu gathering.

Deepak Kumar Sen's book explores life at the Kumbh Mela, where millions of devotees unite at India's sacred rivers every 12 years. The book is richly illustrated with beautiful and soulful pictures that unravel ancient mythology, dynamic rituals, and deep spirituality. The book has chapters that take you through the *akharas*, the life of aesthetic monks, and their traditions and practices. The chapter on the *Juna* and *Nirmohi akharas* is a deep dive into the traditions, lineages, and formations of these akharas. Because of the numerous tales surrounding them, many people attend the Mela to see the procession of the *Naga sadhus*, which are said to exit the mela unknowingly after the snan. Travellers from all over the world swarm to the Kumbh Mela to see the extraordinary presence of *Naga babas* mediating and carrying out various rites. The *Naga sadhus* are a talk that is very excitedly shared among the people, about

ABOUT THE BOOK
 Book: The Divine Kumbh: Echoes of Eternity: Ganga, Shipra, Godavari, and Sangam
 Author: Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan
 Publisher: Niyogi Books Private Limited
 Price: ₹695 Pages: 180

their lives and where they live. The book provides detailed insights into the life and actions of *Naga sadhus*, the reasons why they stay naked, and much more stepping into their world. The book also takes you through the relationship between the moksha and the Kumbh, explaining the cycle of life and death. The notable chapter of the book is about the *Shahi Snan* which talks about the royal bathing done by the saints that is associated with bathing of different akharas on specific days of the Kumbh mela. The pages in the book take you through various camps formed for the *Nirvana Naga Gosains, Niranjani, Bairagis*, and the other three. According to the event timetable, the *Purna (full) Kumbh Mela* is held on the banks of a river once every twelve years in four locations: *Prayag (Allahabad),*



Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik. It is based on the movement of planets. Haridwar and Prayag host the *Ardh (half) Kumbh Mela* every six years. According to *Sen*, the precise zodiacal positions of the Sun, Moon, and planet Jupiter, kumbh is celebrated at these locations. The venue for the next Kumbh Mela is chosen at the holiest time, occurring at the exact moment when these zodiacal conditions are fulfilled. The book provides a comprehensive insight into the essence of the Mela. It beautifully bridges the ancient heritage with modern innovations, showcasing how the *Kumbh* is a global phenomenon while retaining its spiritual core. The main attraction of the book is the vivid imagery beautifully being a double spreader on the pages between the writeups. The images give a beautiful representation of the written history and truth that define this iconic event. *The Divine Kumbh* invites readers on a profound journey to experience the magic, faith, and cultural richness of one of humanity's most enduring spiritual traditions. The book is a must-read for those wishing to connect with the soul of India and understand the unparalleled significance of the *Kumbh Mela*.

Book: Global Tumult: India as a Pole Star
 Author: Sujan Chinoy
 Publisher: Rupa Publication
 Price: ₹395

Book: Brain On
 Author: Deb Smolensky
 Publisher: Rupa Publication
 Price: ₹295

Book: A Stitch in Time: The Biba Story
 Author: Meena Bindra
 Publisher: Rupa Publication
 Price: ₹595

Book: Carnival: A Novel
 Author: Sayam Bandyopadhyay
 Translated by Arunava Sinha
 Publisher: Aleph Book Company
 Price: ₹499

Book: Raj Yoga: Freedom Awaits
 Author: Shivani Singh
 Publisher: Om Books International
 Price: ₹1,295

Sacred Art of the Ramayana

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan's *Ram Viraje Rangon Mein* is a vibrant artistic exploration of the Ramayana through Madhubani art

Dr Rooplekha Chauhan's *Ram Viraje Rangon Mein* is a stunning and evocative visual and spiritual journey through the epic narrative of the Ramcharitmanas. Drawing creative inspiration from her lifelong devotion to Lord Shri Ram, Chauhan blends her mastery of Madhubani art with the profound wisdom of the Ramayana to create a series of paintings that transcend mere aesthetics. Published by Prabhat Publications, this book is both an artistic homage and a devotional offering of a sacred heart to her deity. The preface introduces this beautiful book as "a series of paintings" that depict the major episodes of the Ramcharitmanas through Madhubani art, making it a priceless possession for sadhakas and devotees of Lord Rama. The painter in Dr Chauhan writes, "My colours and my brush became the medium of my spiritual practice, worship, and prayer." The creative brushwork of the artist moves sequentially through pivotal moments of Lord Ram's life, starting with Goswami Tulsidas and culminating in Ram's coronation and the Ashwamedha Yagna. Through this artistic journey, Dr Chauhan articulates her personal spiritual growth, stating that the project brought her "immense mental peace and strength." Dr Rooplekha Chauhan's paintings capture the essence of Lord Ram's life with a unique blend of devotion and artistry. Episodes such as Sita's Swayamvar, the rescue of Ahalya, and the Agni Pariksha are rendered with

intricate designs, vibrant colours, and deep symbolism. The Madhubani style, known for its geometric patterns and vivid hues, serves as a perfect medium to narrate these divine stories. As Dr Chauhan points out, these paintings are "not just paintings, but also have valuable messages inherent in them, which silently communicate between the literate and the illiterate." The book highlights a fusion of artistic styles and the cultural heritage of Lord Rama. While deeply steeped in traditional Madhubani art, Chauhan also incorporates elements of Gond art. This innovative approach enriches the visual narrative, providing a fresh perspective on the timeless tale. The paintings follow a chronological order, beginning with the divine birth of Lord Ram, moving through his formative years, exile and eventual return to Ayodhya. The artist's ability to depict the emotional intensity of scenes like Sita's abduction or Jatayu's sacrifice brings a narrative coherence to the series, making it more than just a collection of isolated artworks. Chauhan shares her personal journey from a medical professional to an artist deeply immersed in spirituality. After retiring as Dean of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College, she rediscovered her childhood passion for art. Her decision to focus on Madhubani paintings of Ramcharitmanas episodes reflects her desire to merge her artistic talents with her spiritual inclinations. The book also documents the

recognition Chauhan's work has received at national and international forums. Her participation in the Second and Third International Ramayana Conferences highlights the universal appeal of her art, which transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries. The book artistically captures many significant themes and episodes from the Ramayana. For instance, in the 'Kaushalya's Vision' section, the celestial form of baby Ram, as revealed to Mother Kaushalya, is depicted with breathtaking intricacy, emphasising the divine nature of the protagonist. Similarly, in the section of Sita's Swayamvar, the artist has brought this pivotal moment to life through vibrant depictions of the assembly, reflecting the grandeur and sanctity of

the event. In the section of Agni Pariksha, the artist in Chauhan captures the emotional turmoil of this episode and offers a poignant visual interpretation of Sita's resilience and purity. Lastly, in the section of Ashwamedha Yagna, the culmination of Lord Ram's earthly journey is presented as a symbolic assertion of dharma and the fulfilment of divine purpose. Dr Rooplekha Chauhan's work exemplifies the transformative power of art. Her paintings, while visually captivating, also resonate with a deeper spiritual message. The detailed brushwork and use of traditional motifs pay homage to the rich cultural heritage of India. Additionally, the autobiographical notes add a personal dimension, allowing readers to connect with the artist's inner journey. To sum up, *Ram Viraje Rangon Mein* is a vibrant testimony to Dr Rooplekha Chauhan's devotion, artistic talent, and cultural consciousness. It serves as both a visual feast for art enthusiasts and a spiritual guide for devotees of Lord Ram. As Chauhan aptly remarks, "The fame of Shri Ram is eternal and infinite, yet the human intellect has moulded it in its own form." This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of art, spirituality, and Indian cultural traditions. — About the reviewer: Dr Shaleen Kumar Singh heads the Department of English at Swami Shukdevanand College, Shahjahanpur (UP) and can be contacted at shaleen@sscollegespn.ac.in

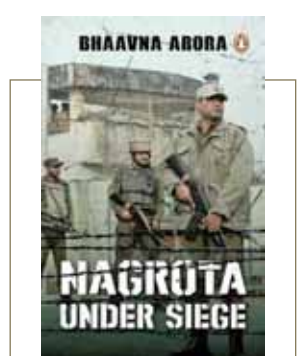
ABOUT THE BOOK
 Book: Ram Viraje Rangon Mein
 Author: Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan
 Publisher: Prabhat Publications
 Price: ₹2,500

A Gripping Tribute to Valor and Sacrifice

By **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

In the book "Nagrota Under Siege" Bhaavna Arora has managed to provide the readers with a poignant account of the terrorist attack on the Nagrota Army base in Jammu and Kashmir. It blends emotional eloquence with factual accuracy and completely expresses the deep impacts of the place on Arora's mind. The author does not simply tell a story; for her, the clash and the impact on the lives of soldiers' families is the real and sad reality. The author vividly details the events surrounding the attack and manages to sort of 'bring the document to life' by making it a part of the narrative rather than just an add on feature. Within the brutal context of the situation, one can witness the sheer bravery of people like Major Akshay Girish, who Arora makes the centre of attention

in the story. The psyche of their family, portrayed with deep insanity, shows the struggles of people not actively participating in the war. The author's way of voicing the sentiments of people is exceptional, and so is his investigative insight. There is no attempt of revealing crude realities, and that is why it stands to be a brilliant



ABOUT THE BOOK
 Book: Nagrota Under Siege
 Author: Bhaavna Arora
 Publisher: Penguin
 Price: ₹299

tribute to the soldiers. This fervent tribute to our troops is crisp and sans any flourishes. It's nothing short of a screenplay that can very well form another actioner highlighting the sheer grit, determination, sacrifice, and most importantly, patriotism of Indian armed forces. The non-linear narrative follows the attack by three Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) militants on an army unit in Nagrota (Jammu and Kashmir) on 29 November 2016. The deadly attack leads to numerous gun fights and the army neutralising all three militants. But the hostage situation leads seven soldiers, including two officers of senior rank, to martyrdom. The extensive interviews, real photos (provided by personnel and families), and back stories that are simultaneously heartwarming and gut-wrenching, make this novel an addition to an illustrious library of tributes to our armed forces.

WORLD BOOK FAIR 2025



For over five decades, the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF) has been a destination for readers, writers, and publishers alike. As it celebrates its 52nd year, the fair promises an even grander experience from 1st to 9th February 2025 at the newly constructed halls (2-6) in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Whether you're hunting for rare finds, exploring new releases, or simply soaking in the literary atmosphere, this is the place to be. Step into a world where every page holds a story waiting to be discovered!

Tata Steel Chess: Gukesh beats Warmerdam to stay in lead

PTI ■ WIJK AAN ZEE

World champion D Gukesh defeated Dutch Grandmaster Max Warmerdam to stay in sole lead on 7.5 points at the end of the 10th round of Tata Steel Chess tournament here. It was another eventful day for Gukesh who is now closing in on the 2800-rating barrier. The victory with black came easily when Warmerdam missed the line after being level for quite some time. The youngest world champion is a half point ahead of nearest rival Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan. Holding the sole third spot is R Praggnanandhaa on 6.5 points after a finely crafted victory over Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia. Arjun Erigaisi's hunt for an elusive victory continued for the 10th day running as he drew with Vincent Keymer of Germany. P Harikrishna defended a slightly worse rook endgame to hold his fort against top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States, while Leon Luke Mendonca played out a draw with Anish Giri. Praggnanandhaa came up with a dominating performance against Fedoseev who chose the Tarrasch defense as black. The opening saw Praggnanandhaa getting a structural advantage and he nurtured it quite well in the middle game. The game was devoid of drama towards the end as Praggnanandhaa sacrificed all his pawns to make a new queen on board. The calculation was perfect and it was all over in 48 moves. Keymer showcased his opening preparation to hold Erigaisi easily. The closed Ruy Lopez did not put up



enough challenge and Keymer sacrificed a pawn early to maintain parity. Erigaisi had to give the pawn back in the middle game and the position just petered out to be level. Harikrishna had to face some stiff resistance against Caruana who played black. Down a pawn in the rook and pawns endgame, Harikrishna made use of his remaining resources and drew after 68 moves. In the Challengers' section, R Vaishali went down fighting against tournament leader Nguyen Thai Van Dai of the Czech Republic while Divya Deshmukh lost another game in the event against Frederik Svane of Germany. Vaishali, on five points, shares the ninth spot and Divya, on two, is on 13th spot in the 14-players round-robin tournament. Just three rounds remain in the first major of the year. **Results: Round 10:** Masters: Leon Luke Mendonca (Ind, 3) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 5); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 6.5) beat Vladimir Fedoseev (6); Max Warmerdam (Ned, 3.5) lost to D Gukesh (Ind, 7.5); P Harikrishna (4.5) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5.5); Wei Yi (Chn, 5.5) drew with Jordan van Foreest (Ned, 4); Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 3) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 7) beat Alexey Sarana (Srb, 5). **Challengers:** Nguyen Thai Van Dam (Cze, 7.5) beat R Vaishali (Ind, 5); Divya Deshmukh (2) lost to Frederik Svane (Ger, 6); Yakubboev Nodirbek (Uzb, 5) drew with Benjamin Bok (Ned, 6.5); Arthur Pijpers (Ned, 4.5) beat Irina Bulmaga (Rom, 1); Suleymanli Aydin (Aze, 6.5) beat Nogerbek Kazymbek (Kaz, 5); Miaoyi Lu (Chn, 5.5) drew with Ediz Gurel (Tur, 5.5); Erwin L'Ami (Ned, 7) beat Faustino Oro (Arg, 2.5).



Several young players in probables list of Hockey India for FIH Pro League

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday included more than half-a-dozen young players in the long list of probables for the upcoming FIH Pro League, based on their performance in the Hockey India League and junior level competitions. Among those included in the list of 32 senior probables for the first time are goalkeeper Princedeep Singh, defender Yashdeep Siwach, midfielders Rabichandra Singh and Rajinder Singh, and forwards Angad Bir Singh, Uttam Singh and Arshdeep Singh. Veteran drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will lead the side, while Hardik Singh will be his deputy for the Bhubaneswar leg of the Pro League, to be played at the Kalinga Stadium from February 15 to 25. India's campaign will feature matches against Spain, Germany, Ireland and England, playing each team twice. "Impressive performances in the junior team and the ongoing HIL has won 22-year-old Angad Bir Singh and 20-year-old Arshdeep Singh their first senior team call-ups for the upcoming FIH Pro League matches," said Hockey India in a statement. Princedeep, a member of the gold-winning side at last year's Junior Asia Cup in Muscat, is a notable addition to the senior side and will join first-choice goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Suraj Karkera. Yashdeep will be positioned in defence alongside veterans Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas and captain Harmanpreet, while in the midfield, Rabichandra Singh will have stalwarts Manpreet Singh, Hardik, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma for company. Head coach Craig Fulton expressed confidence that the current set of players would play entertaining, top-notch hockey in the Pro League. "Extremely happy with the squad we have selected for the Bhubaneswar leg matches of the FIH Pro League. I believe this team can win us games, perform in harmony and most importantly play an impressive brand of hockey. "Looking forward to training with the players in the camp and starting our Pro League campaign on the right note." India had finished seventh among nine teams in the 2023-24 edition of the Pro League but the European leg did not go as per expectations. The team, however, came back from the setback to win a second successive gold at the Paris Olympics. "I have been scouting these players over the last few weeks and am excited to see what they do against some of the best international teams in the world," he added.

Niko Kovac will take over as new coach: Borussia Dortmund

PTI ■ DORTMUND

Niko Kovac will be the new coach of Borussia Dortmund as last season's Champions League runner-up looks to rescue a troubled season. The former Bayern Munich and Monaco coach will start work Sunday, Dortmund's managing director for sport Lars Ricken told broadcaster DAZN following the team's 3-1 win over Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League on Wednesday. "We have reached an agreement in principle. He will take over the team on Sunday," Ricken told DAZN, and said Dortmund would discuss potential signings with Kovac before the transfer window closes Monday. Youth team coach Mike Tullberg oversaw Wednesday's game — Dortmund's first win of the new year in all competitions — and will remain in his interim head coach role for Saturday's Bundesliga game at Heidenheim, Ricken said. Kovac takes over a team which is 11th in the Bundesliga and is heading for a playoff in the Champions League after finishing 10th in the 36-team league phase. Nuri Sahin was fired last week following a 2-1 loss at Bologna. It's the first job for Kovac since he was fired as coach of Wolfsburg in March. Born in Berlin, Kovac played international soccer for Croatia and coached the Croatian national team from 2013 to 2015.

Narmada clinches gold in women's 10m air rifle

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

Former World Cup winner Narmada Nithin Raju overcame a strong field, which included Asian Games medallist Ramita Jindal and Olympian Elavenil Valarivan, to not just create a national record but miss equalling the world mark by a fraction of a point on her way to clinching gold in the women's 10m air rifle event at the 38th National Games here on Thursday. Narmada, representing Tamil Nadu, clinched the top podium finish with a score of 254.4, beating back the challenge from Maharashtra's Arya Borse (252.5) and Ramita (230.4) in the eight-shooter final. In the process, she broke the national mark of 252.9 set by Olympian Apurvi Chandela at the 2019 World Cup in New Delhi. The world record in the event is 254.5 points, set by Huang Yuting of China at last year's ISSF World Cup Final in New Delhi. This was 23-year-old Narmada's third-biggest career achievement in the event after she had won the 10m air rifle mixed team gold partnering Rudranksh Patil at the 2023 Cairo World Cup and bagging a bronze at the World Cup in Bhopal the same year. She is also in total control of her nerves, Narmada, who was third at the end of the qualification round on Wednesday, shot a string of superb scores to stamp her authority over her more illustrious rivals in the final. She consistently shot high scores with three of her shots achieving maximum impact of 10.9, while another two shots in the 24-shot final fetched her 10.8. She didn't go below 10 in any of her 24 shots in the final. Maharashtra's Arya Borse, 22, too enjoyed a great outing and, on any other day would have clinched a top-podium finish with a score of 252.5 but the 2022 junior world cup gold medallist in team event wouldn't have known before the final that Narmada would come up with a record-breaking performance. Haryana's Asian Games bronze medallist shooter Ramita, 21, who had shot a superb qualification-round score of 634.9 to top the qualification, had to settle for a bronze medal despite coming up with another loaded performance, which saw her shoot consistently 10-plus scores on Thursday. Shooting is one discipline where many of the top players are taking part in the National Games. All the shooters, who competed in the Paris Olympics last year, with the exception of double-medallist Manu Bhaker and Esha Singh, will be seen in action in the National Games. In total, 364 shooters are representing 29 teams at the National Games, making shooting the star attraction of the Games.

PCB, ICC to organise Champions Trophy opening ceremony on February 16 in Lahore

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in conjunction with the ICC will hold the opening ceremony of the upcoming Champions Trophy on February 16 in Lahore. A source in the PCB told PTI that chairman Mohsin Naqvi had approved a scheduled list of events prior to the first match of the tournament on February 19 at the National Stadium in Karachi between Pakistan and New Zealand. The PCB will officially open the renovated Gaddafi stadium on February 7 for which Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has been invited as the chief guest. On February 11, the PCB will launch the renovated National Stadium in Karachi with a ceremony in which President Asif Ali Zardari has been invited as the chief guest. The source said the PCB and ICC were also working out the schedule of the captains press conference and photoshoots. They are likely to be held in Lahore on February 16. The opening ceremony is scheduled at Huzoori Bagh at the historic Lahore fort in which officials of different boards, celebrities, legends of the game, and government officials will be invited. The ICC and PCB are yet to confirm if Indian captain, Rohit Sharma, would be travelling to Lahore for the events. India will be playing their Champions Trophy matches in Dubai as part of a hybrid model deal between the ICC, PCB and BCCI and if they qualify for the final, then the title clash would also be held in the UAE city on March 9.

MI Cape Town qualify for SA20 playoffs

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

MI Cape Town booked their maiden entry into the playoffs of the SA20 tournament here with a 10-wicket thrashing of defending champions Sunrisers Eastern Cape here. MI Cape Town will take on Paarl Royals in Qualifier 1 at Gqeberha on February 4 and the winner of the contest will make a direct entry into the final of the third edition of SA20. MI Cape Town were excellent from the beginning of the contest with Dewald Brevis, Corbin Bosch and Reeza Hendricks claiming fine catches to help dismiss the Sunrisers Eastern Cape for just 109.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BARIPADA
e mail = rw_mayurbhanj@yahoo.co.in
O-1351 e-Procurement Tender Call Notice No. Online 13/RWD/BPD/2024-25

- Name of the work : Building Work
- Total No. of works : 03 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Approx Estimated Cost Rs.5.04lakhs to 29.47 Lakh
- Class of Contractor : 'D' & 'C' / 'C' & 'B'
- EMD : EMD @ 1% of Estimated Cost Put to Tender
- Period of completion : 1(One)/4(Four) Calendar months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of Opening of tender in the office of the Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Baripada
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Baripada	13 (Online) /RWD-BPD of 2024-25	DL:31.01.25 at 11.00 A.M.	DL:07.02.25 upto 5.00 P.M.	DL:06.02.25 Upto 5.00 P.M.	DL:07.02.25 05.30 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
R.W.Division, Baripada

OIPR-25057/11/0013/2425

Former CWG gold-winning boxer Manoj Kumar retires to take up coaching

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Commonwealth Games gold-winning boxer Manoj Kumar, who dominated the light welterweight (64kg) division in India at his prime and did not hesitate to voice his disagreements with national federation's policies, announced his retirement on Thursday to begin a career in coaching. The 39-year-old, who won his first and only CWG gold in the 2010 Delhi Games, is also a two-time Asian Championships bronze-medallist. His second and last CWG medal, a bronze, came in Gold Coast in 2018. He is also a two-time Olympian, having competed in the 2012 London and 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games, finishing as a pre-quarterfinalist in both editions after fighting performances that ultimately fell just short of pushing him over the line. "It's a carefully thought out decision because once I turn 40, I can anyway not compete in amateur events as per international rules. I am retiring as a content man after representing my country to the best of my ability," Manoj, who hails from Kaithal in Haryana, told PTI. "I have just gratitude for the opportunities I got," he added. The outspoken pugilist, who began his boxing career at the junior level in 1997, completed his coaching diploma from the National Institute of Sports, Patiala in 2021. Injuries and a dispute with the national federation on selection issues hampered his India career after the Gold Coast CWG and he was not seen in any international event after that. He now intends to devote time to the academy that he has set up with elder brother and long-time personal coach Rajesh Kumar Rajound in Kurukshetra. "For any athlete, saying goodbye to the sport is an extremely emotional moment. If it weren't for Rajesh sir, I wouldn't have been recognised as an Olympian boxer. He made me dream big and cleared every obstacle in my path to achieve them," he said reiterating his reverence for the man who was, at times, his only support system. "This academy will serve as a medium to share our experiences and lessons with young athletes who will one day



Federation of India's executive committee in 2016 but had to quit over disagreements with the body on its ever-changing selection policy, which included doing away with the traditional practice of trials for a while. "While in that commission, I raised my voice for fellow boxers. And when you do that too frequently, there are consequences. But I have never really cared. I still don't care," he said. Manoj's many other battles included a court case to get the Arjuna award in 2014 when the Kapil Dev-led selection panel ignored him despite the fact that he fulfilled the laid-down criteria as per the points system established for the honour. He won that fight in the Delhi High Court and was presented the award by the then sports minister Sarbananda Sonowal a few months after the traditional ceremony. He also fought a long and futile battle to get promotion in the Railways, which had promised him the elevation after the 2010 CWG gold but failed to fulfil it eventually. He is the only Indian boxer aside from the iconic Vijender Singh to have won two CWG medals. win medals for India in the Olympics," he added. Not among the most physically domineering boxers, Manoj created a niche for himself with his workmanlike approach to the sport which meant wearing down his opponents in the ring with his deceptive defensive game. He could frustrate rivals with his shell guards and at the same time, surprise them with his very effective counter-attacks, which relied heavily on accurately placed straight punches. But despite a reasonably successful career, he could never find a steady sponsor who could stand by him when injuries chipped away at his fortunes. Manoj was elected as the athletes' representative in the Boxing

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Bid Identification No. S.E. CBT (R&B) 28/ 2024-25
charbatia@division1@gmail.com

- Name of the work : Civil works-02 Nos
- Estimated cost : Rs 5,15,606/-to Rs25,18,438/-
- Period of completion : 02 months (60 days) to 01 months (30 days)
- Date & time of availability of Bid documents in the portal: from 10.00 AM of 01.02.2025 to 10.02.2025 up to 5.00 PM for 'online' bidding
- Last date/ time for receipt of Bids in the portal: 10.02.2025 up to 5.00 PM.
- Name and address of the officer inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer Charbatia (R&B) Division, Choudwar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation offender can also be seen in the said website. Sd/- Superintending Engineer Charbatia (R&B) Division Choudwar

OIPR-34092/11/0014/2425

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO III
BHUBANESWAR
bbsr@division3@yahoo.com
No - 789 Date - 24/01/2025

Government of Odisha "e-Procurement Notice No (47) of 2024-25
Bid Identification No: - C.C. (R&B) 03

1	Name of the Work	Road E.I. Work
2	Total No of works	1no. work
3	Estimated Cost	l) Rs. 25,30,000/-
4	Class of Contractor	"HT" Class Contractor
5	Period of Completion	1 (One) Calendar Month
6	Type of Tender	Single Cover System (Online)
7	Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From 28/01/2025 at 1.00 P.M. to 07/02/2025 at 5.00 P.M.
8	Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal	07/02/2025, upto 5.00 P.M.
9	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Er. Narendra Kumar Ghoshal, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. III, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
N.B: Subsequent corrigendum / addendum / required shall be available in the website as indicated above

Superintending Engineer
BBSR (R&B) Division No.III, BBSR

OIPR-34089/11/0019/2425