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INSIDE

MONEY 10
EV FIRMS AGREE TO END
SUBSIDY AFTER EXISTING
SUBSIDY REGIME ENDS: GOYAL

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Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

GRAP III INVOKED

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As the air quality index plummeted to very poor at 371, the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) invoked stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) with immediate effect, amid a rise in air pollution. As part of the Stage 3 of the GRAP, for private vehicle owners who still drive in a BS 3 petrol car or a BS 4 diesel car, driving the vehicles in Delhi and NCR districts is out of bounds with immediate effect. However, people with disabilities are exempt from these restrictions. Moreover, non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles with BS-IV or older standards are banned in the capital.

WEATHER

AQI	371
MAX	21.2°C
MIN	7°C

The national capital, battling smog and poor air quality since the beginning of winter, ranked third among the world's most polluted capitals in Friday's live rankings by Swiss group IQAir. Meanwhile, over 500 flight services were delayed at Delhi airport and dozens of trains were affected across North India as the harsh winter chill has tightened its grip on north India, including Delhi, with dense fog blanketing the region and temperatures plunging further. According to FlightRadar24 data, about

145 arrivals were delayed at the national capital's airport. Moreover, about 394 departures were also delayed at this airport. The number of delayed flights is expected to increase further. The minimum temperature was recorded at 7 degree Celsius while the maximum temperature stood at 21.2 degree Celsius in Delhi. Palam recorded the maximum temperature of 17.2 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature stood at 6.6 degree Celsius. According to forecasts from the India Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, the air quality situation is predicted to deteriorate further owing to unfavourable meteorological conditions.

CBI need not seek state consent: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a big win for Central Bureau of Investigation, the Supreme Court has said the CBI does not require the permission of State Governments to register an FIR against Central Government officials posted in the different jurisdictions of States. A bench comprising Justices CT Ravikumar and Rajesh Bindal on January 2 overturned the Andhra Pradesh High Court's order quashing the CBI investigations against two government employees over corruption. CBI is governed by Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (DSPE Act) of 1946. According to this archaic Act, CBI needs "General Consent" from each State to start probe. Due to this provision, even in Central Government offices, CBI can't enter and many Opposition party ruled States denied "General Consent" to CBI, which is empowered to probe against corruption in Central Government offices. "Irrespective of the place of posting, the aforesaid factual position would go onto show that they were Central government employees/central government undertaking employees and allegedly committed serious offence under PC Act, which is a central act," said the Order of the top court, giving free hand to CBI. The case stemmed from the CBI FIRs against the Central Government employees



working in Andhra Pradesh. They had challenged the CBI's jurisdiction in the Andhra Pradesh High Court, arguing the general consent granted to the CBI under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (DSPE Act), by the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh did not automatically extend to the newly formed state of Andhra Pradesh post-bifurcation. The High Court agreed with the accused, who were booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and quashed the FIRs insisting a fresh consent from Andhra Pradesh was required. Justice Ravikumar, who authored a 32-page judgment, differed with the High Court's interpretation, and ruled the latter had erred in asking for a fresh state consent for CBI's investigations. The top court framed a question -- if the CBI required the State Government's consent to register an FIR against a Central Government employee under a Central Act simply because the employee worked within the territory of a State -- as the central issue.



PM Narendra Modi with beneficiaries of a housing scheme, during the foundation stone laying and inauguration ceremony of various development projects, in New Delhi
Photos: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

Modi kicks off Delhi election campaign, Kejriwal reacts

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a major push to Infrastructure ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday sounded the poll bugle for the BJP by inaugurating developmental projects worth of Rs 4500 crore including Economically Weaker Section (EWS) flats at Ashok Vihar, Sarojini Nagar government quarters, World Trade centre and new DU campuses and college. With this, the PM Modi has launched his model against the Kejriwal's model putting aside doubts about who would lead it. Winning Delhi is crucial for the BJP, which has now been out of power in the Capital for more than 25 years. Taking a jibe at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor Arvind Kejriwal without naming him, PM Modi said he could have built a Sheesh Mahal for himself but chose to prioritise the people. "Mai bhi koi 'sheeshmahal' bana



sakta that. Lekin mere liye toh mere desh wasiyon ko puca ghar mile, yahi ek sapna tha (I could have also built a sheeshmahal, but for me, it was a dream that my countrymen should get permanent houses). The country knows it well that Modi never built a home for himself but has built more than 4 crore houses for the poor," PM Modi said. The Prime Minister also coined a slogan 'AAPda ko hatana hai, BJP ko lana hai'. The Prime Minister said that by keeping Anna Hazare at the front, few 'kattar

beimaan' (bigoted dishonest) people have pushed the national capital towards the 'aapda' (disaster). "These people used to talk about Delhi's development...Ye AAP, ye 'aapda, Delhi par aayi hai', and hence the people of Delhi has waged a war against 'aapda'. Voters of Delhi have made up their minds to free Delhi from this 'aapda,' the PM said while speaking at the event at Ashok Vihar's Ramlila Ground. Giving a call for AAP's defeat, Modi raised the slogan, "'Aapda' ko nahi sahenge, badal kar rahenge (we will not tolerate 'aapda', we will remove it)." "Yeh kattar beimaan log... Ek to chori upar se seena zori (These staunchly corrupt people... They steal and then defend themselves brazenly)... Dilli ke log keh rahe hain, aapda ki nahin sahenge, badal ke rahenge (The people of Delhi are saying they will not tolerate this disaster, but will usher in change)," PM Modi said.



Gifts to Biden family include \$20K diamond from Modi

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and his family were given tens of thousands of dollars in gifts from foreign leaders in 2023, with Jill Biden receiving the single most expensive present: a USD 20,000 diamond from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The 7.5-carat diamond from Modi was easily the most costly gift presented to any member of the first family in 2023, although she also received a brooch valued at USD 14,063 from the Ukrainian ambassador to the United States and a bracelet, brooch and photograph album worth USD 4,510 from the president and first lady of Egypt, according to an annual accounting published by the State Department on Thursday. The USD 20,000 diamond

was retained for official use in the White House East Wing, according to a State Department document, while the other gifts to the president and first lady were sent to the archives. The first lady's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment about the diamond's use. The US president himself received a number of expensive presents, including a commemorative photo album valued at USD 7,100 from South Korea's recently impeached President Suk Yeol Yoon, a USD 3,495 statue of Mongolian warriors from the Mongolian prime minister, a USD 3,300 silver bowl from the sultan of Brunei, a USD 3,160 sterling silver tray from the president of Israel, and a collage worth USD 2,400 from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Union Carbide waste disposal: Protests rock Pithampur, two attempt self-immolation

PTI ■ DHAR (MP)

Two men were hospitalised after they set themselves afire on Friday amid a bandh call in Madhya Pradesh's Pithampur against the planned disposal of 337 tonnes of Union Carbide waste in the industrial town, an official said. During one of the protests against the waste disposal in the town in the Dhar district, two persons poured some liquid on their bodies and set themselves on fire, according to eyewitnesses and a video shot at the scene. Eyewitnesses said the two men, both aged around 40, were rushed to a hospital in Pithampur, about 30 km from Indore. "From the local facility, they have been moved to a private hospital in Indore. Both were out of danger. The situation is under control but tense," Dhar Superintendent of Police Manoj Singh told PTI over the phone from a protest site near Pithampur bus stand. Protests were also held at other places in the town, he said. Shops and markets remained closed in the town amid the bandh call by Pithampur Bachao Samiti, which claims that the planned incineration of the Carbide waste in the area would harm the local



people and environment. Pithampur has a population of about 1.75 lakh and its industrial area here has nearly 700 factories in three sectors. On the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from the Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, killing at least 5,479 persons and leaving thousands with serious and long-lasting health issues in Bhopal. The authorities have shifted 337 tonnes of waste from the Carbide factory to Pithampur for scientific disposal, though the move has triggered protests. The material from Bhopal reached an incineration unit in Pithampur on Thursday. Amid the bandh call in Pithampur, which saw shops and markets remaining closed on Friday, a group of protesters blocked the road near Eicher Motors, but

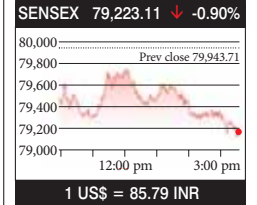
MeitY Invites Objections on Draft Data Rules

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has asked the public to send objections and suggestions to the draft rules proposed for the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025. The public feedback can be submitted on mygov.in; the draft rules will be taken into consideration after February 18, the Ministry said in a notification on Friday. Some of the salient features of the draft rules include greater consumer control over data; users can demand deletion of their data; companies should be more transparent with personal data; right for consumers to ask the reason why their data is being collected, and huge penalty of up to Rs 250 crore for data breach. Once implemented, the Act will empower consumers with greater control over their data. Companies handling user data will be required to disclose the information they possess, enabling users to request its deletion or specify usage preferences. Additionally, consumers will have the right to demand details on the purpose of data collection, permissible uses, and the timeline for its deletion. The draft, titled "Digital

Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025," applies to personal data processing within India and to entities offering goods or services to individuals in India. The rules encompass data fiduciaries, data processors, and consent managers, establishing detailed accountability measures. The rules are expected to provide clarity on various provisions of the law including notice by data fiduciary to individuals, registration and obligations of consent manager, processing of personal data of children and so on. The rules are also expected to provide clarity regarding the setting up of the Data Protection Board, appointment and service conditions of the chairperson and other members of the board. The regulations aim to address crucial aspects of data protection. These include how organizations must notify individuals about data collection, the framework for consent management, and safeguards for processing children's personal information. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 was passed by the Parliament in 2023. The draft rules, once finalised and notified, will come into force.

MARKETS



Sensex, Nifty tank, ahead of earnings season

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure to settle nearly 1 per cent lower on Friday as investors pared exposure to bank and IT stocks ahead of the earnings season starting next week. A depreciating rupee against strengthening US dollar overseas further weighed on sentiment, traders said. Despite a positive start, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 720.60 points or 0.90 per cent to close at 79,223.11. During the day, it slumped 833.98 points or 1.04 per cent to 79,109.73. The NSE Nifty tanked 183.90 points or 0.76 per cent to 24,004.75. On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 524.04 points or 0.66 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 191.35 points or 0.80 per cent. "A sell-on-rally sentiment prevails in the market due to a strong US dollar, high valuation, and a shift towards a multi-asset investment strategy. Reducing US jobless claims and potential policy shifts in the US indicate that the Fed is not in a hurry to cut interest rates in the near term. "Looking ahead, the market is likely to focus on Q3 earnings, with expectations of improvement in earnings on a QoQ basis," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. From the Sensex pack, Zomato, HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra, Adani Ports, Tata Consultancy Services, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Tech and ITC were the major laggards. On the other hand, Tata Motors, Nestle, Titan, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

From begging to manning traffic, inspiring journey of 39 transgenders

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

From seeking alms on city roads to managing traffic at the same places, it has been an incredible journey of empowerment for 39 transgenders in Hyderabad who have been inducted as traffic assistants to help the city police. The transgenders, who have been appointed on a pilot basis, say they now get respect from citizens in contrast to the severe discrimination and insults they faced in the past. "It is wonderful that we manage traffic at places where we used to beg in the past," Nisha, a transgender traffic assistant, told PTI on Friday. Nisha, who works at Patny Centre here, thanked Telangana Chief

Minister A Revanth Reddy for the opportunity given to the transgender community. Nisha, who studied up to Intermediate, recalled facing discrimination from society at large, in college, with friends and even parents. "My parents did not accept me. But, they accepted me now. My friends used to avoid me. But, now they message me and keep in touch. After I got the job, my relations and others are appreciating. It is a wonder. I cannot describe in words," Nisha said. Sana, another traffic assistant, said it is a matter of pride for them that they get respect from citizens, while people earlier used to hesitate to even speak to them. P Viswa Prasad, Additional



A transgender traffic assistant manages traffic, in Hyderabad

Commissioner of Police (Traffic), told PTI that the transgender traffic assistants are doing good and that there are no complaints or there is anything abnormal since they have been inducted about 10 days ago. It will take some time for them to get professional acumen. They want to get integrated with society and do well, he said. It all began when CM Reddy asked officials in November to appoint transgender persons as traffic volunteers at high-traffic areas in the city. During a meeting with officials, he said the services of transgenders should be utilised like home guards at traffic signals to prevent traffic violations. He told the officials to finalise a special dress code for

transgenders and also salary along the lines of home guards. While the CM on December 6, 2024, handed over 'enrolment papers' to the transgender persons who have been selected, they were formally inducted as traffic assistants on December 22. Hyderabad Police Commissioner C V Anand had earlier said transgenders face alienation even within their families and society. The state government had issued an order to inducting the transgenders as traffic assistants, he said. According to him, about 100 transgenders had applied for the posts and 44 of them were shortlisted after a selection process, including physical tests, while 39 successfully completed training.



Additional water being released from Tehri dam reservoir for Prayagraj Kumbh Mela

VINOD CHAMOLI ■ NEW TEHRI

Devotees attending the largest religious congregation in the world—the Mahakumbh Mela at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh will have adequate water to take ceremonial dips in the Ganga river. According to the requirement communicated by the UP Irrigation department, the THDC India Limited has started releasing additional water in the river for the Prayagraj Kumbh Mela. THDCIL has advised that there is adequate water to ensure the required level in the Ganga from Devprayag to Prayagraj during the Kumbh Mela period.

The Kumbh Mela will start at Prayagraj with the Makar Sankranti Snan on January 14. Many crores of devotees from across the nation and abroad are expected to visit Prayagraj to take a holy dip in the Ganga during the Kumbh Mela. It is believed that taking a dip in the Ganga during the Kumbh Mela destroys all sins of a person and grants him or her salvation. This is the reason why crores of people through the Ghats during the Kumbh Mela to take a dip in the holy river. However, less rainfall during the winter and snowfall in the high Himalayan region reduces the level of water in the rivers. The flow of water was 34.01 cusecs in the Bhagirathi and 22.28 cusecs in the Bhilangana in Tehri district on Friday. In such a situation, the UP Irrigation department had asked the THDCIL to release additional water from the Tehri dam reservoir to ensure adequate water in the river during the Kumbh

Mela. Taking necessary action, THDCIL has started releasing additional water from the dam reservoir. Officials informed that at present the water level in the Tehri dam reservoir is 812.21 RL metres. Further, 220 cumecs water is being released from the Tehri dam reservoir at present. The officials further informed that there is enough water in the reservoir to ensure the availability of adequate water in the river during the Kumbh Mela. THDCIL CGM (OMS) SS Panwar informed that water is being released from the reservoir as per the demand of the UP Irrigation department. The dam management has made all necessary arrangements to ensure the release of adequate water from the reservoir, he added.

Various areas of Uttarakhand in the plains and mountains are witnessing a brief spell of comparatively warmer days with the maximum and minimum temperatures considerably above normal. However, the weather is set to take a turn on January 6 and 7 due to a western disturbance becoming active again. According to the State Meteorological Centre, mountainous regions of the State at altitudes of 3,000 metres and above may witness snowfall on January 6 while areas situated at altitudes of 2,500 metres and above may witness snowfall on January 7. Light rain and snowfall is likely on these dates in parts of Uttarakashi, Chamoli, Rudrapur, Tehri, Dehradun, Pithoragarh and Almora districts. On Saturday, dry weather is likely to prevail in the State. The provisional State capital Dehradun is likely to witness a mainly clear sky with mist/fog likely to occur during the morning hours. The

Rain & snowfall to break dry warmer spell in State

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

maximum temperature is forecast to climb further above normal to 28 degrees Celsius in Dehradun today. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various parts on Friday were 26.4 degrees Celsius and 8.3 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 20.5 degrees Celsius and 9.8 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 22.1 degrees Celsius and eight degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 21 degrees Celsius and 9.5 degrees Celsius in New Tehri. The maximum temperature was seven degrees Celsius above normal while the minimum was two degrees above normal in Dehradun while the maximum was two degrees and the minimum was four degrees above normal in Pantnagar. Similarly, the maximum was 10 degrees above normal and the minimum was six de-

grees above normal in Mukteshwar while the maximum was five degrees above normal and the minimum was six degrees above normal in New Tehri.

Survey of glacial lakes planned in Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA) is preparing a work plan for an elaborate survey of glacial lakes in Uttarakhand and their regular monitoring. A discussion was held on this with scientists of various Central institutions on Friday. According to State officials, the USDMA will play the role of the coordinator in this task and provide necessary cooperation to various research institutions which will work on the glacial lakes. Chairing the meeting, the Disaster Management secretary Vinod Kumar Suman said that 13 glacial lakes have been identified in Uttarakhand. Out of these, five lakes are in category A. He informed that a group had conducted survey of the Vasudhara lake in the Dhaulti Ganga basin in Chamoli district last year. Representatives of the USDMA, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, State Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Response Force and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police were part of this



team which had surveyed the glacial lake. The four category-A glacial lakes in Pithoragarh district are set to be surveyed this year. Suman said that work is being undertaken to develop a foolproof system along with various institutions to ensure the proper monitoring of the glacial lakes in the State. The USDMA will also facilitate the necessary cooperation of various scientific institutions for the study of glacial lakes, he said. The USDMA wants to bring various scientific institutions on the same platform to enable elaborate study of the glacial lakes in Uttarakhand, the secretary added. Various equipment like water level sensors,

automatic weather stations, thermal imaging and other aspects will be utilised for the survey of the glacial lakes, he said. USDMA additional CEO (Administration) Anand Swaroop informed that in the first stage, the depth of the glacial lakes, width, water drainage channel and other aspects will be studied. This will be followed by work on establishing early warning systems. He said that equipment will also be installed to enable scientists to ascertain the changes taken place in the glacial lakes. The glacial lakes in the State will be monitored using high quality equipment, the additional CEO added.

Narcotics worth Rs 23.25 crore seized by STF in 2024

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Anti-Narcotics Unit of the Uttarakhand Special Task Force (STF) has reported seizing narcotics worth about Rs 23.25 crore in 2024. The senior superintendent of police of STF Navneet Singh stated this during a Press conference here on Friday. He informed that the STF arrested a drug trafficker in the Bazzpur area of Udham Singh Nagar district with charas worth Rs six lakh late on Thursday. It was reportedly meant to be supplied to the Prayagraj. The SSP said, "Under the supervision of STF CO RB Chamola and led by inspector-in-charge Pawan Swaroop, the STF conducted a joint operation with the local police near Doraha-Bazzpur Road on late on Thursday, the team apprehended Jainath (25), a resident of Sarkadi village, Rampur

district of Uttar Pradesh. The team recovered 1.26 kilogrammes of charas from his possession."

Singh said that the accused revealed during interrogation that he had sourced the charas from Mohali village in Bazzpur, intending to sell it in Prayagraj, where narcotics fetch a significantly higher price. He admitted to frequently smuggling charas from Bazzpur to Uttar Pradesh for distribution. The STF also gathered leads on other drug traffickers during the investigation, and further action against them is underway, he said. The SSP also urged the public to stay away from narcotics and report any suspicious activities or drug-related crimes to the nearest police station or STF office on 9412029536 or 0135-2656202.

Grievance redressal a phone call away in Bageshwar

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

"Hello Bageshwar", a system of grievance redressal implemented by the Bageshwar district administration is eliciting good response from the people. The complainants can register their grievances on a toll free mobile number 9412995958 issued by the administration.

The grievance is noted down by a dedicated team which ensures its redressal by tracking and proper follow up with the department concerned. Hello Bageshwar is the brainchild of district magistrate Ashish Kumar Bhatgani. He told The Pioneer that the initiative sets into place a hassle-free system where complainants can simply make a

phone call to record their grievances. He said that the people can also register their grievances by sending a message on the toll-free number.

"Once a complaint is received, our dedicated team promptly notes it down and creates a structured database of daily grievances. This ensures every issue is tracked and prioritised. The complaint is immediately forwarded to the concerned department for swift action, minimising delays and ensuring accountability," he said.

"The DM further added, 'What sets Hello Bageshwar apart is our proactive approach. Our team maintains

communication with the complainant, providing updates and ensuring they remain informed at every step. From the moment a grievance is reported to its resolution, we stay connected, ensuring transparency and trust. With the Hello Bageshwar, grievance redressal is not just a process—it's a commitment to serve citizens efficiently and ensure their voices are heard and addressed promptly."

One of the complainants, Harish Prasad of Querali village said that he had complained about a problem he was facing in the solar light and the issue was resolved in a few days.

Use of glass quarter bottles banned for country liquor

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In an effort to solve the problem of adulteration in country liquor and curb the menace of illicit liquor the Excise department has banned the use of glass bottles in packing quarters of country liquor. The order will be effective from the next financial year.

In an order the Excise commissioner HC Semwal said that in the country liquor in quarter sized glass bottles will be banned from the financial year 2025-26.

This will be available in tetra packs only.

The order follows a raid conducted by a team of the excise department in many liquor shops in Haridwar district on December 30. The team recovered illicit country liquor from a shop in Shetalkheda. Similarly the officials of the department raided an illegal factory of country liquor in which it recovered illicit liquor and empty glass quarters from the spot.

Govt providing facilities & essential material at Nari Niketan: Kandwal

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The chairwoman of the Uttarakhand State Commission for Women (USCW) Kusum Kandwal stated that the government is providing the best possible facilities and essential materials at Nari Niketan. She said this during her inspection of Nari Niketan on Friday. During her visit, Kandwal met with the inmates to enquire about their well-being. She also gathered information regarding the training programmes offered to women and inspected the materials prepared by them. Considering this, she highlighted that with the help of the Shiksha Se Shikhar Tak Sanstha, es-

sential items for the daily needs of the inmates—such as sanitary pads, diapers and sweets—were distributed. Kandwal further informed that during the inspection she encouraged the girls at Nari Niketan to incorporate Yoga into their daily routines and to take advantage of the training programmes that promote self-reliance and independence. She emphasised that the government has been making the best possible way to provide facilities at Nari Niketan and if any social organisations wish to cooperate with the inmates in a spirit of mutual support, it is a matter of pride.

SHHP school receives recognition for class X from U'khand Govt

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Swami Hari Haranand Public (SHHP) School located in Maletchi (Khairasain) and operated by the Swami Rama Nishkam Karmanyog (SRNK) Trust, has received official recognition from the State government to extend its classes up to the class X. Informing further about this, the president of the SRNK Trust, Vijay Dhasmana said that the school aims for the holistic development of its students. He informed that parents have long been requesting an upgrade in classes due to the school's quality academic environment. In response, the school administration

submitted an application to the education department. He further informed that after that officials from the department conducted a



thorough inspection of the school's facilities and were satisfied with the quality of the infrastructure. As a result, the education department has granted recognition for the school to

extend its classes from the class VIII to the class X. This decision has brought immense joy to the students, their parents, and the community as a whole. The admission process for the new academic session will begin soon, he said.

Dhasmana further highlighted key features of the school, which include, a strong emphasis on moral education and Indian culture, a well-equipped building with modern facilities, an advanced science laboratory, a computer lab and other amenities.

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Advt. No. R&P/310/2024 Dated: 28.11.2024

Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application Form from eligible and highly motivated candidates with proven track record of competence and success for appointment to the one post of Controller of Examination on Tenure/Deputation Basis. The post of Controller of Examination carries Scale of Pay Level 14 as per VII CPC Pay Matrix. The last date for receipt of applications is within two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News. For details, please visit the University website www.du.ac.in and click "Jobs and Opportunities" under the Head "Work with DU".

Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the University website.

CBC 21231/12/0019/2425 REGISTRAR

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE

Sub: Booking agent notice for appointment of Halt Agent at Various halt stations of MB Division.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager Northern Railway/ Moradabad for and on behalf of president of India invites applications for appointment agents for booking of passengers ticket at following halt stations.

S.No.	Halt Name	(Depot) Station	Between Station
1.	Ganj Moradabad	Balamau	MLW-BGMU
2.	Atwakursath	Balamau	BLM-MAH
3.	Chuchelakalan	Gajraula	MNDR-CPS
4.	Adhyatmiknagar	Hapur	DS-MFH
5.	Chandsara	Hapur	KKK-NRNR
6.	Sirsamadampur	Sambal Hatim Sarai	SHTS-HZN
7.	Kastala Kasrnabad	Hapur	HPU-PKW
8.	Bahadurpur	Shahjanpur	BTRA-TLH

Applications completed in all respect shall be received in this office on 27.01.2025 in the Box placed in the chamber of Assistant Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, DRM Office, Moradabad from 10:00 hrs. to 14:00 hrs., which will be open 15:00 hrs. on same date in the presence of the applicants or their representatives. Applications received after 14:00 hrs. shall not be considered. In case 27.01.2025 happens to be a holiday, the applications shall be received & opened on the next working day at the same time. The application notice, Terms & conditions can be seen & downloaded from Northern Railway website www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

No.: 20 Halt Contract-Allot-MB Division 23c
Dated 03.01.2025 39/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No., Date	291-DRM-MB-24-25 Date 03.01.2025
Name of Work	Construction of EI building at BGH station in connection with Replacement of old PI with EI for BGH station of Moradabad Division.
Tender Closing Date, Time	28.01.2025 16:00 Hrs.
Advertised Value (Rs.)	72,63,229.58
Earnest Money (Rs.)	1,45,300.00
Bidding Start Date	14.01.2025
Validity of Offer (Days)	60 Days
Period of Completion	06 Months

No. 75-W/2/3/WA/Publication Dated: 03.01.2025 44/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tender bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No./Date	289-DRM-MB-24-25 Date: 02.01.2025
Name of work	Pre and post tamping track measurement survey using Gedo Vorsys trolley system in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/II/MB
Tender Closing Date/Time	27.01.2025 at 16:00
Advertised Value(₹)	₹69,63,840.00
Earnest Money(₹)	₹1,39,300/-
Bidding Start Date	13.01.2025
Validity of offer (Days)	60 Days
Period of Completion	08 Months

No. 75-W/2/3/WA/Publication Dated: 02.01.2025 25/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Person namely **Risalat Ali (Partner of M/s Arman Packaging) R/o: Bhagwanpur Haridwar Uttarakhand**, also at KH No. 217, Village Sherpur Mohit Pur Bhagwanpur Haridwar (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in CC No. 5638/2019, U/s 138 NI Act, registered at P.S.: PR Vihar, Delhi and the warrant has been returned writing upon that the said accused **Risalat Ali** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Risalat Ali** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Risalat Ali** accused CC No. 5638/2019, U/s 138 NI Act, registered at P.S.: PR Vihar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 04.02.2025.

By Order
Sh. Rohit Kumar, LD
Metropolitan Magistrate -04
Room No. 110, Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/107/RD/2025 (Court Matter)

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
PUBLIC NOTICE

I am Satish Kumar, number 2700011L. My wife's name and date of birth is Sulochana in part-11 order, DOB 12.11.1984 which is wrong. In Aadhar card, PAN and 10th certificate it is Name Sulochna DOB. 10.11.1981 which is correct.

मेरे आर्मी रिकॉर्ड के अनुसार, मेरे पुत्र का गलत नाम पाठ्य मूद्र दर्ज है, उसका सही नाम यार्थ मूद्र आधार नं. 428922230671 S/o आर्मी नं. JC-344684A नायब सूबेदार देवकी नंदन मूद्र, गांव- मझरा फार्म, पोस्ट-श्रीपुर बिच्चा, तह-खटीमा, जिला-उधम सिंह नगर, उत्तराखण्ड - 262308 है।

मेरे पुत्र के सैन्यमिलेखोंनुसार, मेरा गलत नाम भगवती देवी दर्ज है, सही नाम भगवतीया आधार नं. 548168828966 M/o आर्मी नं. 18015221Y नायक प्रमुनाथ चौहान, ग्राम- नन्दीपुर, पोस्ट-गोपालपुर, तह-रसड़ा, जिला-बलिया, यू.पी. -221701 है।

PUBLIC NOTICE

A land bearing Khasra No. 458 Min, total area 3519.47 sq.ft. is situated at TISCO Officers Shivalki, Ganga Vihar, Salempur Mahdood, Pargana Roorkee District Haridwar. The following sale deeds related to this property were executed. (1) Sale deed, executed by Usha Rana, W/o Pritam Chandra Rana in favour of Kashmir Singh, S/o Joga Singh, duly registered vide Book No. 1, Volume 2613, pages 283 to 298, Document No. 1747 dated 01.03.2016. (2) Sale deed executed by Usha Rana, W/o Pritam Chandra Rana, in favour of Prabhanshu Kaur, W/o Joga Singh, duly registered vide Book No. 01, Volume 2614, pages 363 to 378, Document No. 1769, dated 02.03.2016. (3) Sale deed, executed by Dinesh Upadhyay and Usha Upadhyay in favour of Usha Rana, W/o Pritam Chandra Rana and duly registered vide Book No. 01, volume 1418, page 15 to 32, Document No. 6950, dated 30.07.2013. These documents have been actually lost somewhere in Haridwar. If any person/institution/bank etc. has any claim with this land/sale deed, kindly inform the undersigned.

Afzal S/o Iqbal resident of S-395 B Shivalki Nagar, Haridwar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to report that my client Mrs. Laxmi Devi W/O Balam Singh given that the document bearing Original Sale Deed ledger no. 1, Volume 633-1055, Page no. 69, 77/94 to 9215, ADF book -1, dated 31/10/2007 executed between Mohd. Hussain and Jaheera Bano registered at deputy registrar Vikasnagar, Dehradun has been misplaced and my client applied for loan from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd and mortgaging the above said property, if anyone has any objection kindly inform to Adv. Mr. Parvender Kumar, Off add - Block - 2, Chamber no. 58, New Building Near Bar Association, Court Compound, Dehradun, Mobile no. 9758527116

PUBLIC NOTICE

We would like to inform the General Public that Original sale deed dated 17.11.2017 of IP situated at Mauza Mothrawala, bearing Khata No 1923 Khasra No. 864 Area 152.76 Sq. Yards or 127.77 Sq. Mtrs Bounded under: East: Land of Others side measuring 31 ft. West: 18 ft. Wide Road side measuring 31 ft. North: Land of Others side measuring 42.1 ft. South: Land of Others side measuring 46.5 ft. registered at Sub registrar 3rd at Bahi No. 1, zild 1888, page 57 to 84, document No. 6046. In favour of Mrs. Sakshi Chettri have been lost and untraceable. Further, Punjab National Bank, Branch Office Adhwaiala, intends to mortgage the above property. If any person finds it, or claims any interest or title in the property is requested to contact Punjab National Bank, Branch Office Adhwaiala, within 7 days from the date of this publication. Mr. Sunil Thapa S/o Late Pratap Singh resident of Ajabpur Khurd, Madhur Vihar, Banjarawala Mafi, Dehradun

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that I break all my relations with my son Mohammad Sarfaraz Hussain and evict him from all my movable and immovable property. He himself will be responsible for any act done by him, Mrs. Najma Begum, w/o late Husnuddin, resident of Ward No. 6, Keshav Nagar Bazzpur US Nagar Uttarakhand.

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Bangla infiltration: BJP whitewash Didi 'blueprint' claim

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

As Bengal politics sparked over Bangladeshi infiltration the State BJP on Friday hit back at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after she accused the Centre and BSF for encouraging infiltrations. The State BJP said the infiltrators were Banerjee's vote bank. Launching a scathing attack on Banerjee for her 'malicious campaign' junior Union Minister and Bengal BJP president Sukanto Majumdar said that all those who were entering Bengal illegally and settling down in the border districts constituted the vote bank of Chief Minister's Trinamool

Congress. "It is an open secret ... everyone knows who these infiltrators are ... they are the vote bank of Mamata Banerjee which is why they are given grand welcome by the Trinamool Congress government," Majumdar said wondering how she was unaware of the large scale infiltration that has been taking place on daily basis --- if the Chief Minister's claim that nothing that happened escaped her knowledge was true. Incidentally the Chief Minister is also in charge of the Home of the State. The BJP's counterattack came a day after Banerjee charged the Centre with preparing a 'blueprint' in connivance with the

Border Security Force to aid infiltration so as to "destabilize" Bengal. Alleging that the Bangladeshi infiltrators that settle in Bengal promptly acquire the voter and aadhar cards as also the membership of the TMC, Majumdar said these illegal immigrants "work in the elections to garner vote for Mamata Banerjee," Majumdar said that the Chief Minister was not interested in the future of the people and her State rather "she is interested about winning elections only ... she is not interested about the future of the country." Even as a section of the BJP condemned the Chief Minister for making "seditious" state-



ments by implicating the BSF and the Centre and accusing them of making a "blueprint" to engineer infiltration Majumdar said "today she is making reckless remarks to save her face but" during 2021 Assembly elections she had instigated people to attack Central forces... If it would have been Pakistan forces then she would have welcomed them. Majumdar's statements came amid the present volatile situation in Bangladesh and regular arrests made by the Indian security forces of people who had infiltrated into India and had been working as terror modules of Ansar ul Bangla

and JMB Bangladesh. The State BJP president's statements also came within hours of the Chief Minister making an aggressive statement accusing the Centre and the BSF of aiding infiltration. In apparent bid to shift the blame on the Centre's doors Banerjee on Thursday alleged that BSF was which responsible for guarding the borders, was allowing Bangladeshis to cross into India from Islampur, Sitai, and Chopra in North Bengal. "Border is guarded by BSF and not the TMC," Banerjee said adding how the BSF was aiding infiltration "to destabilize Bengal" as a part of a blueprint

prepared by the Centre and the BSF. "It is an inside job of the BSF, and it is a blueprint of the Central Government. If there was not any blueprint from the Central Government, then it would not be possible... I have repeatedly spoken to the Central Government that what they decide will be our path, but we will protest against them if they facilitate militants to disrupt the state... We will send a protest letter to the centre also for this," Banerjee said drawing instant criticism from Union Minister Giriraj Singh who said that Bengal during her rule had become a breeding ground of infiltrators.

India protests China's creation of two new counties in Hotan, asserts area part of Ladakh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday said it has lodged a "solemn protest" with China over creation of two new counties in Hotan prefecture, asserting that such moves will not lend legitimacy to Beijing's "illegal and forcible" occupation in the region. In a strong reaction, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said parts of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh and that the Chinese action will have no bearing on New Delhi's consistent position regarding its sovereignty. China's announcement on establishing the two counties came days after Special Representatives of the two nations resumed boundary talks that was stalled for almost five years. "We have seen the announcement pertaining to the establishment of two new counties in Hotan Prefecture of China. Parts of jurisdiction of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh," Jaiswal said. "We have never accepted the illegal Chinese occupation of



Indian territory in this area," he said. "Creation of new counties will neither have a bearing on India's long-standing and consistent position regarding our sovereignty over the area nor lend legitimacy to China's illegal and forcible occupation of the same," Jaiswal added. He further said: "We have lodged a solemn protest with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels." The latest irritant in ties came weeks after India and China ended an over four-and-a-half-year border standoff and announced steps to reduce mistrust. Following an understanding reached on October 21, the two sides completed the disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Russia on October 23 and agreed to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling an intention to normalise the relations. In the nearly 50-minute meeting, Modi underscored the importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquillity in border areas. Nearly four weeks later, the Special Representatives on the border issue -- India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and China's foreign minister Wang Yi held talks in Beijing. It was the first dialogue under the framework of Special Representatives in nearly five years. In the talks, Doval and Wang focused on "positive" direction for cross-border cooperation including resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, river data sharing and border trade. Moreover, days after China announced its plan to build a mega dam on Brahmaputra river in Tibet, India on Friday said it will continue to monitor

and take necessary measures to protect its interests. In its first reaction to the proposed dam, New Delhi urged Beijing to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas. "We will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests," Jaiswal said. There have been apprehensions that the dam will have adverse impact on Arunachal Pradesh as well as Assam. "As a lower riparian state with established user rights to the waters of the river, we have consistently expressed, through expert-level as well as diplomatic channels, our views and concerns to the Chinese side over mega projects on rivers in their territory," Jaiswal said. "These have been reiterated, along with the need for transparency and consultation with downstream countries, following the latest report," he said. "The Chinese side has been urged to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas," he added.

SC to devise effective mechanism to combat caste-based discrimination in educational institutions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Termining it as a sensitive issue, the Supreme Court on Friday said it will devise an effective mechanism to combat caste-based discrimination in educational institutions in the country. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to notify draft regulations to ensure no caste-based discrimination happened with students in the Central, State, private and deemed universities. The Bench directed the UGC to furnish data on the number of institutions which had established equal opportunity cells in compliance with the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions Regulations) 2012, popularly called "UGC equity regulations". "We are equally conscious of this sensitive issue. We will do something. We will have to find out some effective mechanism and modalities to see that the 2012 regulations are translated into reality," the bench said.

The top court sought Centre's response on the issue and asked the UGC to furnish data within six weeks on the complaints over such discrimination among students in all universities and higher education institutions besides the consequent action. Senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for the mothers of students Rohit Vemula and Paval Tadvi, who allegedly died by suicide after facing caste-based discrimination, said from 2004 till now over 50 students (mostly from SC/ST) had killed themselves in IITs and other institutions after facing such discrimination. While Vemula, a PhD scholar at Hyderabad Central University died on January 17, 2016, Tadvi, a student at TN Topiwala National Medical College, died on May 22, 2019, after she was subjected to purported discrimination by three doctors in her college. The bench said a PIL was filed in 2019 but no substantial hearing had taken place on the issue so far. "From now on we will list this petition periodically so that some effective solution could be found in the

matter as since 2019 nothing much has happened," said Justice Surya Kant. The UGC counsel submitted a committee constituted by it gave recommendation and the commission drafted new regulations to stop caste-based discrimination. "The draft regulations need to be put on the website to invite objections and suggestions from the public in a month's time and thereafter it will be notified," he said. The bench questioned the UGC over the delay and said it had been sleeping all this while and not come up with new regulations. "How much time is needed to notify the new regulations? You do it in one month and place it on record," the bench said and posted the matter after six weeks. It sought the assistance of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on the matter along with the response of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous institution under the UGC which assesses and accredits higher education institutions. On September 20, 2019, the top court issued notice on the

PIL which also sought to enforce the fundamental rights, particularly the Right to Equality, Right to Prohibition of Discrimination against caste, and the Right to Life. The plea alleged "rampant prevalence" of caste-based discrimination in higher educational institutions throughout the country. The petitioners sought directions to the Centre and the UGC to strictly ensure the enforcement and compliance of the 2012 regulations. Seeking directions to the Centre and the UGC, the plea asked to ensure all the educational institutions, complied with the regulations in "letter and in spirit" apart from establishing equal opportunity cells on the lines of similarly existing anti-discrimination internal complaints mechanisms, and have representation from the SC/ST, NGOs or social sector to ensure objectivity and impartiality. Further, a direction was sought to all universities to take strong disciplinary action against victimisation of students or staff over caste-based discrimination and protecting students from any hostility in campuses.

Right to property a Constitutional right, says SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court has said that the right to property is a constitutional right and an individual cannot be deprived of his property without him being paid adequate compensation in accordance with the law. A bench of justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said the right to property ceased to be a fundamental right due to the Constitution (Forty-Fourth Amendment) Act, 1978, however, it continues to be a human right in a welfare state and a constitutional right under Article 300-A of the Constitution. Article 300-A of the Constitution provides that no person shall be deprived of his property, save by authority of law. The apex court delivered its verdict on Thursday on an appeal challenging a November 2022 judgment of the Karnataka High Court in a matter pertaining to land acquisition for the Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure



Corridor Project (BMICP). "As discussed hereinabove, though the right to property is no more a fundamental right, in view of the provisions of Article 300-A of the Constitution of India, it is a constitutional right," the bench said. "A person cannot be deprived of his property without him being paid adequate compensation in accordance with law for the same," it said in its verdict on the compensation related to the infrastructure corridor project.

The bench noted that in January 2003, a preliminary notification was issued by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) for acquiring lands for the project and in November 2005, the possession of land of the appellants was taken over. The top court said the land owners, who were appellants before it, were required to knock at the doors of the courts on a number of occasions during the last 22 years and they have been deprived of their property

without any compensation for the same. The top court noted there was no delay which could be attributed to the appellants in not getting compensation, but it was on account of the "lethargic attitude" of the officers of the State/KIADB that the appellants were deprived of compensation. The bench said that only after notices were issued in contempt proceedings, the compensation was determined by the Special Land Acquisition Officer (SLAO) on April 22, 2019, taking guideline values prevailing in 2011 for determining the market value of the acquired land. The judgment said if the compensation to be awarded at the market value as of 2003 was permitted, it would amount to permitting a travesty of justice and making the constitutional provisions under Article 300-A a mockery. It was a fit case for the apex court to exercise its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution and direct the shifting of the date for determination of the market value of

the land of the appellants. "We, therefore, in exercise of power of this court under Article 142 of the Constitution of India, find it appropriate in the interest of justice that the SLAO be directed to determine the compensation to be awarded to the appellants herein on the basis of the market value prevailing as on April 22, 2019," the bench said. The top court directed that the SLAO shall pass a fresh award taking the market value prevailing as on April 22, 2019 within two months after hearing the parties. "The rights of parties to challenge the award in reference, if they are aggrieved by it, shall remain open," the bench said. It noted the appellants have been deprived of their legitimate dues for almost 22 years. "It can also not be controverted that money is what money buys. The value of money is based on the idea that money can be invested to earn a return, and that the purchasing power of money decreases over time due to inflation," said the judgment.

SC agrees to examine CBI's plea against acquittal of Ram Rahim

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine the CBI's appeal against the acquittal of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and four others in the 2002 murder of Ranjit Singh, a former manager of the sect. The Punjab and Haryana High Court on May 28, 2024, acquitted Singh and others in the case, observing the probe was "tainted and sketchy". Sira-based sect leader Singh, who is serving a 20-year jail term for the charges of raping two of his disciples, is currently lodged in Sunaria Jail in Rohtak, Haryana. He was also awarded life-term imprisonment for the murder of journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati, which will commence after the completion of his current sentence. Singh in the past grabbed headlines for securing parole many times. On Friday, a bench comprising

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar issued notices to the five acquitted persons including Singh. The bench took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, that a bench headed by Justice Bela M Trivedi had issued notices to the acquitted persons on a separate plea filed by the deceased's father against the High Court verdict. "Our attention has been drawn to the office report dated September 9, 2024 regarding the order passed by the bench of Justice Bela Trivedi. Issue notice... Matter is to be listed before the bench presided over by Justice Bela Trivedi," said the top court. Ranjit Singh was fatally shot at by four unidentified assailants at Khanpur Kolian Village in Haryana's Kurukshetra on July 10, 2002. The murder was allegedly orchestrated by Singh, who suspected the deceased of

being behind the circulation of an anonymous letter accusing him of sexually exploiting his women followers. The CBI, which took over the probe in November 2023, said there was a clear motive behind the crime. A division bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, however, acquitted Singh observing the prosecution's failure to conclusively establish the motive and said the case was "shrouded in doubts". Those acquitted include Avtar Singh, Krishan Lal, Jasbir Singh, and Sabdil Singh whereas another accused Inder Sain, died during the pendency of the trial in 2020. A special CBI court in Panchkula, Haryana, convicted all the accused in October, 2021 and sentenced them to life-term imprisonment in the murder case. Singh was held guilty of hatching a criminal conspiracy with the co-accused persons.

SC upholds order saying Haryana Congress MLA Panwar's arrest illegal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has observed ED's "high-handedness" and "inhuman conduct" during an almost 15-hour long interrogation of former Haryana Congress MLA Surrender Panwar and upheld an order saying his arrest was illegal. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said it was an "inhuman conduct" on part of ED officers as the case was not related to some terror activity but of an alleged illegal sand mining. "This is not the way to treat people in such a case. You have virtually forced a person to make a statement," it said. Dismissing the Enforcement Directorate (ED)'s plea against the high court order, the bench held, "We are not inclined to interfere with the finding of the high court that the arrest of the



respondent was illegal." The High Court's findings, it said, were only for deciding whether Panwar's arrest was illegal. "These findings will not affect the merits of the pending complaint under Section 44 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002," said the bench in its order on December 2. The court said the ED's approach in

conducting the probe was a "shocking state of affairs" where a person was virtually forced to make a statement. ED's counsel Zohab Hussain said the High Court had erred in its finding that Panwar was continuously quizzed for 14.40 hours, pointing to a dinner break during the interrogation. The lawyer said ED in a 2024 circular asked its officials

to maintain certain standards of interrogations and to ensure people were not interrogated during late night and in early hours of the day. Panwar, 55, was taken into custody in the wee hours of July 20, 2024, in Gurugram and produced before a special PMLA court in Ambala which sent him to the custody of the ED till July 29, 2024 in an illegal mining-linked money-laundering case. The agency raided the premises of the former Sonepat MLA in January, 2024, on charges of "large-scale illegal mining" in the Yamunanagar area of the state. The money-laundering case stems from several FIRs registered by the Haryana Police for probing alleged illegal mining of boulders, gravel and sand that took place in the past in Yamunanagar and nearby districts despite a ban imposed by the NGT.

MEA rejects Washington Post report linking New Delhi to plot against Muizzu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday rejected two recent reports published by the Washington Post -- one linking New Delhi to a failed plot to impeach Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu and another on Indian agents allegedly attempting to eliminate certain terror elements in Pakistan. Dismissing the reports, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the newspaper and the reporter in question appear to nurse a "compulsive hostility" towards India. In its report on the Maldives, the Washington Post, citing a document titled "Democratic Renewal Initiative", claimed that opposition politicians proposed bribing 40 members of Parliament, including those



from Muizzu's own party, to vote to impeach him. After months of secret talks, the plotters failed to gather enough votes to impeach the president, it said. "Both the newspaper and the reporter in question appear to nurse a compulsive hostility

towards India. You can see a pattern in their activities. I leave you to judge their credibility. As far as we are concerned, they have none," Jaiswal said. "As regards (the report on) Pakistan, I remind you of what Hillary Clinton said -- 'You cannot keep snakes in your

backyard and expect them only to bite your neighbours,'" he said. Clinton had made the comments in a blunt message to Pakistan in 2011, when she was serving as the US secretary of state. She had also said that Washington intended to "push the Pakistanis very hard" to remove militant safe havens and tackle groups like the Haqqani network that are responsible for cross-border strikes. In its report on India's "shadow" operations in Pakistan, the Washington Post, quoting unnamed Pakistani and western officials, claimed that the Indian intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), is carrying out a programme since 2021 to "kill at least a half a dozen people" inside Pakistan.

Protests intensify in Bihar over BPSC exam controversy, rail and road traffic disrupted



PTI ■ PATNA
Protests intensified on Friday over the demand for cancellation of the recent Bihar PSC exam, as agitators disrupted rail and vehicular movement in Patna, while police stopped a few Left-leaning students' organisations from marching to the CM's residence. A day ahead of fresh tests for a select group of candidates, Independent MP Pappu

Yadav led his supporters in blocking rail and road traffic in several areas of Patna as well as other parts of the state, including Araria, Purnea and Muzaffarpur, officials said. The protesters gathered at Sachiwalay Halt Railway Station and squatted on the tracks for a brief period, causing a delay in the train movement, they said. Yadav's supporters also burnt tyres on roads in Purnea and

Patna, the officials said. "The agitators stopped the Buxar-Fatua passenger train at Sachiwalay Halt Station around 9 am. The train was stopped for 20 minutes," East Central Railway Chief Public Relation Officer Sarwati Chandra told PTI. Members of some Left-leaning students' organisations also clashed with police upon being stopped from marching towards the chief

minister's residence in the state capital, the officials said. Meanwhile, Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor continued with his fast-unto-death that he began on Thursday to press the demand for cancellation of the 70th Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) conducted by the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) on December 13. Mocking Kishor, Yadav likened the

former political strategist to well-known conman 'Natwar Lal'. "He is 'Natwar Lal', who sits on fast-unto-death in the evening after having lunch. Please don't talk about him," Yadav told reporters. The Independent MP, along with his supporters, also took out a march from Sachiwalay Halt Railway Station to JP Golumber, where police stopped them from proceeding further.

Top leaders pay tribute to former PM Manmohan Singh at prayer meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Several top dignitaries paid tributes to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at a prayer meet organised in his memory at Gurudwara Rakab Ganj here. Among the top leaders who attended the prayer meeting (Kirtan and Antim Ardas) included Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. Former SGPCC president Bibi Jagir Kaur, Leader of Opposition in Punjab assembly Pratap Bajwa and former deputy chairperson of the then Planning Commission Montek



Singh Ahluwalia also attended the prayer. Others who attended the ceremony included Congress leaders Jaresh Ramesh and Pawan Khera, former Union ministers Salman Khurshid and Ajay Maken, and Sukhjinder Randhawa. BJP's Praneet Kaur and Manjinder Singh Sirsa were also present. Earlier, former vice-president

Hamid Ansari, Sonia Gandhi and Kharge were among the dignitaries who attended the 'Akhand Path' at the ex-prime minister's residence on Friday. Former prime minister's wife, Gursharan Kaur sang a 'shabad (verse)' from the Sikh holy scriptures during the 'Akhand path (continuous recitation of Guru Granth Sahib)' at his residence.

Gurugram traffic police to wear body cameras to enhance road safety and transparency

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram traffic police will soon be equipped with body-worn video cameras to catch traffic violators on vital roads of Gurugram like MG Road and Golf Course Road. The cameras are expected to enhance road safety for both the traffic police and the residents of Gurugram. "All traffic inspectors and zonal officers were given instructions to use body-worn cameras while challaning and were also instructed not to argue with any driver while



challenging and to do their work with pleasant behaviour," Virender Vij, DCP (traffic), said. While challaning, the activities of the driver and the intersection will also be

recorded with the use of these body-worn cameras. All these recordings will be kept safely so that in future if required, these body-worn camera recordings can be used for any evidence," he said.

Manipur CM clarifies apology, says opponents seeking unrest amid ethnic conflict

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Friday claimed that those who are indulging in politics over his apology to the people on the 20-month-long ethnic conflict are seeking unrest in the north-eastern state, and said his government's priority is to restore peace. Claiming that "past is past", he appealed to communities to sit together and find a permanent solution to the conflict that has plagued the northeastern state since May 2023. "Those who are indulging in politics over my statement are seeking unrest.

The opposition has no ideology. What I said was an expression of sadness and grief. My apology was to those who have been suffering and have lost their loved ones. Why should I say sorry to terrorists? I am saying sorry to the innocent people and those who were displaced from their homes," Singh said. The chief minister had on Tuesday apologised for the ethnic conflict in the state, which claimed more than 250 lives and rendered thousands homeless and appealed to all communities to forget and forgive past mistakes and start afresh.

President Droupadi Murmu hails NIMHANS as model for integrated medicine services

PTI ■ BENGALURU

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday hailed NIMHANS for its integrated medicine services as she considered it as a model for all. According to her, the application of Yoga and Ayurveda in the promotion of mental health and well being is worth emulating. "The integrative medicine services of NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences) has been a model for all to examine the applications of Yoga and Ayurveda in the promotion of mental health and well being, and in that treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders," Murmu said during the



Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Institute here. On the occasion, she inaugurated the Psychiatry Specialty Block, Central Laboratory Complex and

Bhima Hostel at NIMHANS. The President also dedicated state-of-the-art diagnostic facilities - the advanced 3T MRI Scanner and DSA System to the nation.

She said different kinds of meditations are also useful in countering negative mental forces, and added that they are being integrated in the Mental health care models.

She underlined the importance of using traditional approaches that are beneficial for all. Murmu said, "Our scriptures tell us that the mind is at the root of everything we perceive in the world." She underlined that greater focus on mental health promotions will become even more important in the years ahead. In the past, issues and concern of mental health had not received enough attention in some societies, the President said, adding that in recent times, awareness about mental health has been rising. She further said that the unscientific belief and stigma associated with mental illnesses are a matter of past, making it easier for those

suffering from various ailments to seek help. "This has been a welcome development, especially at this juncture, because a variety of mental health issues are taking epidemic proportions around the world. The COVID 19 pandemic in particular led to a spike in such concerns," Murmu pointed out. According to the President, working professionals face more stress, and a large number of the elderly people suffer from loneliness due to social challenges. However, it is truly heartening to note that the rising awareness has made it possible for patients to open up and share their problems," she said.

Former union home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla takes oath as 19th Governor of Manipur

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Former union home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla took oath as the 19th governor of Manipur during a function at the Raj Bhavan here on Friday. Bhalla was administered the oath of office by Manipur High Court Chief Justice D Krishnakumar in the presence of Chief Minister N Biren Singh. He inspected the guard of honour by Manipur Rifles personnel. Speaking on Bhalla's swearing-in as the governor, the chief minister said, "He is a dynamic person who knows the ground reality and the situation of the state very well. He is a very committed person. I wholeheartedly



welcome him. With his appointment as the governor of the state, I believe that normalcy and peace will be restored at the earliest." The former union home secretary took oath as the governor at a time when strife-torn Manipur has been witnessing periodic ethnic clashes between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023.

"Appointing one of the intelligent and competent persons as the governor of the state during these trying times shows that the central government is serious about solving the problems of Manipur," Singh said. Bhalla, who has the rare distinction of being the longest-serving union home secretary, completed his five-year tenure in August last

year. He is a 1984-batch retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre. President Droupadi Murmu appointed Bhalla the governor of Manipur last month. "I know Bhalla ji. He is a well-experienced person and held many important posts. He held posts in the home department. We appreciate his appointment as the governor of Manipur. I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for Bhalla's appointment," the chief minister said. Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya was holding the additional charge of Manipur.

Police constables arrested for hotel manager's death in new year's party brawl

PTI ■ SHIMLA

A police constable was arrested and another placed under custody for allegedly killing a hotel manager at a New Year's party in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district, officials said on Friday. The accused, Anoop Kumar and Amit Kumar were posted as constables in the Chamba district while the victim was identified as hotel manager Rajinder Kumar. According to police, the incident occurred during a New Year's party when three police personnel visited a hotel in Bankhet, Chamba. Anoop and Amit got into a

heated argument with Rajinder and Sachin, a hotel employee. In the heat of the moment, Rajinder, Anoop and Sachin fell from the hotel's elevated parking space and suffered injuries. While Anoop and Sachin suffered fractures, Rajinder Kumar succumbed to injuries. Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhishek Yadav said that Amit has been arrested while Anoop will be formally placed under arrest after getting discharged from the hospital. The involvement of the third police personnel is under investigation. Rajinder's family members earlier held a protest and

demanding action against the accused. They blocked the Pathankot-Chamba National Highway for a few hours which disrupted vehicular movement. They withdrew the protest after the SP assured them of stern action. Yadav said that the accused were posted in Chamba and were sent to Dalhousie for duty. "While they were returning from their duty, they headed up to the hotel where the incident took place. We have also checked CCTV footage in which we can see that a scuffle had taken place" he said. Further investigation into the matter is underway, he added.

Odisha CM declares unseasonal rain as natural calamity

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Friday declared the unseasonal rain in December last year as a natural calamity to facilitate disbursement of compensation from the state disaster response fund (SDRF) to farmers for crop damage due to the untimely weather event. Addressing the 'Krushi Odisha Conclave' 2025 here, he said farmers who have lost 33 per cent or more crops due to the unseasonal rain, would be provided assistance as per the provisions in the relief code. The assistance of around Rs 291 crore will be given from the state disaster response fund (SDRF), he said. "Unseasonal rain was not on the list of natural calamities in the state. However, keeping in view the crop damage and plight of farmers, our government today declares the unseasonal rain as a natural calamity in the state to facilitate the disbursement of compensation from the state disaster response fund," he said. According to district collectors, 6,66,720 farmers have so far reported 33 per cent or more crop loss due to rain between December 20 and 28, the chief minister said. "These cultivators are entitled to get financial assistance of about Rs 291.59 crore as compensation," he said. Crop on around 2,26,791 hectares of agricultural land has been damaged by the untimely weather event, he added.

2013 to 2025, Maha Kumbh grows threefold in 12 years

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

As the sacred city of Prayagraj prepares to host the Maha Kumbh 2025, an air of excitement envelops the region, promising a spiritual gathering unparalleled in scale and splendour. This iteration of the Kumbh Mela surpasses the grandeur of 2013, showcasing transformative progress in infrastructure and amenities, making it a hallmark of modern governance and cultural heritage. The event's ₹5010 crore budget, bolstered by ₹2010 crore from the central government, marks a monumental rise from the ₹1214 crore allocated for the 2013 Kumbh. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi



Adityanath remarked, "This year's Kumbh is not just a religious event but a global spectacle. The increased budget reflects our dedication to creating world-class

infrastructure for devotees from around the globe." The Maha Kumbh grounds have expanded from 16 square kilometers in 2013 to a sprawling 40 square

kilometers, accommodating an estimated 40 crore pilgrims over 45 days. Mahakumbh Nagar, a temporary district with 25 sectors and 56 police stations, exemplifies meticulous planning. "The scale of Maha Kumbh 2025 is unprecedented. This transformation highlights how far we have come in managing such a massive event," said Dr. Shailendra Singh, a senior official overseeing preparations. For devotees, the improvements are palpable. The number of toilets has surged from 33,903 to 1.5 lakh, complemented by 300 portable units, while change rooms have increased fourfold to 10,000. "Our aim is to provide not just a

spiritual experience but also a safe and hygienic environment for everyone," said Ramesh Tiwari, sanitation head of Mahakumbh Nagar. Naval Raghuvanshi, a regular pilgrim from Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, shared his experience: "I also came to the Maha Kumbh in 2013. There is a lot of difference between that system and today's system. Facilities have increased. Earlier, we had three toilets in our camp; this time, we have 11. We used to get two taps; now, we have six taps." Transportation facilities have also undergone a remarkable upgrade. Over 7,000 buses, including 200 air-conditioned ones, and more than 200 charter flights will

complement regular flights from 23 cities, while 3,000 special trains will ensure seamless connectivity. The infrastructure is geared to handle the daily influx of approximately 5 lakh passengers. Lighting and energy have seen significant advancements, with ₹391 crore allocated to power the Kumbh area. The setup includes 1,532 kilometers of wiring, 67,000 streetlights, and 170 substations. "Illuminating the Kumbh is as symbolic as it is practical, embodying the light of spirituality that guides millions," observed A.K. Mishra, Chief Engineer for Maha Kumbh 2025. Technology will play a vital role, with drones, AI-powered

cameras, and face-recognition systems ensuring security and efficiency. Visitors can also access real-time assistance via a dedicated Google Chat feature. The event is expected to break records, with peak attendance on Mauni Amavasya, January 29, anticipated to exceed 4 crore devotees, surpassing the 3 crore recorded in 2013. Swami Anand Giri, a noted spiritual leader, expressed, "Maha Kumbh 2025 is not just an event; it is a phenomenon that unites humanity in faith and devotion." With its fusion of tradition and modernity, Maha Kumbh 2025 is set to redefine spiritual gatherings, serving as a beacon of India's rich cultural legacy and innovative capabilities.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

America under attack

A series of seemingly unrelated attacks highlight a troubling pattern of violence that has become a daily occurrence in the US

It is not a good beginning of the new year for the United States. The United States witnessed a series of attacks that shook it to core: a truck-ramming incident in New Orleans, a shooting incident in New York and a shooting spree in Las Vegas. These events, happening in quick succession, underscore an alarming pattern of violence that warrants deep analysis into their causes and potential implications. In New Orleans, a truck driven by Shamsud Din Jabbar plowed into a crowd, killing 15 and injuring 30. The truck, bearing an ISIS flag, was found to contain weapons and potential improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Jabbar was killed in a shootout with law enforcement and the FBI is treating the incident as an act of terrorism. Several people were injured after a mass shooting incident at the Amazura nightclub in Queens, New York late on Wednesday. Meanwhile, one person was killed and seven were wounded when a Tesla Cybertruck exploded outside a hotel belonging to US President-elect Donald Trump in Las Vegas. Motives remain unclear, but early investigations point to ideological influences. The attacks share a few commonalities. All incidents targeted densely populated, high-profile locations to maximise casualties and media coverage.



In New Orleans and potentially Las Vegas, ideological motives appear central, with Jabbar's ISIS affiliations highlighting international terrorism's persistent threat. The use of a vehicle, explosives, and firearms demonstrates the adaptability of attackers, making prevention increasingly complex. The motivations behind these attacks stem from several intersecting factors. Jabbar's case exemplifies how individuals, even the US citizens, can become radicalised through extremist propaganda, facilitated by online networks. The New York incident is case in point of hazards of allowing free gun culture and resistance to any law on gun control. Early reports from Las Vegas suggest mental health challenges combined with ideological leanings may have fueled the attack, a trend increasingly observed in lone-wolf attackers. The growing threat of extremism, combined with unchecked emotions and easy access to firearms, continues to claim innocent lives. The implications of these attacks call for enhanced surveillance, with increased monitoring of online platforms and extremist networks. The gun control is the need of the hour. Though the US is divided on the gun control, it is high times at least some initial steps were taken in this direction. The recent spate of attacks underscores a volatile and evolving threat perception in the US. While law enforcement's swift action has mitigated further tragedy, addressing the root causes of such violence requires a multifaceted approach. From tackling radicalisation to bolstering community resilience, the nation must remain vigilant and united against the forces that seek to sow fear and division.

Don't miss the special feature on Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, who leaves behind an extraordinary legacy as a leader, peacemaker and humanitarian.

PICTALK



A worker plucks chrysanthemum flowers at a farm, in Nadia

A legacy of leadership, humanity and service



SANTOSH MATHEW

Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, leaves behind an extraordinary legacy as a leader, peacemaker and humanitarian



Jimmy Carter, was one of the oldest living American presidents. Along with being the individual who has lived the longest after serving as president in American history, he is also distinguished for spending the most extended post-presidential period alive. Jimmy Carter, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his efforts in promoting human rights and conflict resolution, passed away in 2023. He was the 39th President of the United States, and he outlived many of his contemporaries, including George H.W. Bush, who he defeated in the presidential race in 1980. Born James Earl Carter Jr. on October 1, 1924, he has made a significant mark on American history. From 1977 to 1981, Jimmy Carter served as the President of the United States. Before becoming president, Jimmy Carter served as the Governor of Georgia in 1971. Despite running for president again in 1982 (Democrat) and competing against Ronald Reagan, he faced defeat. After leaving the presidency, he, along with his wife Rosalynn Carter, established the Carter Centre in 1982 in pursuit of helping the disadvantaged. Rosalynn Carter became the first lady and the first woman to serve as a board member of the

Carter Centre. In 2002, Jimmy Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts towards peace and his exemplary actions in promoting human welfare. Despite reaching the age of 90, he remained active in various fields. Carter continued his philanthropic work, including building houses for low-income families through Habitat for Humanity, reducing diseases and elevating the quality of life for the underprivileged. His advocacy for human rights, international conflict resolution, presidency, human rights, and socio-economic development reflects his dedication to humanitarian causes. Carter's dedication to peace and social justice, as well as his active involvement in public service, sets him apart among U.S. presidents. Carter played a key role in mediating international conflicts, notably contributing to the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. His post-presidential activities, including receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and actively participating in various humanitarian initiatives, showcase his commitment to making a positive impact on the world. However, his attempt to rescue



IN 2002, JIMMY CARTER WAS AWARDED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR HIS EFFORTS TOWARDS PEACE AND HIS EXEMPLARY ACTIONS IN PROMOTING HUMAN WELFARE. DESPITE REACHING THE AGE OF 90, HE REMAINED ACTIVE IN VARIOUS FIELDS

American hostages in Iran, known as Operation Eagle Claw, failed. In his personal life, Jimmy Carter married Rosalynn in 1946, and their marriage lasted more than seven decades. They have four children: Jack, James, Donnel, and Amy. Rosalynn "Rosallynn" Carter, actively participated in various activities, including writing, activism, and advocacy for different causes. She was born in 1927. Rosalynn was actively involved in various meetings and discussions as the First Lady. She faced controversies, engaged in foreign trips, and represented her husband in diplomatic roles. In 1978, the then-American President Jimmy Carter visited India. Morarji Desai was the Prime Minister at that time. He had a meeting with 500 media persons. Carter visited the village of Chumukedima. The purpose of his visit was to revitalize the village where his mother, Lillian Peace, had served in the Peace Corps. During his journey, Carter distributed a considerable amount of money and television to the villagers. The village was later renamed as Carterpuri. In 2015, Jimmy Carter was diagnosed with

cancer, and in 2019, he faced health challenges related to multiple falls. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Carter, at the age of 96, stayed at home due to the pandemic's circumstances. Despite facing challenges and controversies, Jimmy Carter remained an active and influential figure in national and international affairs throughout his life. His contributions to diplomacy, human rights, and conflict resolution earned him recognition and respect. Even though his time as the American President failed, he left the White House and continued his work as a global advocate for human rights. He established the Carter Presidential Foundation to protect human rights globally, helping those in need and experiencing hardship. The organization has grown globally, assisting those in distress in Africa, Latin America, and other societies. Carter's compassionate activities in these regions included health-care services and other humanitarian initiatives. Today, he remains one of the eminent figures among the great presidents of America. (The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

Balancing dreams and parental aspirations: A dilemma for students

In a society deeply rooted in tradition and shaped by economic uncertainty, parents often tread cautiously when guiding their children's career paths

We tend to be over-cautious when we guide our children in their professional choices. I realised this only after I had cajoled my children into studying sciences till their class 12. My rationale was that they could always switch to any other course for graduation, but the reverse was not possible. They are now happily pursuing their non-science professions, often ribbing me about how much better they could have done in their Board examinations had I not insisted. Many parents from my social circle still struggle to resolve the conundrum. A senior colleague faced such a dilemma for his daughter two decades back. My daughters were by now happily pursuing their dreams. I freely dispensed my wisdom to let the young lady pursue whatever she wanted. He was contemplative for some time before agreeing. He remembered his school friend, the son of a famous medical doctor. The friend was pushed into a medical college sometime in the late sixties. He quit after a couple of years, joined a



course in liberal arts, and was a contented leading artist. I was born a few years after independence. I believe our parents were excited about freedom but were equally apprehensive about the future for the next generation. They opted for the more secure government jobs for us through engineering or medical studies. Children from families who had already seen enough government jobs through second-generation elders started moving to other options in the nineties. The liberalisation of the Indian economy opened professional choices hitherto unknown to children and parents alike. But it was still not the same across the entire spectrum. A junior colleague sought my advice regarding his son's admission to an engineering course. The child had not performed well in the competi-

tive examinations. The fee charged by the available lower-rung colleges was exorbitant, necessitating the father to take a loan. It was tragic as he came to me after five years, a year after the young man had completed his graduation and had been unable to secure a job, requesting if I could arrange a job even at a measly monthly salary. I witnessed several similar cases and wondered about the strange phenomenon even half a century after independence when several better-paying career options were available. An improved economy has resulted in a continuous upward movement of people financially from the below-poverty line to the lower class to the lower-middle-class to the middle-middle-class, and so on. However, an increasing population also ensures a part of the population remains in the lower financial strata. These parents are insecure about the future leading them towards the perceived safer educational courses for children to pursue. We read about senior leaders exhorting young people to become job providers instead of job

seekers. Not many talk about the ways to achieve this or the alternate career options. Engineering and medical colleges keep mushrooming without the government and the leaders pausing to reflect upon the implications of unplanned growth. This will continue for a few more generations till the population stabilizes. I narrate experiences from my life when interacting with the young in college. I tell them to pursue their dreams. A few of them invariably ask me whether to follow the courses that their parents have chosen for them or if they should follow their dreams. It is a difficult question to answer. I draw upon my life when I respond, "Follow your parents today, they only want the best for you. But do not let your dreams die. Life gives enough opportunities for you to pursue your dreams - if not today, certainly sometime in the future."

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



SANJAY CHANDRA

ENSURE WORKERS' SAFETY

Madam — This refers to the editorial, 'Save Priya' (January 3). It is indeed the responsibility of the Indian government to ensure the safety and security of millions of Indian nationals who choose to avail the employment opportunities extended in other countries. When the government is not able to provide employment in India, it is but natural that helpless people venture going abroad seeking livelihood means. Had the government provided jobs they would not have thought of going abroad. Therefore, the government should negotiate with the countries employing Indians to ensure the safety and security of the employees. In case any of them are found guilty of any crime, they should be sent back to face legal proceedings in the home country. This is not new. In the case of Abu, the extradition is agreed to with the condition of not awarding him capital punishment. Above all, it is time to rethink awarding capital punishment. Let us imagine a scene of punishing all those involved in various crimes, those who instigated and promoted them in Manipur in the recent months. An individual killing another individual is a crime to be punished by awarding death sentences, but mass killing and raping go unpunished and even if punished, enjoy remission and paroles. Review is imminent.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

ISIS STRIKES AGAIN

Madam — Apropos of the headlines 'Terror Strikes United States' (January 3), the ghastly terror strikes before Donald Trump swears in his second term as president are ominous for his upcoming tenure and may influence and harden his policy on terrorism throughout the world. The army veteran Shams Ud Din Jabbar, swayed by ISIS, can't be alone in executing the terrorist attacks killing 14 people and fatally injuring several citizens. In fact, he got the advanced arms training and technology from the US army itself. The police investigation may unearth the

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sports award winners announced



The list of sports award winners is finally made public now, and the names of those who received the government nod for the Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award include D Gukesh, Harmanpreet Singh, Manu Bhaker and Praveen Kumar. Also, there is a long list for the Arjuna Awards, Dronacharya Award and the others. Although every recipient is worthy of receiving the honours for doing exceptionally well in their respective sports field. But D Gukesh is worthy of receiving extra appreciation for clinching the

title at such an early age of 18. He excellently carved out his own space for the national sport honours by becoming the winner of the FIDE World Chess Championship, beating Ding Liren most recently last December 2024. His calmness, grit and sacrifices on personal grounds, as well as his patience for his sports category, made him the utmost deserving candidate for this very honour. He has taken chess to new heights for being a cynosure in the Indian sports history. Today chess has become a popular mind-game among the youth, especially Gen Z & Gen Alpha. All credit goes to the young aspirations & zeal of D Gukesh, R Vaishali and Praggnandhaa who have made this 6-century-based, Indian-origin game called Shatranj reach the epitome of sports craze among players of every generation. He is in true sense, India's Khel Ratna (Sports Gem).

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

deep conspiracy, but the vulnerability for terror attacks is conspicuous.

Islamic fundamentalism has already destroyed Islamic countries where nationality and geographical boundaries are deeply divided among ethnic groups. Islamic terrorism has gripped Asia, America and Africa and the peace is unsustainable. Let Islamic countries settle their own nationalities and borders without foreign intervention and fight internecine wars among themselves. There is a need to adopt a policy of keeping away from Islamic fundamentalist countries from all diplomatic channels, trade and security agreements. The extremist and fundamentalist leadership of all those countries are inflicting gruesome attacks in the US, Europe and India. The diplomatic channels in the Islamic countries are failing. It may be recalled that in the past, the US had to abandon Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan after decades of feeding them and strengthening them. The world needs to rethink fighting terrorism.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

SOLAR POWER FOR RESIDENTS

Madam — It is an excellent initiative by the UT Administration of Chandigarh to provide solar plants to the residents of the 'City Beautiful' under the RESCO (Renewable Energy Service Company) scheme at no cost, inviting the tapping of solar energy and savings for every household. The sun is available in plenty in northern India, which will make the scheme very successful. This scheme needs to be promulgated rapidly in other cities of the nation too, with the initiative of the Union government, to benefit the maximum number of people. It will help in saving natural energy, a privilege available in abundance to only a few select countries. The government should ensure that benefits are given only to those holding authorised infrastructure duly registered to discourage further unauthorised constructions and ensure correct utilisation of government funds.

R S Narula | Patiala

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FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING JEALOUSY AND POSSESSIVENESS

In a world driven by competition and material aspirations, they become the silent tormentors



RAVI VALLURI

The world has become exceedingly ruthless and is not populated by monks and sages. Renunciation today is seen as an act contemptibly performed by someone lacking in courage. Competition fuels the aspiration to launch territories and enlarge the area of dominance. Companies, countries and communities have all become wary of the material success of their 'competitors' and in the process compromise with their goals and objectives. Consequently, they resort to shortcuts to emerge triumphant and victorious. The attribute of jealousy arises in an individual when the mind is possessive of certain belongings.

They fail to appreciate it is primarily inadequacy and deficiency in the personality that triggers this kind of capricious and mercurial behaviour. Interestingly, envy in many also arises out of shortages. There can be a lack of aptitude, talent, resources, connections, opportunities or because of unfavourable outcomes. This engenders negative feelings towards perceived competitors, which culminates in jealousy and other negative feelings. Individuals subsumed by jealousy build walls of false security walls around their personalities.

Such minds feel cheery about their possessions. They attach importance to this property, clinging on to it. This could be a physical property, position, power and pelf, pleasure or sex. As per the Mahabharata, Karna was extremely jealous of Arjuna, which eventually proved to be his nemesis. Similarly, Dev Dutt remained extremely envious of his enlightened



cousin, Buddha, which only led to his downfall. The jealous and possessive mind is acquisitive by nature, taking both animate and inanimate objects for granted and getting attached to things, like an addiction to alcohol or marijuana.

Additionally, such a mind is perpetually petrified at the prospect of losing acquisitions. Fear in such minds harbours negative tendencies such as hatred, greed and ruthlessness. For instance, an artiste aspiring to be a lead artiste in a drama plays foul with a more talented actress becoming fearful and gripped with hatred and greed. Her ruthless mind kept conjuring tricks, trying to outsmart the second lead and in the bargain lost the plot. Jealous and envious minds have become laboratories of antagonism that spew hatred. How do we overcome attributes such as jealousy, envy, and possessiveness? At one end of the spectrum are organisations and authorities which need to take up this responsibility. This includes proper parenting, where children are brought up on ideals of inherent goodness, an effective educational system that imparts values as part of their pedagogy, governments that take up the responsibility of providing equal opportunities to the citizens and try to carve out an egalitarian system and a society that addresses the core issues of humaneness amongst its citizenry. Vasudeva Kutumbakam (or what is termed one world family) is the net result. The spiritual touch is an important colour in the rainbow of goodness. One can practice any faith, but we need to be tolerant of other peoples' points of view. Spirituality succeeds where religions draw the fault lines and wave red flags. Globalisation has made the world flat, but has resulted in an exponential increase in crass commercialisation and human minds have fallen prey to antipathetic traits such as jealousy, envy, attachments, entanglements, greed and possessiveness. The vicious tendencies of jealousy and possessiveness can be tackled by following the two-fold approach highlighted so that the chasm between individuals diminishes. "Manifest plainness Embrace simplicity Reduce selfishness Have few desires." — Lao Tzu

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

How waterways shape global dominance



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

Beyond the rhetoric of ideologies and resources, history reveals a stark reality: whoever commands the strategic arteries of global trade rules, the world



Have you ever wondered why the world's most significant conflicts haven't often been about land or wealth, but about water—specifically, the narrow, strategic passages that govern the flow of global commerce? What if the true history of power isn't written in the conquest of continents, but in the manipulation of these invisible arteries that sustain entire civilisations? We've been conditioned to believe wars are fought over ideologies, religions, or resources, but in reality, the greatest power struggles have always boiled down to one thing: who controls the waterways. In the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE), Athens fought for dominance over the Aegean Sea, while the Punic Wars (264–146 BCE) saw Rome and Carthage clash over Mediterranean trade routes. The Viking Invasions (8th–11th Century) leveraged rivers and coastal routes to expand across Europe. The Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) revolved around control of the English Channel, vital for military and trade access.

The Spanish Armada (1588) attempted to invade England via the Channel, only to fail, marking the rise of English naval power. The Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652–1674) pitted England against the Dutch for supremacy over global trade routes. The Opium Wars (1839–1860) saw Britain assert control over Chinese trade routes, while the Crimean War (1853–1856) focused on access to the Black Sea and key straits. History teaches us one undeniable truth: whoever controls the waters, controls the world. So, are today's tensions over waterways merely the latest chapter in an ongoing imperialist saga, where the West fights to preserve its dominance, regardless of the cost? Consider the Suez Canal, that artificial marvel that stitched together the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

To the naked eye, it may appear as nothing more than a lifeline for global trade, but dig deeper and you'll find it at the heart of Western exploitation. When the British seized control in 1882, under the convenient pretext of 'protecting their investments,' they didn't just shorten maritime routes; they solidified their chokehold on the world's shipping routes, ensuring that they would remain the dominant force in global com-



THE PANAMA CANAL EXISTS BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES ORCHESTRATED THE DISINTEGRATION OF COLOMBIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN 1903. THIS WASN'T A MOMENT OF ENGINEERING BRILLIANCE, BUT A CALCULATED EXERCISE IN IMPERIALISM

merce. When Egypt's Nasser attempted to break this grip in 1956, his actions sparked the Suez Crisis, where Britain, France, and Israel launched a military intervention to maintain their control. As US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles famously quipped, "The United States will not tolerate the use of force to interfere with the free flow of commerce." And yet, isn't it glaringly obvious that this was never about commerce at all—it was about the West's attempt to secure its monopoly, at any cost? In the same vein, the Panama Canal stands as a bold symbol of imperial manipulation. The US didn't merely 'build' the canal—it stole it.

The Panama Canal exists because the United States orchestrated the disintegration of Colombian sovereignty in 1903. This wasn't a moment of engineering brilliance, but a calculated exercise in imperialism. With the canal, the US secured its unchallenged control over the Atlantic and Pacific, guaranteeing military and economic supremacy for the century to come. Even when Panamanian discontent festered, and the CIA's once-trusted ally Manuel Noriega threatened the established order, the United States responded with military force under the guise of 'fighting drug cartels.'

To the naive, it was a noble cause. To the cynical, it was a ruthless move to preserve a stranglehold over one of the world's most critical arteries. The canal may have technically been handed back to Panama in 1999, but let's not fool ourselves—it remains an essential tool of Western control, albeit one with a new face.

Let's not forget the Strait of Hormuz, a sliver of water that handles a quarter of the world's oil. The British recognised its significance early on, securing their dominance over it through protectorate agreements in the 19th century. By the time of the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s,

Hormuz had become the beating heart of the global oil trade, and any attempt to disrupt its flow was met with swift intervention.

Both sides sought to shut it down, understanding that control over Hormuz meant control over global energy. Yet, even today, with Iran flexing its military muscles, Western powers continue to police this waterway as though it were their birthright, ensuring that the oil flows uninterrupted, no matter the cost of human lives. Now, as the world shifts into a new era, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) is emerging as the latest theatre of power. Stretching along Russia's Arctic coastline, this passageway promises to bypass traditional chokepoints like the Suez and Panama Canal, opening up a new frontier for global shipping. With the ice caps melting, climate change has inadvertently opened a new battlefield for dominance. The West, for all its talk of climate change solutions, is deeply uneasy about the NSR. For centuries, the Western maritime powers have been used to dictating global trade, yet now they face the challenge of a new route that circumvents their long-held control. And then there are the Turkish Straits—where the promise of control has always been laced with deception.

In World War I, the Entente powers offered Russia control over the straits in exchange for military support, only to revoke that promise after the Bolshevik Revolution. Since the Montreux Convention of 1936, Turkey has held sway over the straits, but with conditions that serve the interests of the West. These waters remain a hotbed of tension, especially now, as the Russia-NATO conflict forces us to re-evaluate the importance of these narrow waterways.

Yet, in all of these conflicts, one fact is clear: Western powers have never relinquished their thirst for control. Look at the Malacca Strait, the lifeline for Asia's maritime trade, and the silent battlefield of geopolitical manoeuvring. In the 16th century, the Portuguese recognised its importance as the gateway between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, and later, the Dutch would follow. During World War II, Japan's occupation of Malaya underscored the strait's value, as it was the critical supply line for its imperial ambitions.

Today, China's dominance of the strait has triggered an uneasy response from the United States, which seeks to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region. The Malacca Strait is as vital as it is contested, and its importance will only increase as the world edges closer to a new era of Cold War. Donald Trump's re-emergence as a political force serves as a blunt reminder that these conflicts are far from distant.

His comments on Greenland—a land abundant in resources and strategic significance—and on seizing Panama if needed, are not just idle musings. The United States' thirst for the Arctic has always been driven by the same imperial instincts that have defined its foreign policy for over a century. His fixation on the Panama Canal reveals the same ambitions, albeit with more brash rhetoric.

While many dismiss his comments as the reckless utterances of a man out of touch with the world's realities, those who know history understand that this is how empires operate: through calculated moves disguised as political theatrics. The bottom line is this: the manipulation of waterways remains an open secret, and the struggle for control is as intense as ever—whether by the West or any power with imperialistic and hegemonic ambitions.

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

Dalal Street ends 2024 on a bearish note: Rs 9.65 trillion investor wealth eroded

A focus on earnings growth and moderation in valuations will be critical for sustaining long-term market performance in 2025

The absence of new year cheer was evident as Dalal Street continued crashing in the last week of December leading to 2025, in the process eroding investors' wealth to the tune of Rs 9.65 trillion as Sensex tanked by 2,915 points. The bear run at a time when the market was already grappling with thin year-end volumes was made worse by a weakening rupee as it slid towards the 86-per-dollar mark. This further dampened the appeal of Indian equities for foreign institutional investors (FIIs) leading to robust FII outflows. The prevalence of this phenomenon was worldwide with Japan's Nikkei 225, China's Shanghai Composite, Australia's ASX 200, India with the world's Germany's DAX, France's

CAC 40 and NASDAQ Composite showing similar bearish sentiments. The current stock market meltdown is influenced by several factors. Not only in India, but global markets are witnessing this trend particularly due to profit-taking, and tax-loss harvesting focussing on year-end tax strategies, giving a miss to the traditional 'Santa Claus rally'. Institutional and retail investors alike booked profits and rebalanced their portfolios, particularly in large-cap stocks which posted strong growth in 2024, leading to selling pressure across the board and a broad-based correction. As economic interlinkages of India with the world have deepened, so has the integra-



HIMA BINDU KOTA

tion with global stock markets. The uncertain global economic conditions, particularly in countries like the United States, coupled with fears of a global recession fuelled by weak manufacturing data from China, have dampened investor sentiment both worldwide and in India. A decline in the demand for Indian exports, mainly in the IT and manufacturing sectors

further led to the market's downward spiral. Geopolitical tensions including regional wars, ambiguous crude oil prices and subsequent disruptions in supply chains have impacted the markets and sector-specific tragedies like the Jeju Air crash in South Korea contributed to the overall bearish sentiment. Weaker than expected third quarterly results, particularly in the banking and consumer goods sector, dampened the confidence displayed by the markets due to the resilient first two quarters showed by the Indian economy. This reduced the conviction further as the banking and consumer goods sectors were considered growth engines since the beginning of the year.



Stock market valuations in India and around the globe were elevated in 2024. In India, the higher valuations were fuelled by strong domestic economic growth and robust corporate earnings, leading to sustained investor confidence. Several companies ranging across industries were trading at premium P/E ratios, like Infosys (28-30x); HUL (55x); Bajaj Finance (40x); and

Zomato (10-12x) to name a few. However, since the question of sustaining the overvalued stocks in the backdrop of weak quarterly earnings is difficult, it led to the year-end market corrections that we are experiencing at the end of December 2024. Although the aggressive monetary policy by the Reserve Bank of India was able to combat inflation during the year, high interest rates negatively affected the borrowing costs of businesses and retail investors. This led to increased interest in investments in fixed-income securities instead of finding equity markets attractive. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) who were attracted to the Indian growth story and wanted to be its

integral part also turned into net sellers in December 2024. A risk-averse stance and a strong USD value made emerging nations like India less attractive during the year-end, leading to capital outflows, which in turn led to a weakening rupee again. Overall, the bearish stock market sentiment in December 2024 was a combination of year-end profit-taking strategies, global economic outlook, high stock valuation concerns, weak sectoral performance and outlook and several international events. However, all is not bleak. These fluctuations are a part of the larger economic cycle and the markets will see an upward cycle with a long-term focus on the fundamentals and relevant steps at

the policy level. The resilient Indian economy and its economic growth will be the key driver for renewed opportunities for growth and investment in 2025. This economic growth will be supported by increased investments in infrastructure, boosting the manufacturing environment to improve the industrial output, a burgeoning middle class and a revival of the rural economy may increase the demand for automobiles, FMCG and consumer durables in 2025. In addition, India's rapidly growing digital economy will continue to support new-age companies and sectors. (The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal)

Rana's attorney seeks review of US court's decision to extradite him to India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

An attorney for Mumbai-attack convict Tahawwur Rana has urged the US Supreme Court to review the lower court's decision to extradite him to India, citing the principle of double jeopardy which prevents a person from being tried or punished twice for the same offence. India is seeking the extradition of Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, as he is wanted in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks case. Having lost the legal battle in lower courts and several federal courts, including the US Court of Appeals for the North Circuit in San Francisco, Rana had filed a petition for a writ of certiorari before the US Supreme Court on November 13. On December 16, US Solicitor General Elizabeth B Prelogar urged the Supreme to reject the petition. Rana's counsel Joshua L Dratel, in his response on



December 23 challenged the US Government's recommendation and pleaded with the Supreme Court that his writ be accepted. In a long battle, this is Rana's last legal chance not to be extradited to India. "The (Supreme) Court should grant the writ. On the merits, it should hold that the term 'offence' in the double jeopardy provision of the United States-India extradition treaty (and many other similar treaties) refers to the conduct underlying the charges in the two countries, rather than the elements of the crimes the respec-

tive countries have charged," Dratel argued. The court has scheduled a conference for both parties on this issue on January 17. Rana, currently lodged in a jail in Los Angeles, faces charges for his role in the Mumbai attacks and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. In his petitions for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Rana argued that he was tried and acquitted in federal court in the Northern District of Illinois (Chicago) on charges relating to the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai. "India now seeks to extradite him for trial on charges based on the identical conduct at issue in the Chicago case," it said. Prelogar disagreed. "The government does not concede that all of the conduct

on which India seeks extradition was covered by the government's prosecution in this case," the US Solicitor General had said. "For example, India's forgery charges are based in part on conduct that was not charged in the United States; petitioner's use of false information in an application to formally open a branch office of the Immigration Law Center submitted to the Reserve Bank of India," she said. "It is not clear that the jury's verdict in this case—which involves conspiracy charges and was somewhat difficult to parse—means that he has been 'convicted or acquitted' on all of the specific conduct that India has charged," Prelogar said. A total of 166 people, including six Americans, were killed in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in which 10 Pakistani terrorists laid a more than 60-hour siege, attacking and killing people at iconic and vital locations of Mumbai.

South Korea's impeached president defies warrant after hourslong standoff

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korean investigators left the official residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol after a near-six-hour standoff on Friday during which he defied their attempt to detain him. It's the latest confrontation in a political crisis that has paralyzed South Korean politics and seen two heads of state impeached in under a month. The country's anti-corruption agency said it withdrew its investigators after the presidential security service blocked them from entering Yoon's residence for hours, due to concerns about their safety. The agency said its outnumbered investigators had several scuffles with presidential security forces and expressed "serious regret about the attitude of the suspect, who did not comply with the legal process." Outside the residence, a large group of pro-Yoon protesters braved freezing temperatures for hours, waving South Korean and American flags while chanting slogans vowing to protect him. The National Police Agency said it planned to investigate the chief and deputy chiefs of the presidential security service on suspicion of obstructing official duty and summoned them for questioning on Saturday. Yoon, a former prosecutor, has resisted investigators' attempts to question him for weeks. The last time he is known to have left the residence was on Dec. 12, when he went to the presidential office to make a televised statement to the nation, making a defiant statement that he will fight efforts to oust him. Investigators from the country's anti-corruption agency are weighing charges of rebellion after Yoon, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by an opposition-dominated parliament, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dis-



Police officers arrive at the gate of the presidential residence as supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose a court having issued a warrant to detain Yoon, in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. AP/PTI

patched troops to surround the National Assembly. Parliament overturned the declaration within hours in an unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events. A Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence on Tuesday, but enforcing them is complicated as long as he remains in his official residence. Yoon's lawyers, who filed a challenge to the warrant on Thursday, say it cannot be enforced at his residence due to a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge. The office said it will discuss further actions but did not immediately say whether it would make another attempt to detain Yoon. The warrant for his detention is valid for one week. Yoon's lawyers have also argued that the Corruption

Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military investigators, lacks the authority to investigate rebellion charges. They said that police officers don't have the legal authority to assist in detaining Yoon, and could face arrest by either the "presidential security service or any citizens." They didn't elaborate further on the claim. If investigators manage to detain Yoon, they will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, he will be released after 48 hours. During a background briefing to reporters, an official from the anti-corruption agency said its investigators were able to approach within 200 meters (yards) of Yoon's residence but were stopped by a barricade comprising around 10 vehicles and approximately 200 members of the presidential security forces and troops. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity per department rules, said three of its prosecutors were eventually allowed to approach the building but they weren't able to confirm whether

Yoon was inside. While the presidential security act mandates protection for Yoon, it does not authorize the presidential security service to block court-ordered detentions, which would amount to an infringement on judicial authority, said Park Seong-bae, an attorney specializing in criminal law. While the president mostly has immunity from prosecution while in office, the protection does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason. "There's a high possibility that the act of blocking the execution of a detention warrant would constitute an obstruction of official duty," he said. The law requiring consent of the person in charge for searches in locations with potential military secrets could continue to hinder Yoon's detention. Courts often require law enforcement officials to obtain search warrants with detention warrants in case they need to search the site to locate the suspect, which is also what the anti-corruption agency did in their pursuit of Yoon.

China downplays reports of flu outbreak, says country safe for travel

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Friday played down reports of a massive outbreak of flu in the country overwhelming hospitals, saying that cases of the

respiratory diseases which occur during the winter were less severe this year compared to last year. The Foreign Ministry here said it is safe for foreigners to travel to China.

"Respiratory infections tend to peak during the winter season in the northern hemisphere," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media here in response to a question on the

spread of influenza A and other respiratory diseases in China. Videos circulating on social media show overcrowded hospitals. "The diseases appear to be less severe and spread with a smaller scale compared to the previous year," she said. "I can assure you the Chinese government cares about the health of Chinese citizens and foreigners in China. It is safe to travel in China," she said. She also referred to guidelines issued by the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration of China regarding the prevention and control of respiratory diseases in the winter. For the past few days, reports of a massive flu outbreak in China have been circulating abroad, particularly in India and Indonesia. Health officials, however, maintain the outbreak is an annual occurrence during the winter. China is currently experiencing severe cold weather for the past few months.

Ukraine's president hopes Trump's strength and unpredictability can help end war with Russia

AP ■ KYIV

US President-elect Donald Trump is "strong and unpredictable," and those qualities can be a decisive factor in his policy approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. However, Zelenskyy said it won't be possible to end the almost three years of war in one day, as Trump claimed during his election campaign he could do. "The hot" stage of the war can end quite quickly, if Trump is strong in his position," Zelenskyy said in a Ukrainian television interview late Thursday, referring to fighting on the battlefield. "I believe (Trump) is strong and unpredictable. I would very much like President Trump's unpredictability to be directed primarily toward the Russian Federation," Zelenskyy said. Trump, who takes office on Jan.

20, hasn't publicly fleshed out his policy on Ukraine but his previous comments have put a question mark over whether the United States will continue to be Ukraine's biggest — and most important — military backer. Zelenskyy is eager to guarantee that Washington's support keeps coming, and he met with Trump in New York even before last November's US presidential election. With the war about to enter its fourth year next month, and with Trump coming to power, the question of how and when Europe's biggest conflict since World War II might end has come to the fore. Russia controls about one-fifth of Ukraine and last year capitalised on weaknesses in Ukraine's defences to slowly advance in eastern areas despite high losses of troops and equipment. The war's trajectory is not in Ukraine's favour. The alliance's 32 member coun-



tries say Ukraine will join one day, but not until the war ends. "The deployment of European troops (to keep the peace in Ukraine) should not rule out Ukraine's future in NATO," Zelenskyy said in the television interview. Zelenskyy described the incursion by Ukrainian forces into Russia's Kursk border region as a "very strong triumph card" in any future peace negotiations. In a bid to counter glum news from the front line, Ukraine seized part of Kursk last August in what was the first occupation of Russian territory since World War II. But the incursion didn't significantly change the dynamic of the war, and military analysts say Ukraine has lost some 40% of the land it initially captured. Nevertheless, Zelenskyy said the achievement impressed countries in Asia, South America and Africa and tarnished Russia's military reputation.

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, (यांत्रिकी शाखा), भोपाल
क्रमांक. 157/यां.वि./24
भोपाल, दिनांक 30.12.2024

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
निम्न कार्य हेतु म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत विवरण Website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर है।

क्र.	निविदा क्र.	कार्य का संक्षिप्त विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. में)	निविदा क्रय करने का अंतिम	
				दिनांक	समय
01	2024_UAD_391606_1	PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF PARK AT NAMO VAN AT LALGHATI M.P.	5,94,39,194/-	28-JAN-2025	05:30 PM

नोट - संशोधन केवल वेबसाइट पर ही देखे जा सकेंगे, समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित नहीं होंगे।
Executive Engineer
Municipal Corporation Bhopal
District Bhopal
दि.क्र. 103/024/025

U GRO Capital Limited
4th Floor, Tower 3, Equinox Business Park, LBS Road, Kurla, Mumbai 400070
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE OF 15 DAYS FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSET(S) ("SECURED ASSET(S)") UNDER THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISION TO RULE 8 AND 9 OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Secured Asset(s) mortgaged / charged to U GRO Capital Limited ("Secured Creditor"), the possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is what is" and "As is where is" and "Whatever there is" on the date of realization of amount, due to Secured Creditor from the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below. The Reserve Price, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and last date of EMD deposit is also mentioned herein below:

Details of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Details of Demand Notice	Details of Auction
1. Dawesco LLP 2. Neil Dawes Bhutani 3. Raemon Dawes Bhutani, 4. Arun Bhutani Loan Account Number : UGDELTH000011248	Date of Notice : 10-06-2024 Outstanding Amount : Rs. 85,66,772/- as on 05-06-2024	Reserve Price : ₹ 1,00,37,115/- EMD ₹ 10,03,712/- Last date of EMD Deposit : 22-01-2025 Date of Auction : 24-01-2025 Time of Auction : 11 AM to 01 PM Incremental Value : Rs. 1,00,000/-

Description of Secured Assets: "All that part and parcel of the immovable property bearing Property No. 129, area measuring 35 square yards, out of Khazra No. 303, consisting of Ground Floor, First Floor, Second Floor, Half Third Floor, situated in Abadi of Lal Dora of village Saiduljab, Tehsil Saket (M.B. Road), New Delhi. Batted and bounded on the East by house of Mr. Ram Kumar, on the West by house of Mr. Raj Kumar, on the North by main M.B. Road, on the South by House of Others."

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in U GRO Capital Limited/Secured Creditor's website, i.e. www.ugrocapital.com or contact the undersigned at ugrocapital@ugrocapital.com

TAKE FURTHER NOTE that the previous sale notice published on dated 03-01-2025 in respect to the Secured Debt(s) and/or Secured Asset(s) herein above may be deemed as withdrawn on account of inadvertent Error.
Date: 04-01-2025, Place: New Delhi
Authorised Officer, UGRO Capital Limited

MANIBHAVNAM HOME FINANCE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer, under the provision of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, of Manibhavnam Home Finance India Private Limited having its Registered Office at, 2nd Floor, N-2, South Extension Part-I, New Delhi-110049, (hereinafter referred to as "MBHF"), which has duly been Authorised by the Central Government, vide a notification dated 17.06.2021, to be treated as a Financial Institution, for the purposes of the "The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, hereby issue you the following notice:-

1. MUKHI DEVI W/O RAM DEV SAHANI, 2. RAM DEV SAHANI C/O RAM SWARUP SAHANI, 3. LAXMI D/O RAMDEV SAHANI, 4. DHEERAJ SAHANI S/O RAM SWARUP SAHANI, All At - PLOT NO-112 B, KHARSA NO. 11/5, NATHUPURA, ULTRAHAND ENCLAVE, BURARI DELHI - 110084, ALSO AT- M-215, GALI NO. 14, SHASTRI NAGAR, ASHOK VIHAR (NORTH WEST DELHI), DELHI - 110052.

Loan A/c Numbers : LP000000002145 & HL000000001356, Loan Amount Availed /Date : Rs. 2,00,000 / 29-Jun-2020 & Rs. 19,70,000 / 30-Apr-2019.
Date of 13(2) Notice : 12-12-2024, NPA Date : 09-01-2024

Demand Date and Amount as Per Sec. 13(2) Act. Notice : Rs. 28,52,995.17/- as on 05-06-2024

Mortgage Properties: All that Piece And Parcel Of Property Entire Single Storey Built Up Property Bearing No. 112-B (Old) & New No. 112, With Land Area Measuring 50 Square Yards Or Say 41.805 Square Meters, Comprising Of Ground Floor With Its Roof/Terrace Rights Upto Sky High, Comprising in Khazra No. 11/5, Situated in The Area Of Village Barari, Delhi-110084, Abadi Known As Shastri Park East, UltraHand Enclave, Block-A, Gali No.3, Burari, Delhi-110084, And The Same Is Bounded As Under:- East:- East:- Other's Property, West:- Road, South Other's Property.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Umesh Kumar and Mrs. Anju Rani had acquired Built Up Property bearing No. WZ-475, area measuring 41 sq. yds., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur Delhi vide Sale Deed Dt. 22.02.2024 executed by Mr. Pradeep and Now Mr. Umesh Kumar and Mrs. Anju Rani is the undisputed owner of the said property.

OR
Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance whatsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Gini (Advocate) H. No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi - 110024

AI cannot replace human decision-making on battlefield, Chinese military warns its forces

PTI ■ BEIJING

Investing heavily in modernisation, the Chinese military has cautioned its armed forces against banking heavily on artificial intelligence saying that AI should be a tool to guide but not a replacement for human decision-making in the battlefield because it lacks self-awareness capability. "As AI evolves, it must remain a tool guided by human judgment, ensuring accountability, creativity, and strategic adaptability remain at the forefront of military decision-making" an article published in People's Liberation Army Daily, the official media of the Chinese military said on New Year's Eve. "AI must work in tandem with human decision-makers to optimise command effectiveness, enhancing rather than replacing human agency," it said. AI can be used to augment human capabilities — through data analysis, simulations or planning — but cannot replace the

human factor. Human autonomy and creativity are indispensable on the battlefield, it said adding that while human commanders can respond to situations dynamically, and exploit enemy weaknesses AI operates within predefined algorithmic boundaries and its responses often lack originality, it said. The Daily said PLA preferred a model where "humans plan and AI executes" in which the technology is used to carry out the strategies and tactics developed by commanders and keeps an element of human oversight. The military prefers a structure where machines analyse data, provide insights and suggest potential actions. However, "final decisions rest with human commanders, safeguarding against errors stemming from AI's black-box nature", the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post report said. The article said another weakness

of the technology is its inability to reflect on its own actions or take responsibility for its decisions, unlike human commanders who can refine their plans in response to the circumstances. Even advanced systems, such as autonomous missile defence, typically rely on human operators for final decisions to ensure accountability. Last month a comprehensive report by the Pentagon on the Chinese military said the PLA is modernising its capabilities across all warfare domains to become a joint force capable of the full range of land, air, and maritime as well as nuclear, space, counter space, electronic warfare, and cyberspace operations. But despite its progress, the force still has significant deficiencies including in commander proficiency, long-distance logistics, and urban warfare. The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) continues to modernise equipment and focus on combined arms and

joint training to meet the goal of becoming a world-class military by 2049. The PLAA has continued to demonstrate long-range joint fire capability, the US Department of Defence report titled "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China" said. The PLA Navy (PLAN), numerically has the largest navy in the world, with a battle force of over 370 ships and submarines, including more than 140 major surface combatants. The PLAN is largely composed of modern multi-mission ships and submarines, it said. PLA Air Force (PLAAF) is modernising and indigenising its aircraft and unmanned aerial systems rapidly, matching US standards. In 2023, the PLA transferred significant portions of PLAN shore-based, fixed-wing combat aviation units, facilities, air defence, and radar units to the PLAAF, the Pentagon report said.

1. SONAM W/O-NAMAL MAVI, 2. NAMAL MAVI S/O-BHOOP SINGH, Both at - B/D-GT ROAD OPP CHHAPRAULA POLICE CHOWK DABRI, UTTAR PRADESH - 203207. ALSO AT- KHARSA NO. 782, VILLAGE-KHERA, DHARAMPURA GAUTAM BUDHA NAGAR UTTAR PRADESH 203207. Sr. No. 2 also at - ALSO AT- LITTLE FLEET PRESTIGE SCHOOL, GT ROAD OPP CHHAPRAULA POLICE CHOWK DABRI, UTTAR PRADESH-203207
ALSO AT - KHERA DHARAMPURA CHHAPRAULA, GAUTAM BUDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH 201009.

Loan A/c Numbers : LP000000009865, Loan Amount Availed /Date : Rs. 25,90,000 / 27-March-2024
Date of 13(2) Notice : 17-DEC-2024, NPA Date : 03-12-2024

Demand Date and Amount as Per Sec. 13(2) Act. Notice : Rs. 29,27,606.47/- as on 13-DEC-2024

Mortgage Properties : ALL THAT THE PIECE OF PARCEL OF PROPERTY RESIDENTIAL AREA AREA MEASURING 284 SQ. YDS., I.E., 237.45 SQ. METERS, OUT OF KHARSA NO. 782, SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE KHERA DHARAM PURA MAJRA, CHHAPRAULA, PARGANA & TEHSIL DABRI, DISTRICT GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, U.P. Boundaries: East- Road 12th, West- House Bijnendra, North- House Azad, South- House Anand.

1. Danavati W/O Naresh Kamat, 2. Naresh Kamat S/O Janak Kamat, 3. Dhesh Kamat S/O Janak Kamat, 4. Umesh S/O Janak Kamat, All At - H No-315 Bombay Colony Nandgram Ghaziabad - 201001. Also At- Dps Public School, No. 526/1, Judges Enclave, Ghiana Khand 2, Indrapuram-201010. Also At - Family International School, Sector 4, Sector 6, Vasuda, Ghaziabad-201012.

Loan A/c Numbers : LP000000005135, Loan Amount Availed / Date : Rs. 48,2339 / 30-Jul-2022
Date of 13(2) Notice : 17-DEC-2024, NPA Date : 09-12-2024

Demand Date and Amount as Per Sec. 13(2) Act. Notice : Rs. 451379.43/- 14-DEC-2024

Mortgage Properties : ALL THAT PIECES AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY H.No 315 BOMBAY COLONY NANG (GRAM GHAZIABAD UTTAR PRADESH GHAZIABAD 201003 total area 26.14 sq.mt.

Further with reasons, we believe that you are evading the service of demand notice, hence this publication of demand notice. You are hereby called upon to pay MANIBHAVNAM HOME FINANCE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED within a period of 60 days of date of publication of this demand notice the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc., failing which MANIBHAVNAM HOME FINANCE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED will take necessary action under all or any of the provision of Sec. 13(2) of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of this secured assets of the borrower/s. Further you are prohibited U/S 13(1) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease or in any other way the aforesaid secured assets. Please note that no further demand notice will be issued.
Date-04.01.2025
Authorized officer
Place-Delhi & UP
MANIBHAVNAM HOME FINANCE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR ASSIGNMENT OF NRRR (NOT READILY REALIZABLE ASSETS) UNDER REGULATION 37A OF THE IBI (LIQUIDATION) PROCESS REGULATIONS, 2016
IN THE MATTER OF COMPACT LAMPS PRIVATE LIMITED- IN LIQUIDATION
(CIN - U31501DL2005PT1400731)

EOI's are being invited for assignment of following Not Readily Realizable Assets ("NRRR") in the matter of Compact Lamps Private Limited under Regulation 37A read with Regulation 44A of IBI (Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2016. (Within the ambit of IBC, 2016) on "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS, WHATEVER THERE IS AND WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS". The details of the same are as follows:-

- Transaction Application under Preferential and Undervalued Application filed under Section 43 and 45 of the Code having IA No. 2658/2020 and Fraudulent Trading or wrongful trading Application filed under Section 66 of the Code having IA No. 2660/2020. (All rights and interest including litigation right).

Interested parties may submit their offers to the undersigned latest by 20th January, 2025 and accordingly relevant documents will be shared with the interested parties for their due diligence. The assignment will be subject to the provisions of the IBC, 2016. Regulations made thereunder and the process document. For further details please refer to process document published on website <https://insolvencyandbankruptcy.in/public-announcement/compact-lamps-private-limited/>

Note:- The issuance of this EOI does not imply that the Liquidator is bound to select an applicant/ assignee/transferee or to appoint the Preferred applicant/assignee/transferee as successful applicant/assignee/transferee for the assets of the company and offer and the Liquidator reserves the right to reject all or any of the offers in consultation with SCF.

Sd/-
Deepika Bhugra Prasad - Liquidator
Compact Lamps Private Limited (in Liquidation)
IBBI Regn No: IBI/PA-003/IP-NO00110/2017-2018/11186
AAA Insolvency Professionals
64, 1st Floor, Okhla Estate, Phase III, New Delhi-110020
Email ID: compact.lamps@aaainsolvency.com ; asset.sale@aaainsolvency.in
Contact No. : +91 8800865284 (Mr. Wasim/Raj Kumar)

Date: 03/01/2025 & Place: New Delhi

New Orleans inches toward normalcy

A mix of law enforcement, street performers and football fans has filled New Orleans' blocks as the city inches back to normalcy while mourning victims of the deadly New Year's rampage in which an Army veteran ploughed a truck into revelers.



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sujata, Mother of No.15456524N Sep/AA Ravichandr Melmatti, R/o- A/P Basav Nagar, Shindikurbet, Tq Gokak, Dist- Belgaum, Karnataka- 591306, have changed my name from Sujata to Sujata Melmatti, vide affidavit dated 03/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi PD(1189)C

I, Mallappa, Father of No.15456524N Sep/AA Ravichandr Melmatti, R/o- A/P Basav Nagar, Shindikurbet, Tq Gokak, Dist- Belgaum, Karnataka- 591306, have changed my name from Mallappa to Mallappa Melmatti, vide affidavit dated 03/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi PD(1190)C

I, P Madhavi W/o- JC-774717H Sub Kantarao Ponduru, R/o- 1-83, Diguvastreet (Street), Kesavaraopeta (Vill), Shermahmadpuram (PO), Srikakulam (Dist), A.P- 532402, have changed my name from P Madhavi to Ponduru Madhavi, vide affidavit dated 03/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi PD(1191)C

I, No.15326399L Hav Sridharan, R/o- 1/546, Savulur Nallampalli, Pagalahalli, Dharmapuram, Tamilnadu-636807, declare that S Sathya is my Wife, in my service document's her DOB is wrongly written as 01/05/1986, whereas her correct DOB is 19/08/1985, vide affidavit dated 03/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi PD(1192)C

I, Mamta Devi, Mother of No.16026820M Nk Devender Kumar, R/o- Vill- Amadajpur, Post- Khari, Teh & Dist- Jhajjar, Haryana- 124108, have changed my name from Mamta Devi to Munnai Bai, vide affidavit dated 03/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi PD(1193)C

I, Menka Loomba W/O Gaurav Loomba R/o E- 143, Paramount Golf Foreste, Sector Zeta, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddh Nagar have changed my name from Menka Loomba to Menka Jain for all Future Purposes. PD(1194)C

I, Mohammad Aslam Asif S/o S.K. Ahamed Ali R/o H.NO.- C- 544, behind telephone exchange, Sector-19, Noida, Gautam Buddha naar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 declare that My daughter's name has been changed for all purposes as a (School student) Arisha Asif instead of Arisha Faiza Musawwir. PD(1195)C

I, Hmangte Thangneing Kom, JC-552741P Rank Nb/Sub 9th Assam Regiment, resident of Lakhumbi Village, PO Moirang, Churachandpur Dist, Manipur, PIN: 795133. I have changed my son's name from HMT Kambolien Lennedy Kom to Hmangte Kambolien Lennedy Kom (15 years) including my two daughter names from HMT Ringipnei Glory Kom to Hmangte Ringipnei Glory Kom (14 years) and HMT Ringsutnei Hanan Kom to Hmangte Ringsutnei Hanan Kom (7 years) vide Affidavit date 23-12-2024 sworn before notary N Singhajit Singh, Imphal, for all future purposes. PD(1196)C

30 killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza

At least 30 people, including children, were killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes overnight and into Friday morning, said hospital staff, as air sirens sounded across Israel and stalled ceasefire talks were set to resume.

For civilian deaths. Israelis also woke up to attacks early Friday morning. Israel said missiles were fired into the country from Yemen, which set off air raid sirens in Jerusalem and central Israel and sent people scrambling to shelters.

The delegation is leaving for Qatar on Friday. The US-led talks have repeatedly stalled during 15 months of war, which was sparked by Hamas-led militants' Oct. 7, 2023 attack into Israel. The militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250.

PUBLIC NOTICE My clients Joginder Kumar and his wife Rita Devi both R/o A-43, Ground Floor, Gali No.01, Aali Vihar, Sarita Vihar, South Delhi Delhi-110076 have disowned their daughter Roshni from their all moveable-immovable properties and severed all relations with her due to her disobedience. My clients shall not be responsible for her any act. A.K. Mishra (Advocate) Ch. No.415, Saket Court New Delhi-17

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Mrs. Raj Bala owner of Plot No. 84-A, area measuring 250 sq. yds. part of Plot No. 84, Total area measuring 500 sq. yds. out of Khazra No. 523 situated in the abadi of Lal Dora of Village Mahipal Pur. New Delhi-110037. Through Registered Relinquishment Deed Dated 23.12.2024 executed by Mr. Prashant Sahrawal (Son) and Mr. Paras Selwrazat (Son) vide Reg. No. 2024/68/7516 at SR-VII A DELHI the above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Fedbank Financial Services Limited. If any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehra, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110052 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehra, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110052, Mob: 9811215181

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that Simran Raj Rathi Kashyap who is/are purchasing the Property Bearing Municipal No. 2532, Ground Floor Without roof Rights, having area measuring 52 Sq Yds. Ward No. 39, Situated at Sector-10, Punjabi Sarai, Mandi, Delhi-110007 from Indir Mohan Sharma S/o Kausal Kumar Sharma who was the owner of property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 13.10.2023 (Doc. No. 2023/19/13596), registered in the office of Sub-Registrar-Delhi executed by Veena Sarsi W/O Indir Mohan Intend to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited, Registration Particular of Original Sale Deed dated 13.10.2023 (Doc. No. 2023/19/13596) of said property is lost and not available with Seller i.e. Indir Mohan Sharma S/o Kausal Kumar Sharma, to comply with requirements of BANK/NFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate, in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of this notice. NCR LAW ASSOCIATES Advocates & Consultants A-98, Sector-9, New Vajay Nagar, Ghazabad, (U.P)-201009, MOB- 999882427, 9999721155

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the public at large that my client Bishnu is a notice is hereby given that the Plot No. 50 Property ID No. 17050092/25, Area Measuring 85 Sq. Yds. out of Khazra No. 823, situated at Waka Maaja Ballabgarh, Tehsil Ballabgarh, District Faridabad, Haryana (having loan from PNB) of said property is lost and not available with Seller i.e. Kamal Kaur Gargi (Advocate) who has acquired the said property vide Transfer Deed dated 12/9/2022 (Document No. 4390) executed by her mother Gargi, she confirmed that his sale is not having the below mentioned Documents pertaining to the property in question for that online FIR has already been lodged on dated 25/12/2024 vide application No. 13275097/2400345 (Original Sale Deed dated 31.10.1995 in favour of Gargi (Doc. No. 4157). All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise however, are hereby requested 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. Kamal Kaur Gargi (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vashi, Gb, (U.P. Mob. 9810063351)

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the public at large that my client ICICI Bank is advancing an education loan to Mr. Aryanam Khurana, Mr. Amit Khurana & Mrs. Varika Khurana for Agreement No. 2002 (260.31 Sq Mtrs.), 20th Floor, Tower No. WT-03, Windchamps, Sector-112, Village - Chauma, Gurugram, Haryana ('said property'). The said property was originally owned by Mr. Sunder Malhotra, however, upon his demise, the property devolved upon Mrs. Sushma Malhotra (wife), Mr. Jatin Malhotra (son), and Ms. Varuna Malhotra (daughter). The son and the daughter executed a Relinquishment Deed in favour of Mrs. Sushma Malhotra and subsequently a Conveyance Deed dated 25.09.2020 was executed by Mrs. Sushma Malhotra P.L. Ltd. The said property was purchased by Mr. Amit Khurana and Mrs. Varika Khurana and is now being mortgaged. If anybody has any claim or objection upon the said property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, trust, partnership, joint heirs, partners, encumbrance however or otherwise is required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice with supporting documents. After the expiration of notice period, the claim(s), if any of such person shall be treated as null and void and be treated as waived. TAPAN RAGHAV (Advocate) Ch. No. 203, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-110032. (M - 8800096522)

PUNE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION-HEALTH DEPARTMENT TENDER CELL DEPARTMENT TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

Table with columns: Sr.No, Particulars, Date, Tender No., Depart. Ment Name, Name Of Work, Tender Fees, B1/B2, Emd Amt., Period of Work, Contact Person Mobile No.

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to the general public at large that my client Mr. Zafar Ali S/o Mohd. Ali who is the owner of One Shop bearing Pvt. No. B, on Ground Floor without roof rights, area measuring 15.79 sq. mt., Part of Property bearing Municipal No. XIV/1055-56 and 1062, situated at Ward No. XIV, Pan Mandi, Sadar Bazar, Delhi-110006, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 09.11.2020 executed by Mr. Anil Kumar s/o Late Jagat Ram (Doc. No. 7839). Any person(s), institution(s) having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 07 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim of such person(s)/institution(s) shall not be binding upon the said property or purchaser. Ram Prakash Pandey, (Advocate), 2E/23, 3rd Floor, Jhandewalan Extn. New Delhi-110055, Mob. 9871308962

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the general public that Mr. Nareesh Kumar Gupta is the GPA Holder of Property Bearing No. 7, B, area measuring 25 Sq. Yds. i.e. 20.90 Sq. Mtrs. out of Khazra No. 1004, situated at Subhash Park-2, Malaspur colony, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & District Ghazabad Uttar Pradesh-201309. He is in possession through Regd. GPA dated 25.08.2018 ad doc. no. 4322 executed by Smt. Ansham in favour of Mr. Nareesh Kumar Gupta in respect of the said property. Mr. Nareesh Kumar Gupta intends to transfer the ownership of aforementioned Property by way of Sale Deed to Mr. Bipendra Singh, Subsequently, Mr. Bipendra Singh is in the process of mortgaging the said property with SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd). 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 this 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 Venter, North (Advocate & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-4A, Sector-15, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +91280-331063, e-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that Mr. Nareesh Kumar Gupta is the GPA Holder of Property Bearing No. 7, B, area measuring 25 Sq. Yds. i.e. 20.90 Sq. Mtrs. out of Khazra No. 1004, situated at Subhash Park-2, Malaspur colony, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & District Ghazabad Uttar Pradesh-201309. He is in possession through Regd. GPA dated 25.08.2018 ad doc. no. 4322 executed by Smt. Ansham in favour of Mr. Nareesh Kumar Gupta in respect of the said property. Mr. Nareesh Kumar Gupta intends to transfer the ownership of aforementioned Property by way of Sale Deed to Mr. Bipendra Singh, Subsequently, Mr. Bipendra Singh is in the process of mortgaging the said property with SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd). 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 this 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 Venter, North (Advocate & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-4A, Sector-15, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +91280-331063, e-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India) KURUKSHETRA-136119 (HARYANA) Advt.No.03/2025 Special PhD Admission Drive for SC/ST in Even Semester of Academic Year 2024-25

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR (Established by the State Legislature Act No. 21 of 1969) Only University of Punjab to have earned "Category-1" Status Accredited with CGPA 3.85 on four-point scale at "A++" grade (highest among all India centre, state public and private universities) and conferred upon "University with potential for Excellence" status by UGC

ADMISSION NOTICE FEBRUARY-2025 BATCH UGC-DEB ENTITLED COURSES UNDER DIRECTORATE OF ONLINE STUDIES Admissions are open for following UGC DEB entitled courses in fully Online Mode under Directorate of Online Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The candidates may visit the Directorate's website (http://gndu-online.in) for filling online application form and further details.

Pune Municipal Corporation-Health Department Tender Cell Department Tender Advertisement Table with columns: Sr.No, Particulars, Date, Tender No., Depart. Ment Name, Name Of Work, Tender Fees, B1/B2, Emd Amt., Period of Work, Contact Person Mobile No.

M.P. STATE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING BOARD Office of The Chief Engineer, 26 Arera Hills, Jail Road, Bhopal Board/Nirman/P.CeII/Consultant Empanelment/24-25/1259 Bhopal, Dated : 02.01.2025 NOTICE INVITING TENDER M.P. State agricultural Marketing Board, Bhopal ("MPSAMB") invites REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL from reputed organization/agency for "Empanelment of Consultants & Architects/firm" for providing Technical Consultancy Services, Architectural Planning, Designing & Estimation, Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR), Bid Process Management etc. for various Infrastructures, building construction projects and PPP (Public Private Partnership) & BOT (Build, Operate & Transfer) projects in Head Office Bhopal, Divisional Office and APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) of Madhya Pradesh. (STN No. 2025_MPSAMB_392598) Interested firms may submit their proposals on e-procurement portal i.e. www.mptenders.gov.in. The following Empanelment Tender to be received Online up to 5:30 PM on 23.01.2025. Technical bid documents with EMD & Financial Offer to be received online only as per Detailed NIT. The tender documents can be obtained Online on the http://mptenders.gov.in as per the Notice Published on the above Portal and detailed information can also be seen on website www.mpmandiboard.gov.in Note : Any corrigendum in this NIT, if required, shall be displayed only in above portal regarding any matter included in this NIT or otherwise. Other details can also be seen on our website www.mpmandiboard.gov.in M.P.M./118119/2025 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJECT CELL)

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CORRIGENDUM NO. 01 Corrigendum for Tender Notice of work contract vide DRM(Works)/Katihar's Notice No. KIR/Engg/55 of 2024 Dated: 23-12-2024. Please read the modified Date of Closing & Opening of the tender as under:

Table with columns: The existing Date & Time, The modified Date & Time, Date & Time of closing of Tender, Date & Time of opening of Tender.

verka THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD. SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66 Notice Inviting Tender e tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

STORES E-PROCUREMENT E-procurement Tender Notice No. S/31/2024-25 Dated: 30-12-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

SN.1. Tender No. 83/24/0004C/OT/261/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 13-01-2025 Brief Description: Thermal Tickets Rolls of 500 each for Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) as per specification under RB's Commercial circular no. 12 of 2018 dated 09.02.2018 and 55 of 2018 dated 25.09.2018 [both attached], special note:- (1) Top coated thermal paper shall be with image durability of minimum two years.

SN.2. Tender No. 61/24/5546/OT/262/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 16-01-2025 Brief Description: Manufacture and Supply for Nylon reinforced Grooved Rubber Sole Plates 6 mm thick for 1 in 8.5 turnouts on 60 kg PSC sleepers to RDSO Drg. No. T-4965, conforming to IRS specification for Rail pads for paving beneath Rail, SI. No. T-55-2023. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [UVAM linking:] Item Type: Goods, Qty- 406 Set for SSE/P.WAY/TD/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam), P.L.No. 60110892.

SN.3. Tender No. 30/24/1329A/OT/263/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 20-01-2025 Brief Description: Set of control arm for LHB bogies consisting of 1) Control Arm Lower Left, Drg No. FIAT 1267716 Ver 00R2 or latest 2) control arm upper to FIAT Drg no. 1277122 Ver-01R3 or latest Mat Spec.-: 17.334 100 06/10701 Amnd. 01, MDTS-166 Rev-02, IS:1865-91 SG 400/18L. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [UVAM linking:] Item Type-Goods 1) Qty-140 Set for Dibrugarh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), 2) Qty: 66 Set for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam), 3) Qty- 156 Set for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), 4) Qty- 20 Set for New Jalpaiguri/GSD, NFR (West Bengal), 5) Qty- 6 Set for Katihar/GSD, NFR (Bihar), P.L.No.- 33500137.

SN.4. Tender No. 61/24/5412/OT/264/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 27-01-2025 Brief Description: Elastic Rail clips MK-V as per RDSO Drg No. T-5919 with latest alteration and in accordance with IRS Specification IRIS-T-31-2018, (Fourth Revision) and as amended up to 20 days prior to the date of closing of tender. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: Yes, Stages: 1] [UVAM linking:] Item Type: Goods, Qty- 2077544 Nos for SSE/P.WAY/TD/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam), P.L. No.- 60110557.

SN.5. Tender No. 30/24/1465/OT/265/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 30-01-2025 Brief Description: Manual uncoupling arrangement assembly for LHB passenger coaches. MAT. SPEC.: RDSO/2011/CG-03 (REV-03) [Warranty Period: 84 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [UVAM linking:] Item Type: Goods 1) Qty- 541 Nos. for Dibrugarh Town/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), 2) Qty- 40 Nos. for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam), 3) Qty- 401 Nos. for New Bongaigaon/WORKSHOP/DEPOT, NFR (Assam), 4) Qty- 2 Nos. for New Jalpaiguri/GSD, NFR (West Bengal), P.L.No.- 33542600.

SN.6. Tender No. 61/24/5474/OT/266/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 21-01-2025 Brief Description: Fabrication and supply of newly developed Improved Switch Expansion Joint for 2 degree to 4 degree curve for 60 kg (UIC) rail section for long welded Rail on PSC sleepers along with all parts as per Drawing excluding ERCs, Liners & Rubber Pads (a) 60 kg Improved Switch Expansion Joint for 2 degree to 4 degree curve as per RDSO Drg No. T-8924 (Raheem make Drg. No. RH/PC5911 (Rev-4) [Warranty Period: 84 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [UVAM linking:] Item Type: Goods, Qty: 18 set for SSE/P.Way/TD/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam), P.L. No. 6060128.

SN.7. Tender No. 61/24/5225A/OT/267/2024-25 Closing/Opening date: 27-01-2025 Brief Description: T/O 1 in 16 60 kg, RDSO DRG No. T-5891 (Fabricated switches [Description-11200mm O/R (Curved) Fan shaped Switch for 1 in 16 T/O for BG 60 KG (UIC) on PSC Sleepers to RDSO Drg. No. T/5692 Alt. 03 as per IRS Specification IRS-T-10-2023 complete with stock rails, tongue rails and all parts with fittings including check rails as listed in the RDSO drawing but excluding Liner, Elastic rail Clip, Fish plate & Fish Bolts, & PSC Sleeper] and CMS Xing body [Description-CMS Crossing 1 in 16 BG for 60 kg Rails on PSC Sleepers as per RDSO Drg No. T/5693 (Alt.02) complete with fittings as per specification No. IRS T-29 (Revised 2022). List of fittings to be supplied with is enclosed as Annexure-A] [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages: 0] [UVAM Linking:] Item Type: Goods, Qty: 6 set for Sr. Section Engineer/P.Way/New Halfong, NFR (Assam). (ii) Qty: 7 set for SSE/P.Way/Hill/Lumding, NFR (Assam). P.L. No. 60220077. Note: For full details of tender notice and tender documents, tenderer may log on to the website (www.iimps.gov.in). Prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tender are required to log on themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In Case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders. PCMM, Maligaon

EV firms agree to end subsidy after existing subsidy regime ends: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said the electric vehicle (EV) companies present in the meeting have unanimously agreed that they would no longer need subsidies once the existing subsidy regime ends.

Stakeholders from the EV sector held deliberations with the minister here on issues pertaining to development of battery charging and swapping infrastructure.

The minister also said that companies are free to choose their own business models.

Whether they prefer to collaborate and share resources for battery swapping or sell vehicles with their own batteries, the decision is entirely up to them, he said.

"Everybody was unanimous in the room that once the existing subsidy regime comes to an end, none of them requires the subsidy to grow further... Each sector has one or the other model which makes it self-sustaining and does not call for further subsidies," Goyal told reporters when asked about the views of companies on subsidies.

In a bid to woo global EV makers into the country, in March last year the government rolled out an electric vehicle policy, under which duty concessions were offered to companies setting up manufacturing units in the country with a minimum



investment of USD 500 million. The government has plans to install 10,763 public charging stations across the country under the FAME-II scheme.

Under FAME-India Scheme phase-II, incentives are provided to buyers of electric vehicles in the form of an upfront reduction in the purchase price of electric vehicles.

There is another scheme - PM E-DRIVE - to support electric mobility through support for 14,028 e-buses, 2,05,392 electric three-wheelers (L5), 1,10,596 e-rickshaws and e-carts and 24,79,120 electric two-wheelers. In addition, e-trucks, e-ambulances, EV public charging stations and

upgrading of testing agencies are also supported under the scheme.

The government has also rolled out the production linked incentive (PLI) schemes for auto sector and manufacturing of Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC).

Electric vehicles are covered under PLI scheme for automobile and auto components, which was approved in 2021 with a budgetary outlay of Rs 25,938 crore for a period of five years. Goyal said that awareness is increasing among people about cost benefits of using EVs.

"The electric mobility today is absolutely ready and set to fly. They do not need newer incentives or

subsidies, the existing subsidies are available for some more time and will help them give that appropriate kick start to the EV ecosystem... There are options and ideas available by which electric mobility can be successfully marketed," he said.

When asked about their discussions on battery charging infrastructure, he said Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organization (PESO) has released draft guidelines for installation of multiple EV charging/battery swapping facilities at petrol pumps. The idea is to make it easier for setting up charging infrastructure at petrol pumps or gas stations.

The ministry has suggested to make those guidelines self-monitored and self-certified so that whoever is setting up the charging station will self-regulate those.

"Similarly, we want to encourage resident welfare associations, commercial establishments, office complexes to have electric charging equipment. Charging, swapping or auto companies are ready to do the investments," Goyal said.

The ministry also suggested the industry body of the sector to run a campaign to increase awareness about benefits of EVs.

Besides, he said, they can consider developing a common app or tool through which people will know the nearest charging stations and other information required for growth of the sector.

EPFO rolls out centralised pension system in all regional offices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body REPFO has completed the Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) rollout in all its regional offices across the country that will benefit over 68 lakh pensioners, the labour ministry said on Friday.

The CPPS is a paradigm shift from the existing pension disbursement system that is decentralised, with each zonal/regional office of EPFO maintaining separate agreements with only 3-4 banks, the ministry explained in a statement.

Under CPPS, a beneficiary will be able to withdraw pension from any bank and there will be no need for visit to the bank for verification at the time of commencement of pension, and the amount will be immediately credited upon release, it stated.

The CPPS system January 2025 onwards will also ensure disbursement of pension throughout India without any need for transfer of pension payment orders (PPO) from one office to another even when the pensioner moves from one location to another or changes his bank or branch, it said.

This will be a great relief to pensioners who move to their hometown after retirement. The first pilot of CPPS was



completed in October last year in Karnal, Jammu, and Srinagar regional offices with the pension disbursement of about Rs 11 crore to more than 49,000 EPS pensioners, a ministry statement said.

The second pilot was taken up in November in 24 regional offices where about Rs 213 crore pension was disbursed to more than 9.3 lakh pensioners, it stated.

According to the statement, in a landmark move towards enhancing pension services, the EPFO completed full-scale rollout of the new CPPS under Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 in December.

About Rs 1,570 crore pension was disbursed to more than 68 lakh pensioners pertaining to all 122 pension-disbursing regional offices of the EPFO for December 2024.

Announcing the successful rollout, Union minister

Mansukh Mandaviya said, "The full-scale implementation of the CPPS across all regional offices of EPFO is a historic milestone. This transformative initiative empowers pensioners to access their pension seamlessly from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country."

The minister said the CPPS eliminates the need for physical verification visits and simplifies the pension disbursement process.

"The CPPS is a testament to our commitment to modernise EPFO services and ensuring convenience, transparency, and efficiency for our pensioners.

"With this rollout, we are setting a new benchmark in pension service delivery, aligning with the vision of a tech-enabled and member-centric EPFO," he said.

Premium devices demand to push India smartphone market to over USD 50 Billion in 2025: Counterpoint Technology Market Research

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rising demand for premium devices, led by Apple and Samsung, is expected to increase India's smartphone market size to over USD 50 billion (about Rs 4,28,900 crore) this year, market research firm Counterpoint Technology Market Research said on Friday.

The Indian smartphone market size was estimated at USD 37.9 billion (about Rs 3.25 lakh crore) in 2021, according to the research firm.

"India's smartphone market is on track to achieve its highest-ever value in 2025, crossing USD 50 billion. Brands like Apple and Samsung are leading this shift by offering competitive options in the premium and ultra-premium segments," the report said.

Apple India has registered a total income of Rs 67,121.6 crore, while Samsung reported revenue of Rs



71,157.6 crore from the mobile phone vertical in the financial year 2024. According to the report, the retail average selling price of India's smartphone market is expected to cross the USD 300 mark (about Rs 25,700) for the first time in 2025. "Apple is expected to see strong demand for its Pro models, driven by local manufacturing and recent price reductions across its

iPhone lineup. Meanwhile, Samsung's value-focused strategy is gaining traction, particularly with its flagship S series," the report said. Chinese brands like Vivo, Oppo, and OnePlus are attracting consumers by offering advanced camera systems etc. In the affordable premium category, ranging between Rs 30,000-45,000 apiece. "Meanwhile, OnePlus is

making a comeback by addressing Indian retailers' concerns related to display and motherboard, which had negatively impacted its performance earlier this year. Besides, the company's planned investment of Rs 6,000 crore (about USD 720 million) in local market expansion is expected to accelerate its recovery and growth," the report said.

The premium segment (starting above Rs 30,000) is projected to exceed 20 per cent market share by 2025, the reports said.

"The shift towards premiumisation is also being driven by consumers increasingly opting for offline stores, where they can experience premium smartphones first-hand before making a purchase. The growing interest in AI-powered features has further motivated consumers to seek hands-on demonstrations to better understand these innovations and make more informed decisions," it said.

Rural poverty declines sharply in FY24 at 4.86 per cent: SBI research

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rural poverty has declined significantly to 4.86 per cent in the fiscal ending March 2024 from 25.7 per cent in 2011-12 mainly driven by government support programmes, said a SBI research released on Friday.

Urban poverty too is estimated at 4.09 per cent, down from 13.7 per cent in 2011-12.

"The sharp decline in rural poverty ratio is on account of higher consumption growth in lowest 0-5 per cent decile with significant government support and such support is important as we also find that change in food prices has a significant impact on not just food expenditures, but overall expenditure in general," said the SBI research on consumption expenditure survey.

The latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, showed that consumption



inequality in rural as well as urban areas declined during the August 2023-July 2024 period as compared to a year ago.

The SBI research said that the Consumption Expenditure Survey reveals a remarkable decline in rural poverty estimated at 4.86 per cent in 2023-24 (7.2 per cent in FY23 and 25.7 per cent in FY12) and urban poverty estimated at 4.09 per cent (4.6 per cent in FY23 and 13.7 per cent in 2011-12).

It is possible that these numbers could undergo minor revisions once the 2021 census is completed and the new rural-urban population share is published, the research report said.

"We believe urban poverty could decline even further. At an aggregate level, we believe poverty rates in India could now be in the range of 4-4.5 per cent with almost minimal existence of extreme poverty," it said. Enhanced physical infrastructure is scripting a new story in rural mobility, it said and added that one of the reasons for the increasingly shrinking horizontal income gap between rural and urban and the vertical income gap within rural income classes," SBI said.

"The difference between rural and urban monthly per capita consumption expenditure/ Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) to rural MPCE is now at 69.7 per cent, a rapid decline from 88.2 per cent in 2009-10... Mostly due to the initiatives the government has taken in terms of DBT transfers, building rural infrastructures, augmenting farmer's income, (and) improving the rural livelihood significantly," it said.

India's exports to cross USD 800 Billion this fiscal: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said despite global economic uncertainties, India's exports of goods and services are expected to cross USD 800 billion this fiscal, which will be a record.

Last fiscal year, the exports stood at USD 778 billion. He said though there will be stresses in the global system, but India's exports basket is large.

"My estimate is that we will cross USD 800 billion in exports, another record given the world situation," he told reporters here.

He added share in services exports is also growing at a rapid pace.

On exports to developing and least developed countries (LDCs), he said those nations have been stressed because of the forex crisis they are facing after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Forex reserves drop by USD 4.11 Billion to USD 640.27 Billion

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.11 billion to USD 640.279 billion during the week ended December 27, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall kitty had dropped by USD 8.478 billion to USD 644.391 billion. The reserves have been declining for the last few weeks, and the drop has been attributed to revaluation along with forex market interventions by RBI to help reduce volatility in the rupee. The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September.

For the week ended December 27, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 4.641 billion to USD 551.921 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves increased by USD 541 million to USD 66,268 billion during the week, the RBI said.

Zepto sets up new entity to shift to marketplace model



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quick commerce company Zepto has set up a new entity Zepto Marketplace to rejig its operations from a B2B model to a marketplace model, according to people in the know.

Zepto Marketplace was registered in October 2024, and the company's operations will soon switch to the new model once the operational and regulatory nitty-gritty are sorted out, sources said. A mail query sent to the company did not elicit any response.

The shift, according to sources, will enable Zepto to have a greater hold on quality control and service. Zepto is also set to soon launch "Thor"-a SaaS inventory management platform to further streamline operations, they added.

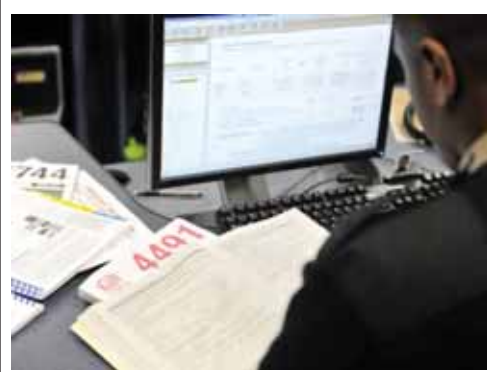
The development comes as Zepto prepares for a public listing within this year. Zepto's peers like Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart already follow a marketplace model. Under the current structure, Zepto licenses its brand name and operations to three companies: Geddit Convenience, Drogheria Sellers and Commodum Groceries. These three

companies purchase their stock from Kiranakart Technologies Pvt Ltd and sell it to end consumers via the Zepto platform.

In essence, Kiranakart Technologies is a B2B company that sources and buys products directly from brands and sells them to Geddit Convenience, Drogheria Sellers and Commodum Groceries, Zepto's three licensee companies. These companies then sell to the end consumer. For every sale that the three companies make using Zepto's platform, they pay a licensing fee to the latter. Thus, under the present B2B model, Zepto is the technology platform, serving as an intermediary between operators, sellers and delivery partners. Sellers list themselves on the platform while dark stores are franchise-managed and delivery partners are third-party rendering a gig.

Zepto reported a 120 per cent increase in operating revenue to Rs 4,454 crore in FY24. The company also proposes to launch a separate app for Zepto Cafe, which is engaged in quick delivery of snacks and other food items. Zepto's valuation stands at USD 5 billion. In November 2024, it raised USD 350 million in a funding round that included investments from Indian HNIs, family offices, and leading financial institutions. With business growing rapidly, Zepto is looking to expand to over 50 cities by next quarter from about two dozen cities right now.

ICAI seeks tax benefits to promote climate change mitigation strategies



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chartered accountants' Capex body ICAI has sought tax benefits for promoting climate change mitigation strategies and a separate section for income from shares and securities in the income tax returns form. Besides, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has sought a special tax regime for partnership firms and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) as well as simplification of income tax return forms. The institute on Friday said it has advocated for prudent tax reforms aimed at fostering economic growth and encouraging environmental sustainability in the pre-Budget Memorandum 2025. "Provision of tax benefits for promoting climate change mitigation strategies, which will not only contribute to India's climate change goals

but also drive economic growth by promoting sustainable business practices is a suggestion in this direction," it said in a release.

Among other suggestions, ICAI has proposed a new head to show income from shares and securities that will have provisions relating to taxability of income by way of dividend, interest or capital gains. Rationalising conditions for treating a return of income as defective in the e-filing regime and provision of opportunity of being heard before treating a defective return as invalid is another suggestion by the institute. ICAI has also pitched for simplifying the capital gains provisions under sections 54 to 54F of the Act, extending 10 per cent tolerance band to cases where value is determined by the valuation officer under Section 50C(2), rationalising rate of tax under Section 115BBE in

respect of cash credits and unexplained investments. Further, the institute has proposed obtaining report of a chartered accountant in the prescribed form certifying the sum chargeable to tax instead of going through the process of getting the certificate of lower deduction of tax from the assessing officer, where a non-resident transfers immovable property to a resident.

As per the release, another recommendation is to exempt the transferee responsible for paying to a non-resident transferor from the requirement of obtaining TAN.

Meanwhile, ICAI has submitted its final recommendations regarding simplifying the I-T Act, including introduction of special tax regime for partnership firms/LLPs, simplification of the registration and taxation regime of charitable trusts as well as provisions for determining residential status of individuals. Other suggestions include simplification of income tax return forms, alignment of TDS/TCS rates with the objective of serving as an audit trail, periodic review of disposal of cases by assessing officer, mandatory time limit for disposal of appeals, and effective grievance redressal mechanism. Another recommendation is the extension of time limit for filing belated return to March 31 of the assessment year.



Gold prices almost flat at ₹79,700 per 10 grams, Silver slips ₹230

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices traded almost flat at Rs 79,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal closed at Rs 79,720 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver slipped Rs 230 to Rs 90,400 per kg on Friday. The white metal settled at Rs 90,630 per kg in the previous trading session. However, the price of gold with 99.5 per cent purity rose Rs 130 to Rs 79,300 per 10 grams on Friday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for February delivery increased Rs 6 to trade at Rs 77,723 per 10 grams. Gold traded with minor gains in the domestic market, while Comex gold maintained a sideways trend around USD 2,655 per ounce," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at

LKP Securities, said.

The market remains steady with limited movements as participants await further global cues to determine the next direction, Trivedi said. Silver climbed Rs 517 or 0.58 per cent to Rs 89,690 per kg in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

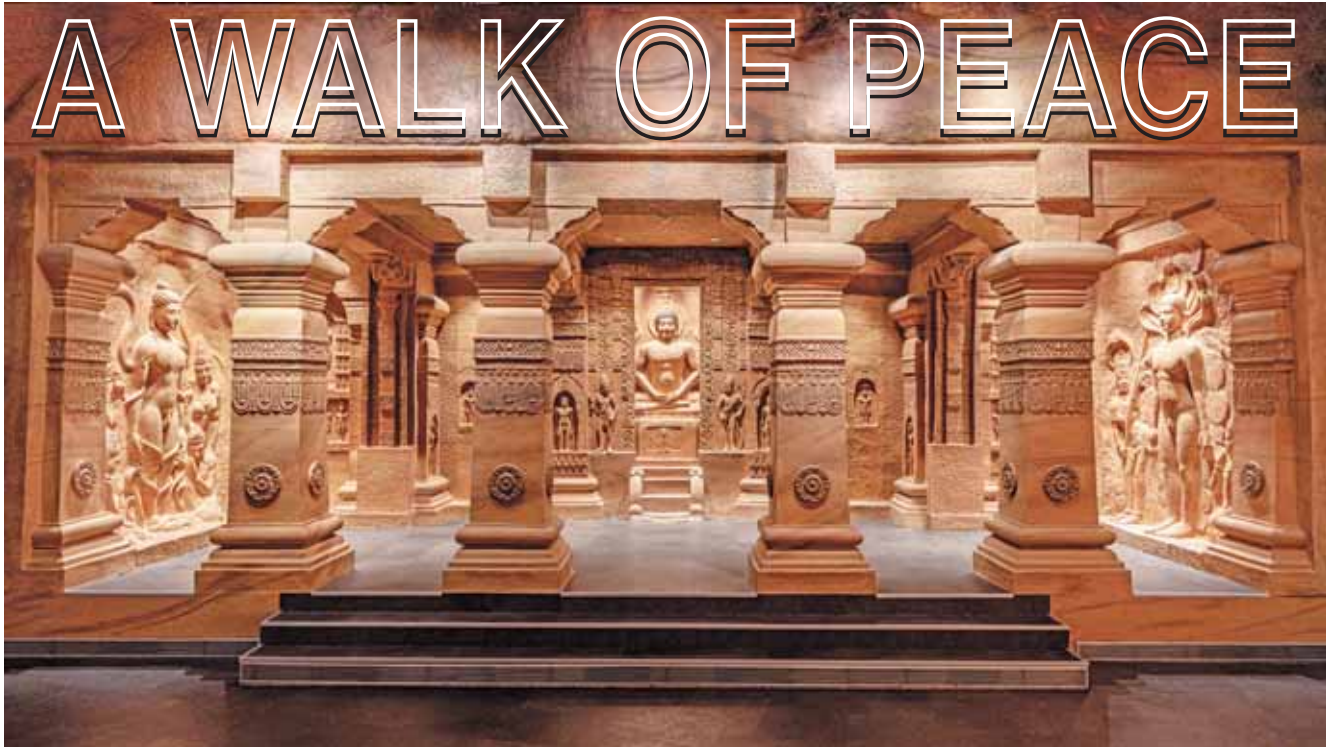
Globally, Comex gold futures rose USD 2.10 per ounce or 0.08 per cent to USD 2,671.10 per ounce. "Gold extended gains on Friday buoyed by safe-haven demand after news reports came that US President Joe Biden discussed contingency plans to strike Iran's nuclear facilities if it made progress towards developing a nuclear bomb before Trump's inauguration on January 20," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities. Comex silver futures quoted 1.05 per cent higher in the Asian market hours at USD 30.22 per ounce.



At every turn, the museum tells a story – one not just of artifacts, but of ideas that have lasted through time. This thought constantly comes to my mind as I walk through the calm halls of the *Abhay Prabhavana* Museum in Pune. As I move through the calm, serene halls, it's as if the museum itself transports me into the heart of India's spiritual history, inviting me to reflect on values that have stood the test of time. Located near the peaceful Indrayani River, the museum is not just a collection of objects, but a deep journey into Indian values, brought to life through Jain philosophy.

The *Abhay Prabhavana Museum*, hailed as one of the largest "Museums of Ideas," offers a unique experience. With its perfect blend of ancient wisdom and modern technology, it brings the teachings of Jainism to life. The museum stands as a tribute to the timeless values of compassion, non-violence and tolerance, which form the core of Jainism. Spearheaded by *Mr. Abhay Firodia* and the *Amar Prerana Trust*, the museum captures the essence of these principles, making them accessible to everyone.

As I journey from Pune to the museum, the road winds through hills and the city fades away. It feels like entering another world, one where nature, history and spirituality come together. The moment I set eyes on the museum, I am drawn to its striking modern architecture, set against the backdrop of tranquil nature. It's a visual representation of the museum's core: a living tribute to India's spiritual and cultural roots.



A WALK OF PEACE

EXPLORE THE RICH HERITAGE AND SPIRITUAL LEGACY OF JAINISM AT THE ABHAY PRABHAVANA MUSEUM IN PUNE, WRITES SAKSHI PRIYA

Covering 3.5 lakh square feet, the museum is divided into 30 galleries, each offering a deep dive into different aspects of Jain philosophy and culture. The exhibits go beyond showcasing objects; they tell immersive stories using modern technology. Audio-visually, interactive kiosks and even virtual reality are used to engage visitors in a multi-sensory experience, making it feel like I am experiencing the teachings of Jainism firsthand.

One of the most wonder-inspiring features is the towering 60-foot statue of Rishabhdev, the first Tirthankar. Standing in a meditative pose, the statue symbolises the foundation of Indian civilisation. Murals at its base explore the contributions Rishabhdev made to Indian society, such as introducing agriculture, trade and professional skills. The statue is not just an artistic marvel but also a visual journey that connects the ancient wisdom of Jainism to the modern world.

As I explore the galleries, the museum's message becomes clearer: Jainism's core principles – Ahimsa (non-violence), Aparigraha (non-possessiveness) and Anekantvad (acceptance of multiple perspectives) hold immense relevance today. These values have the potential to



address contemporary issues like environmental sustainability and social harmony. Walking through the exhibits, I find myself reflecting on how these teachings can guide us in our daily lives, encouraging me to adopt a mindset rooted in compassion, non-violence and understanding.

A visit to the *Abhay Prabhavana Museum* is incomplete without experiencing its

serene outdoor spaces. The museum offers a tranquil nature walk along the Indrayani River, spanning 8 hectares of beautifully landscaped grounds. As I walk, I'm surrounded by monumental modern sculptures and replicas of Jain monuments that blend seamlessly with nature. This open-air heritage walk is a perfect example of how the museum connects Jain philosophy with the natural



world, offering visitors a unique opportunity to witness India's spiritual geography.

The 320-metre heritage walk showcases miniatures of Jain monuments from across India, offering a cultural journey through Jainism's rich legacy. The Plaza of Equanimity, with a 57-foot tall Sarvatobhadra statue, brings a modern interpretation to the traditional

Chaturmukh Temple. The calm and spiritual atmosphere of this space encourages introspection and peace. In the tranquil Garden of the Revered, miniature trees dedicated to the 24 Tirthankars create a serene and contemplative environment. This peaceful setting adds another layer to the museum's ability to connect visitors with the timeless values of Jainism.



The *Abhay Prabhavana Museum* is a place for everyone, not just those with an interest in Jain philosophy. It's a destination for anyone looking to understand the spiritual and cultural roots of India. The museum offers a rare chance to connect with the wisdom that has shaped Indian society for centuries, reminding us of the values of compassion, non-violence, and tolerance. The museum is a tribute to their dedication to preserving Jain teachings. After over ten years of research and collaboration, the museum has become a unique cultural landmark, continuing to inspire visitors with its powerful message.

Walking through the museum takes time and to fully understand its meaning, you need to immerse yourself in every path. The more time you spend here, the more you realise how much thought and care have gone into every detail. The lessons I've learned are more than just intellectual; they are deeply personal. As I leave, I feel a sense of peace that stays long after I've walked through the museum's doors. The *Abhay Prabhavana Museum* is not just a place to visit, it's a journey into India's spiritual heart, a living reflection of the values that unite us all.



THE ART OF REVERENCE

By SAKSHI PRIYA

'सुरदास जी के भक्ति में जो रंग है, वही रंग जीवन में बस जाता है।'
(Just like the devotion in Surdas Ji's poetry, it fills our lives with love and meaning)

In the soft glow of the spotlight, where music casts its magic and dance flows with the rhythm of devotion, the *Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav* unfolded as a rare gem, shimmering with the glow of India's classical arts and spiritual heritage. It was an invitation to step into a world where time slows and the sacred words of Sant Surdas meet the expressions of dance and music.

The Geetanjali International Foundation proudly presented the 5th edition of the *Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav*. This grand celebration paid tribute to the 16th-century Bhakti poet Sant Surdas, alloying Indian classical dance and music to showcase the spiritual and artistic heritage of the revered saint. As the opening notes of the tabla reverberated through the C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, it was clear that the evening was destined to be something extraordinary. There's something deeply moving about watching dancers embody poetry, not just through their steps, but in their very being. This was evident from the moment *Diksha Rawat* and *Karthika Umikrishnan*, disciples of the esteemed *Vidushi Uma Dogra*, took the stage. Kathak, often described as a dance of storytelling, was brought to life in the most vibrant and energetic



manner. With each swirl, each beat of the ghungroo, they seemed to move beyond just physical steps, offering a glimpse into the soul of Surdas's poetry, which itself was steeped in devotion and longing. And then came *Rani Khanam*, whose Kathak solo performance was nothing short of enchanting. The bhajan she performed, "सुंदर बदन सुख सदन श्याम को," translated into a visual display of grace, passion and beauty. One could almost see the words of Surdas materialise as her feet danced in rhythm, each step echoing the love and longing of a devotee gazing at Krishna. What struck the audience the most was the emotional charge she brought to her performance. It was as though she wasn't simply dancing, she was telling a story that resonated deeply with everyone present.

Equally captivating was *Rama Vaidyanathan's* Bharatanatyam performance. There's something inherently powerful about the way Bharatanatyam

communicates emotion. In her portrayal of the Nayika's yearning for Lord Vishnu, *Vaidyanathan's* expressions were a masterclass in silent storytelling. Her eyes, her hands, every angle of her body spoke volumes, capturing the delicate interplay of longing and love in a way that words could scarcely do justice. True dance is never just about physical movement, it's about the silent dialogue between the dancer and the audience, a dialogue that connects deeply and unspoken.

But what truly made the evening unforgettable was the duet between *Rani Khanam* and *Rama Vaidyanathan*. As they danced together, interpreting a playful poem by Sant Surdas, it was as if the very essence of Krishna's mischievous nature danced through them. Watching these two talented artists, each representing a different classical tradition, merge their energies was a moment of pure magic. The chemistry between them was visible and the playful interaction between Krishna and his devotees came to life through their expressions, perfectly capturing Surdas's wit and deep devotion. The performance left the audience reminded once again of the power of classical arts to evoke deep emotions and connect people to something greater than themselves. The *Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav* was a celebration of a poet's legacy, of India's soul and its arts, an experience that connected everyone in attendance to something much larger than themselves.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Canvas of Emotions

By TEAM VIVA

Art has a way of speaking to the parts of us that words often cannot reach.

Visions Unveiled, an exhibition at the Open Palm Court, India Habitat Centre, is a vivid reminder of this power. From the moment you step inside, the space transforms into a sanctuary of colours, textures, and emotions, inviting visitors to pause and truly feel. Organised by *Happy Strokes* and curated by *Dr Mandakini Devi*, the exhibition presents 30 pieces that are as diverse in medium as they are in message.

The works, ranging from the vivid energy of *Flame of Himalaya* to the intricate lines of *Focus Series*, are not just to be seen, they are to be experienced. Each artwork is an intimate exploration of identity, resilience, and emotional growth, speaking volumes about the deeply personal journeys of the artists. Highlights include the delicate *Blooming Innocence*, which captures the essence of youthful wonder and *Joy in Her Arms*, a tender portrayal of maternal love. The bold strokes of *Grace in Motion* convey the elegance of movement, while the subtle details in *The Portrait of an Elderly Man* evoke a quiet dignity. Pieces like *Gulabo*, with its vibrant palette and *Beauty Within Series*, rendered in acrylic, further showcase the versatility of artistic expression. Each work invites viewers into a different narrative, offering a fresh perspective with every glance.

What makes this exhibition stand out is its human touch. It doesn't aim to overwhelm with grandeur but instead creates an inviting atmosphere for quiet reflection. The curation reflects a keen understanding of art's ability to connect with its audience on an emotional level. Pieces like *Dehleez* and *The Blue Ivy* capture life's fleeting, fragile moments with raw honesty, making them especially striking. Interactive sessions, including art talks and workshops, add another layer to the experience. These events break down the often-intimidating barriers of the art world, encouraging visitors to engage directly with the themes on display. It's a refreshing approach, one that turns spectators into participants and deepens their connection to the art.

This exhibition isn't about showcasing perfection but about embracing the imperfect beauty of human experience. It's a poignant reminder that art is more than just decoration, it's a bridge to understanding and introspection. Every



brushstroke, every line and every shadow carries the weight of stories untold and emotions unspoken. *Visions Unveiled* doesn't just leave an impression, it leaves you thinking about how art mirrors life in all its complexity. It's a show that resonates long after you've left the gallery, reminding us why creativity matters in an increasingly chaotic world. Through its thoughtfully curated works and sincere execution, it becomes a celebration of art as a reflection of humanity's most meaningful truths.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

India all out for 185 on day one of fifth Test against Australia

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Rohit Sharma "opted to rest" in the team's interest but the same old script unfolded on a new day for Indian batters as they surrendered meekly for a paltry 185 in the face of some hostile seam bowling from Australia on the opening day of the fifth and final Test here. Virat Kohli (17 off 69 balls), whose form and technical weaknesses are also under the scanner, was for the seventh time dismissed in the corridor of uncertainty in the tour, a problem that seems incurable at the moment. At stumps, Australia were 9 for 1 with stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah sending the woefully out-of-form Usman Khawaja (2) back in the hut. Teenage sensation Sam Konstas was unbeaten at 7 after hitting Bumrah for a first-ball four. The 19-year-old also had an animated exchange with the Indian star. Bumrah opted to bat under overcast conditions and the ultra-defensive

approach by Indian batters only compounded their problems with Scott Boland's (20-8-31-4) immaculate length and tremendous discipline leaving them in a disarray. Mitchell Starc (18-5-49-3) and Pat Cummins (15.2-4-37-2) were equally relentless giving the Indians no room for release shots. Rishabh Pant top-scored for the visitors with a 98-ball 40, going against his grain to battle it out, taking painful blows to his body in the process. If Rohit's decision to "rest" was a forward thinking move, the persistence with Kohli is proving to be detrimental and the celebrated batter might just have one more Test innings left to save his place in the traditional format. "I wouldn't say it's a par score but still a competitive score," said Pant, admitting that the pitch is not easy to bat on. If one takes away the second innings hundred at Perth out of his last 20 Test innings, Kohli has managed an average of 17.57.



He could have been out off Boland's first delivery but tried to battle hard. However, it has always been that one moment in which his hands and the willow magnetically follow a delivery in the corridor of uncertainty. Pant curbs natural instincts for a session Having copped criticism from all quarters for his bizarre shot selection in Melbourne, Pant, for a change, copped body blows, trying to curb his natural game. The big-hitter in him came out only on a couple of occasions with one of them fetching him a straight six off Beau Webster. Pant put his head down and endured nasty blows on his bicep, helmet and twice in the sensitive abdominal area. He and the dogged Ravindra Jadeja (26 off 95 balls) defended doggedly as they added 48 off 151 deliveries for the fifth wicket. Only 50 runs were scored in the second session and trying not to be adventurous proved counter-productive with most batters

retreating in a shell letting Boland and company dictate the terms of play. Finally, Pant's patience ran out and one pull shot too many became his undoing. India realised they haven't scored enough runs and lost a lot of wickets. The defensive tactic in the second session when the ball got old ended up costing them dearly. There wasn't much swing on offer despite cloudy conditions but a decent grass cover ensured that Boland's back-of-length deliveries proved enough. As far as Pant was concerned, the "honest conversations" with head coach Gautam Gambhir seemed to have worked with the southpaw respecting the game situation for most part. If Pant was disciplined, Shubman Gill's judgement on the last delivery before lunch did cause trouble for India. Gill (20 off 64 balls) did all the hard work for close to couple of hours before stepping out to Nathan Lyon on the last ball of the session only to be caught at first slip.



Facing Jasprit Bumrah will be challenging on this track: Beau Webster

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Debutant all-rounder Beau Webster feels facing ace India pacer Jasprit Bumrah will be an enormous challenge on the SCG pitch which is helping seamers, and the Australian did not place his finger on an ideal first innings score. India were all out for 185 and then Australia lost Usman Khawaja off the last ball of the day to Bumrah to end at 9 for one. "Think there's definitely a method to go about batting on this wicket. But Jasprit is a world class bowler and no doubt he's going to challenge our whole batting group. He's phenomenal with his lengths and lines, it is going to be tough on a wicket that will offer a fair bit for him," Webster said in the post day one press conference. He said getting India out for a total less than 200 on a seamer friendly track was a commendable effort. "It was a pretty seamer-friendly track and most of the day the ball stayed pretty new with the grass coverage. It is not an abrasive square either. So, the plan was to bowl a little bit fuller and entice those front foot defences and front foot drives. "Thought Scotty (Boland) was excellent, he's been unbelievable since he came back into the team and saw why he's a world class bowler. Thought all the bowlers were really good today to bowl

them out for 200." Webster said the degree of seam movement for a few deliveries was way more pronounced and hence they beat the bat regularly. "There were a couple of unplayable balls, when it seems that much it can be hard to get a wicket at times. We saw a nice-ish partnership (Jadeja-Pant), where we struggled to get a breakthrough through the sheer seam movement. We beat the bat a lot but couldn't find the edge." The 31-year-old was all praise for Boland and said the pacer can find a way to get wickets on any surface and when there is help on offer, he is on par with the best in business. "If there's anything in the wicket he finds it and if there's nothing in the wicket he still manages to find a way through," the lanky Tasmanian said. "He's been fantastic this whole series when he's got his chance, he's relentless. I think it's his line and length and his natural angle that makes it really hard for right-handers, but when we see him go round the wicket to left-handers it's impressive stuff." Webster caught the great Virat Kohli at third slip and he found Boland's bowling enjoyable. "It's great to watch from the third slip today, the amount of movement he gets and how accurate he is and how challenging he is for both left and right handers.

We've probably seen Rohit Sharma for last time in Test cricket: Gavaskar, Shastri

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Former India cricketers Sunil Gavaskar and Ravi Shastri feel that the Boxing Day Test might have been Rohit Sharma's final appearance in Test cricket, following his bold call to rest himself for the series finale that began here on Friday. The 37-year-old chose to sit out with the series on the line, having scored only 31 runs in five innings across three Tests. "I think it probably means that (if) India don't qualify for the WTC final, the Melbourne Test will be Rohit Sharma's last game," Gavaskar said during the lunch break on day one. "The WTC cycle will start with the England series, and the selectors would likely want someone available for the 2027 final. Whether India gets there or not is another matter, but that's what the selection committee is likely to do. "We have probably seen Rohit



Sharma for the last time in Test cricket," he added. Shastri echoed the sentiment, predicting that Rohit would "pull the plug" on his Test career after the series. "At the toss, Jasprit [Bumrah] mentioned it before I could ask," Shastri said during commentary. "He said the captain opted to sit out and said the team would be stronger if Shubman

Gill plays. "It can happen when you're out of sorts, you're mentally not there, you don't have the runs under your belt. It is a brave call for a captain to own up and say, 'I'm prepared to take the bench in this game,'" he added. Rohit has struggled in Test cricket recently, breaching the 20-run mark only twice in his last eight matches.

With India trailing 1-2 in the series, they must win the final Test to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which they've held for a decade, and remain in contention for a spot in the World Test Championship (WTC) final against South Africa. If India fail to qualify, their next Test series will be a tour of England starting mid-June. "If there was a home season coming up he might've thought of carrying on, but I think he might just pull the plug at the end of this Test," Shastri said. "He's not getting younger ... it's not that India don't have youngsters. There are very, very good players in the wings and it's time to build. "Tough decisions, but there is a time for everything," Shastri added. At the toss, stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah said "our captain has shown leadership by opting to rest in this game."



I wasn't in frame of mind to take charge because of nature of wicket: Pant

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India wicketkeeper batter Rishabh Pant said he batted with restraint on the opening day of the fifth Test against Australia because character of the SCG pitch and the game situation did not allow him to be his customary aggressive self. Pant, who copped severe criticism from all corners for his callous approach to batting during the previous Test at Melbourne, made a 98-ball 40 in India's 185 all out here on Friday. "I think in this innings, I was not in a frame of mind where I wanted to take charge of the game because the wicket was doing too much and the kind

of situation we were in," Pant said in the post-day press meet. "I would say there might be a 50-50 chance which I could have taken early on in this innings but sometimes you have to play more secure cricket especially the way wicket was behaving. "We knew that if we lost one more wicket here, we might lose 2-3 in quick succession. So that was the idea behind the way I was playing," he added. Pant's falling pull in Melbourne had prompted legendary Sunil Gavaskar to call the shot "stupid" and in the second innings, he slogged a half-tracker from Travis Head to find the only fielder in the deep when the Test match could have been saved.

Biggest achievement of life but plenty more to come: Harmanpreet on Khel Ratna award

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Elated to become a Khel Ratna awardee after his career-defining Olympic performance, Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said the honour is a recognition of his "fascinating" journey in which he still has plenty more to achieve. Double Olympic-medallist shooter Manu Bhaker, chess world champion D Gukesh, Harmanpreet and Paralympic high jump gold-winner Praveen Kumar were finalised for the 2024 Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award by the sports ministry on Thursday. "It's the biggest recognition of my life. It's a big achievement for me. I am really very happy. I think it's the best part of my life that I am getting such a huge award



and recognition," the 28-year-old Harmanpreet, who was India's top goal-scorer in the Paris Games with 10 strikes, told PTI in an interview. The ace drag-flicker has won most of the prominent awards and accolades in his career, including back-to-back Olympic bronze medals, a junior World Cup gold in 2016, a Commonwealth Games silver, an Asian Games gold and bronze besides two silver medals in the Champions Trophy. Harmanpreet has also claimed the FIH Player of the Year award three times,

including the year gone by. But he is far from satiated. "Throughout my journey I have learnt a lot, I have seen a lot of ups and downs including wins and losses.

I was very surprised when I heard the term 'opting out': Ponting says of Rohit's absence

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian batting great Ricky Ponting on Friday said he was "surprised" by the Indian camp's wording around Rohit Sharma's absence from the fifth and final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy but admitted that the move was on expected lines. The match started here on Friday with the visitors eyeing a win to level the series and retain the trophy. However, Jasprit Bumrah, who walked out for the toss, said Rohit has "opted to rest" from the Sydney Test. "I think the reaction has been that they all sort of expected that it might happen," Ponting told The ICC Review. "The chat's been for the last couple of days that everyone expected that Rohit would not play this game, that



Shubman Gill would come back in and that (Jasprit) Bumrah would probably take over the captaincy again and that's the way it's turned out." Given the circumstances, Ponting was totally in agreement with the woefully out-of-form Rohit skipping the decider at SCG but the former Australia captain was surprised by the wording of the news that came from the India camp. "I was very surprised when I heard the term 'opting out' coming into such an important game," Ponting

said. "We know he's been a great stalwart for Indian cricket over a long period of time. So the way that they've actually worded it, you can only take it on face value. "We've got to believe what we're hearing coming out of the Indian camp, but being such a big game, knowing that they have to win this one to retain the trophy, it was an interesting time for one of their more experienced players to opt out." The 37-year-old white-ball great looked like a pale shadow of himself in the ongoing series Down Under, struggling to execute even his bread and butter shots including the trademark front foot pull. During the customary pre-match warm-up session, Rohit was seen playing football with Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and Sarfaraz

Khan, who along with Abhimanyu Easwaran will end the series without getting an international game. Ponting did not say it in as many words but he very well understands that it could be the end of road for Rohit in the game's traditional format. "You'd think it's probably a long way back for Rohit Sharma now in this format of the game," Ponting said. "India don't play a Test match, I believe, until the middle or late June, which is a long way away when you're sort of coming to the back end of your career. "I think he's been a terrific player for India so with those sort of guys, you wish them all the best and hope to see them back out there again, but as I said, I think it will be a long - and probably difficult road - back for him." Catch off Kohli's bat was clean.

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

04066/04065 Delhi Jn. - Phaphamau Jn. - 14 Trips
Delhi Jn. Kumbh Special Train

TRAIN NO. 04066	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04065
ARR. DEP.		ARR. DEP.
--- 23:25	Delhi Jn.	13:40 ---
14:15 ---	Phaphamau Jn.	--- 23:30

Days of Run : 04066 Ex. Delhi Jn. on 10.01.2025, 18.01.2025, 22.01.2025, 31.01.2025, 08.02.2025, 16.02.2025 & 27.02.2025 and 04065 Ex. Phaphamau Jn. on 11.01.2025, 19.01.2025, 23.01.2025, 01.02.2025, 09.02.2025, 17.02.2025 & 28.02.2025.
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.
Stoppages : Ghaziabad, Hapur, Garhmuktesar, Gajraula, Amroha, Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly Jn., Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Lucknow and Raebareilly Jn. stations.

04662/04661 Amritsar - Phaphamau Jn. - 06 Trips
Amritsar Kumbh Special Train

TRAIN NO. 04662	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04661
ARR. DEP.		ARR. DEP.
--- 20:10	Amritsar	04:15 ---
19:00 ---	Phaphamau Jn.	--- 06:30

Days of Run : 04662 Ex. Amritsar on 09.01.2025, 19.01.2025 & 06.02.2025 and 04661 Ex. Phaphamau Jn. on 11.01.2025, 21.01.2025 & 08.02.2025.
Accommodation : 2 Tier AC cum 3 Tier AC, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.
Stoppages : Beas, Jalandhar City, Dhandari Kalan, Sirhind, Rajpura, Ambala Cantt., Yamuna Nagar Jagadhri, Saharanpur, Deoband, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut City, Hapur, Garhmuktesar, Gajraula, Amroha, Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly Jn., Shahjahanpur, Lucknow and Raebareilly Jn. stations.

04664/04663 Firozpur - Phaphamau Jn. - 02 Trips
Firozpur Kumbh Special Train

TRAIN NO. 04664	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04663
ARR. DEP.		ARR. DEP.
--- 13:25	Firozpur	16:45 ---
11:30 ---	Phaphamau Jn.	--- 19:30

Days of Run : 04664 Ex. Firozpur on 25.01.2025 and 04663 Ex. Phaphamau Jn. on 26.01.2025.
Accommodation : 2 Tier AC cum 3 Tier AC, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.
Stoppages : Faridkot, Kot Kapura, Bathinda Jn., Dhuri Jn., Patiala, Rajpura, Ambala Cantt., Saharanpur, Moradabad, Bareilly Jn., Shahjahanpur, Lucknow and Raebareilly Jn. stations.

04316/04315 Dehradun - Phaphamau Jn. - 12 Trips
Dehradun Kumbh Special Train

TRAIN NO. 04316	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04315
ARR. DEP.		ARR. DEP.
--- 08:10	Dehradun	21:30 ---
18:30 18:35	Lucknow	10:40 10:50
23:50 ---	Phaphamau Jn.	--- 06:30

Days of Run : 04316 Ex. Dehradun on 18.01.2025, 21.01.2025, 25.01.2025, 09.02.2025, 15.02.2025 & 23.02.2025 and 04315 Ex. Phaphamau Jn. on 19.01.2025, 22.01.2025, 25.01.2025, 10.02.2025, 17.02.2025 & 24.02.2025.
Accommodation : 2 Tier AC cum 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General.
Stoppages : Haridwar, Najibabad, Moradabad, Bareilly Jn., Lucknow and Raebareilly Jn. stations.

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