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MURDEROUS ATTACK ON SAIF ALI KHAN TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

prayers and support during Naa Ho, Omkara, Parineeta, and Hum Tum, the 54-yearthis time," Saif's family said in old Saif is the son of legendary a statement issued to the cricketer Mansoor Ali Khan media. The incident took Pataudi, popularly known as place around 2 a.m. at the 12th-floor flat of Saif's "Satguru Sharan" building, Tiger Pataudi, and actress Sharmila Tagore. He is also the 10th Nawab of Pataudi. located at the junction of 29th "Saif Ali Khan has come out and 24th Roads in Bandra of surgery and is out of (W). Saif and his family danger. He is currently in occupy the top four floors of recovery, and doctors are the 12-storey building. A housemaid, identified as monitoring his progress. All family members are safe, and Eliyama Phillipes alias Lima, the police are investigating was the first to spot the the incident. We would like to intruder and raised an alarm, thank Dr. Niraj Uttamani, Dr. prompting Saif to rush out of Nitin Dange, Dr. Leena Jain, his bedroom. Upon seeing the and the team at Lilavati actor, the knife-wielding intruder, who is suspected to have broken into the house Hospital. We also thank all his fans and well-wishers for their

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

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

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

Continued on page 2 Developments on page 2

Hindenberg winds up political turmoil DEEPAK KUMAR JHA/PTI NEW DELHI/

Established 1865

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS NEW DELHI

paper mode.

detailed

mode.

The decision comes after

between education and health

ministries on whether to

conduct the NEET-UG in pen

and paper mode or online

"As decided by the National

Medical Commission(NMC),

the NEET-UG shall be

conducted in Pen and paper

mode (OMR based) in a

the adoption of non-

traditional devices such as

deliberations

Government to constitute 8th **Pav Commission**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday on approved setting up the 8th Pay Commission to revise salaries of nearly 50 lakh central government employees and allowances of 65 lakh pensioners. The chairman and two members of the Commission will be appointed soon, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters here. "Prime Minister has approved 8th Central Pay Commission for central government employees," the minister said. The term of the 7th Pay Commission will end in 2026. Since 1947, seven Pay Commissions have been constituted, with the last one

implemented in 2016. As the 7th Pay Commission's term concludes in 2026, initiating the process in 2025 ensures sufficient time to receive and review recommendations before its completion, the Minister added. He said the setting up of the Pay Commission in 2025 will ensure that its recommendations are received before the completion of the term of the seventh pay panel. Continued on page 2



Ceasefire deal hangs | **Delhi residents suffer fluctuating GRAP restrictions** | in balance in Gaza

lurch

overnight,"

Chennai.

after receiving

message that the taxi service

they hired a few hours ago has

been canceled due to GRAP in the city. "I booked a day-

long cab service for an official

visit to Delhi and boarded my

flight early in the morning.

The moment I switched on

received a message from the

travel service regretting the

cancellation of the service due

to GRAP implementation

Guleria, a media professional

who came to the Capital from

"I drove to my office in my

private car in the morning. In

said Ankit

my mobile network,

PTI TEL AVIV

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that a "last-minute crisis" with Hamas was holding up Israeli approval of a long-awaited ceasefire that would pause the fighting in the Gaza in and release dozens of hostages. Israeli airstrikes, meanwhile, killed at least 72 people in the war-ravaged territory. Netanyahu began signalling there were issues with the deal just hours after US President Joe Biden and key mediator Qatar announced it was complete. The objection created a dual reality: War-weary Palestinians in Gaza, the relatives of hostages held there and world leaders all welcomed an agreement, expected to begin Sunday, even as Netanyahu said it was not yet finalised. It was not yet clear if Netanyahu's statements merely reflected jockeying to keep his fractious coalition together or whether the deal was at risk. Netanyahu's office said his Cabinet won't meet to approve the deal until Hamas backs down, accusing it of reneging on parts of the agreement in an attempt to gain further concessions, without elaborating.



SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

 $R_{\text{Capital have no respite}}^{\text{esidents of the National}}$ either from the hazardous air pollution or from the sudden revocation and imposition of different stages of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the recent past, leaving common people to ue to the



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

unaware of these implementations, questioning noor disse



Izzat al-Rishq, a senior Hamas official, said the militant group "is committed to the ceasefire agreement. which was announced by the mediators." The deal announced Wednesday would see a scores of hostages held in Gaza released and a pause in fighting with a view to eventually wind down a 15-month war that has destabilised the Middle East sparked worldwide and

protests. Hamas triggered the war with its October 7, 2023, crossborder attack into Israel that

killed some 1,200 people and took 250 others hostage. Israel responded with a fierce

offensive that has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not distinguish between civilians and militants but say women and children make up more than half of those killed. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence

imposed.

Narrating their ordeal, many question the government's action plan, stating that only ordinary people are harassed by this flip-flopping. The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Thursday revoked curbs under stage 4 of the GRAP amid dip in pollution levels following its invocation on Wednesday as the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi crossed 400 However, stage 3 of GRAP is

still in force which prohibits BS-III and BS-IV vehicle from plying on the roads.

Moreover, the invocation happens with immediate effect, leaving many officegoers and regular citizens to face fines repeatedly. People say that the constant removal and imposition of GRAP stages causes significant problems in their daily lives. În several instances, people who book a cab in Delhi before boarding a flight from

the evening, when I was leaving, I heard that GRAP Stage-IV had been implemented. In such a **Continued on page 2** | a different city are left in the



а

WEATHER

AQI 302 MAX 10.3°C(+2.7) MIN 19.6°C(0)

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

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

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

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

restrictions. Continued on page 2

Centre keeps NEET-UG in pen-paper format

Thursday. The National Eligibility-cum-The Centre has decided against conducting the Entrance Test (NEET) is the largest entrance exam in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG in online mode for country in terms of number of candidates appearing for the test. In 2024, a record now, and announced on more than 24 lakh candidates Thursday it will continue to be conducted in pen and took the exam.

The NTA conducts the NEET every year for admission into medical colleges. A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for MBSS course.

Of the seats available for the MBBS course, approximately 56,000 are in government hospitals and about 52,000 in private colleges. Admissions to undergraduate courses in Dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha also utilise the results of the NEET for admission.

single day and shift," a senior National Testing Agency (NTA) official said on

Continued on page 2

India joins US, Russia, China with satellite docking success

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

n a major boost to India's ambitious future space missions, ISRO on Thursday successfully performed the docking of satellites as part of the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) and announced that post docking, control of two satellites as a single object was also achieved

"India docked its name in space history! Good Morning India ISRO's SpaDeX mission accomplishes historic docking success. Proud to witness this moment!", ISRO said in a social media post.

With the successful docking of satellites – Chaser and Target – India has become the fourth country after the US, Russia and China to accomplish the technological feat. In space, docking technology is essential when multiple rocket launches are required to achieve common mission objectives.



The docking experiment is crucial for the smooth conduct of the country's ambitious future missions, including Chandrayaan-4, Gaganyaan, setting up a space station and landing an astronaut on the moon.

Last October, the government announced that India will have its own Space Station by 2035, known as the "Bharatiya Antriksh Station". Continued on page 2

Indic languages are driving India's internet growth

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

The internet user base in India is set to surpass 900 million by 2025, driven by the growing use of Indic languages for digital content. The Internet in India Report 2024, jointly prepared by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and KANTAR, reveals that the number of active internet users in India reached 886 million in 2024, marking a robust 8% year-on-year growth.

The report underscores the increasing role of Indic languages in shaping internet consumption patterns. It shows that rural India is leading the way when it comes to internet consumption. Not only that, but news consumption is also highest among the rural Indian population. The report further highlights

the increasing importance of Indic languages in shaping internet consumption patterns. Nearly all internet users (98%) accessed content in Indic languages, with Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam emerging as the most popular to their extensive due availability. Over half (57%) of urban internet users prefer in consuming content

regional languages, underscoring the growing demand for local-language content across platforms.

The report highlights that the digital gender gap in India is steadily narrowing, with 47% of all internet users in the



previous years. Rural India. portion of shared device users in rural India: 58%. This however, continues to witness marks substantial progress in double the growth rate of making digital access more urban regions, reflecting the inclusive and equitable over untapped potential in these the years. areas. Urban India leads in

While internet penetration continues to grow, the pace country being women-so far has moderated, especially in smart TVs and smart the highest. Female internet urban areas, compared to the speakers, which have grown users now form a significant exponential growth seen in by 54% between 2023 and

2024. Concurrently, mobile devices remain the primary means of accessing the internet across both urban and rural demographics. Rural India dominates online engagement for top activities, including OTT video and music streaming, online communication, and social media usage, outpacing urban users in these categories. Conversely, activities like ecommerce, digital payments, and online education are still more prevalent among urban

populations. According to the report, rural India, with 488 million users, leads this growth and now accounts for 55% of the total internet population. The

report states that Indians

spend an average of 90

minutes online daily. Continued on page 2

nation 02



Council for

Prof TG Sitharam.

NCR.

From page 1

Pav

of

Pay

the pioneer

PNS NOIDA/NEW DELHI

 $\mathbf{I}_{\mathrm{for}}^{\mathrm{n}}$ a first of its kind platform for student entrepreneurs to engage with the Investor Community to pitch their startups, raise funds and receive mentorship on business models and scaling the startups, a joint initiative by AICITE and Amity University Noida titled Udyamotsav -

NEW DELHI | FRIDAY | JANUARY 17, 2025

Centre keeps NEET-UG in penpaper format

From page 1

The idea of switching to Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode for NEET is not new and has been deliberated several times before. However, the push for the exam reforms came following the paper leak controversy last year.

In the line of fire over alleged irregularities in NEET and PhD entrance NET, the Centre had in July set up the panel to ensure transparent smooth and fair conduct of examinations by NTA.

According to the high-level panel headed by former ISRO Chief R Radhakrishnan, multi-stage testing for NEET-UG could be a viable possibility that needs to be followed up.

While NEET was under the scanner over several including irregularities, alleged leaks, UGC-NET was cancelled last year as the ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam had been compromised. Both matters are being probed by the CBI.

उद्यमात्सव 2025 National

Trivandrum, and Guwahati. 2025 Investor Network was launched on Thursday on the A total of 35 startups pitched to occasion of National Startup Day. Amity University is the only University from Delhi NCR, which has been selected to host event which was financials, inaugurated by All India Technical Education (AICTE) Chairman This event is a part of National Startup Week Celebration across 14 locations in India, including Ahmedabad, Delhi-Jaipur, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Srinagar, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Lucknow, Chandigarh,

2016.

Central

commission

were central pay commission.

Usually, every 10 years, the

constitutes a Pay Commission

to revise the remuneration of

recommends the formula for

the revision of dearness

allowance and dearness relief

them for inflation. Several

State Governments also revise

Government

The pay

also



six investors and the pitches were evaluated based on key criteria such as market fit, scalability, team strength traction, and competitive advantage. Postevent, a dedicated follow-up process will be in place for investors and startups to continue negotiations, due diligence, and investment closures. The summit aims to close real deals during or after the event, helping startups secure the capital they need to grow, said a Press release from the University.

Celebrities and politicians demand action after Saif Ali Khan's attack

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

The attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan on Thursday sent shockwaves across both the Indian film industry and the political landscape of Maharashtra. High-profile figures reacted strongly to the incident, expressing their concerns and wishing the actor a speedy recovery, while the Ōpposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) criticized the BJP-led MahaYuti government for the alleged breakdown" of law and order in the state. Chief Minister Devendra

Fadnavis described the incident as "unfortunate" and emphasized that it would be unfair to claim that Mumbai is unsafe. However, the attack sparked sharp responses from both film personalities and MVA leaders. and Yestervear

actress Bhatt Pooja filmmaker

expressed her frustration on social media platform "X," writing: "Law & Order... We have laws... What about expressed his surprise at the order? Can this lawlessness please be curbed? We need more police presence in Bandra. The city and especially the queen of the suburbs have never felt so unsafe before.

Veteran Telugu film star Chiranjeevi also shared his concerns, tweeting: "Deeply disturbed by the news of the attack by an intruder on Saif Ali Khan. Wishing and praying for his speedy recovery Actor Junior NTR added: "Shocked and saddened to

hear about the attack on Saif Sir. Wishing and praying for his speedy recovery and good health." Hansal Mehta Director

raised an important point, 'Unfortunate asking, incident with Saif. Prayers for his speedy recovery. But why

are media reports giving out his residential address?'

Raza Murad, a veteran actor. security breach, noting, "The surprising thing is that the security in the building where Saif lives is very efficient. There are 3-4 layers of security where you have to sign the register, provide your mobile number, and CCTV cameras are installed. And since it is a celebrity's house, he too must have his

own security." Despite these measures, Murad questioned how the attacker managed to breach the security and what his intentions were. "Did he just want to steal, or did he intend to attack, and that too lethally?" he asked.

Rajya Sabha member and Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sanjay Raut commented, "The law and order has collapsed in Maharashtra.

award-winning actor (Saif Ali Khan), who lives in a high-profile society in a supposedly safe area like Bandra, is attacked in his own home. What a horrific incident!

She continued, "The law and order situation Maharashtra is deteriorating day by day. A politician (Baba Siddique) was shot

dead in Bandra, an actor's house was shot at (Salman Khan), and now Saif Ali Khan is attacked. All these attacks have occurred near the homes and offices of these prominent individuals. When such famous people are not safe in their homes and offices, how can a common person feel safe?" The attack on Saif Ali Khan follows the recent abduction and murder of Sarpanch

of years. Congress leader and Mumbai Santosh Deshmukh in Beed North Central MP Prof. Varsha Gaikwad remarked: "A popular Padma Shri

and

Abdullah

regarding

He added, "What a shame

that Mumbai sees another

high-profile attempt on a life. The attack on Saif Ali Khan

raises serious questions

about Mumbai Police and the

Home Minister. This comes

after a series of incidents that

suggest a deliberate attempt

to undermine Mumbai by

spokesperson of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP, echoed similar concerns: "The attack

on Saif Ali Khan is a cause

for concern because if such

high-profile people with

levels of security can be

attacked in their homes, then

what could happen to

common citizens? The fear of

law seems to be at a low in

leniencies in the past couple

due

to

national

targeting big names."

Clyde Crasto,

Maharashtra

Jammu

Omar

Sinha

7, 2024.

district, further fueling concerns over the state's law and order situation. Aggrieved families seek

justice in Rajouri deaths

Government to constitute SC criticises ED over bail conditions for women 8th Pay Commission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE implemented on January 1, NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has I strongly criticised the Enforcement Directorate for submitting that rigorous bail conditions in money laundering cases will apply to women despite a statutory exception explicitly provided under the law.

for Central Government A bench comprising Justices employees and pensioners Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih, while hearing with a view to compensating the bail plea of Shashi Bala, a government school teacher the remuneration of their accused in a money employees on the lines of the laundering scam involving the Shine City Group of

Companies, called the ED's Wednesday. submissions "contrary to statute" and emphasised that such arguments would not be

tolerated not tolerate "We will То conduct... make submissions contrary to statute," the bench said and granted bail to Bala in the case, saying she had been in custody since November 2023 and there was little likelihood of her trial concluding anytime soon.

Union of India do not know basic provisions of law, why should they appear in the matter," the bench said on

construction work, including

linear public projects such as

highways, roads, flyovers,

power transmission, pipelines,

telecommunication.

he cost of labor

have

period," he said.

Businesspeople

and

The ED argued that the stringent bail conditions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, should apply

to women. Section 45 of the PMLA imposes stringent conditions for granting bail in money laundering cases, requiring the accused to prove that there is no prima facie case

Gurugram

STAFF REPORTER GURUGRAM

Haryana's Industry and Commerce Minister, Rao expressed that they are Narbir Singh, has instructed incurring losses since there is always uncertainty regarding officials to accelerate the completion of infrastructure projects under the Gurugram etropolitan Devel men (GMDA) Authority and Gurugram Metro Rail Limited (GMRL), as part of the Comprehensive Mobility Management Plan-2020. The plan aims to improve traffic

Murderous attack on

MOHIT KANDHARI 🖬 JAMMU never forget you. 15 innocent lives were lost, and Opposition parties have once again attacked the government the He completely silent. Kashmir added, "In the last 37 days, government, questioning the silence of Chief Minister 15 unfortunate deaths have occurred in Badhal, Rajouri, and but there hasn't been even a Lieutenant Governor Manoj single statement from CM the Omar Abdullah or LG mysterious deaths of 15 Manoj Sinha over this villagers, including 13 children, in the Badhal area The current tragedy. government is complacent!" of Rajouri since December The BJP has also weighed in on the issue, with leaders The fresh outcry has come such as former J&K Unit after weeks of no official Chief Ravinder Raina and former Cabinet Minister statements or action from

the government. Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, a prominent legislator from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) representing visited Pulwama, the grieving families in Badhal on Thursday. He demanded immediate assistance and justice for the families affected by the tragedy. In a post on X, Para also criticized Omar Abdullah for his silence on the issue, urging him to visit Badhal and address the situation

personally. In his post, Para said, "Incredibly talented, Sir! Surely, an hour from your schedule can be spared to visit Badhal, Raiouri where 15 lives from one family were tragically lost under mysterious circumstances." Political activist Guftar Ahmed, who accompanied Para, also expressed his management and enhance anger online, stating, "Sleep metro connectivity in the city. | well Mr CM. History will

residence.

repeated setbacks.

Trump's

breakthrough.

daunting

reconstruction.

international

US President-elect Donald

joined the talks in the final

weeks, and both the outgoing

administration and Trump's

team are taking credit for the

Many longer-term questions

about postwar Gaza remain,

including who will rule the

territory or oversee the

Israel has come under heavy

including from its closest ally,

the United States, over the

civilian toll in Gaza. It also

blames Hamas for the civilian

casualties, accusing it of using

task

of

criticism,

and

Mideast envoy

(MVA),

Choudhary Zulfikar Choudhary visiting Badhal offer condolences. to During the visit, Raina telephonically contacted the Lieutenant Governor of J&K, who assured the family that prompt action would be taken. Meanwhile Territory administration has been closely monitoring the

the Union situation in Badhal, where an unexplained illness has caused the deaths. One child remains in critical condition after being admitted to a hospital in Jammu.

The government has initiated an investigation, with police forming a Speci Invest oation (SIT) to look into the matter. An official spokesperson confirmed that the situation is under constant scrutiny, with the government taking steps to address the crisis.

India joins US, Russia, China with satellite docking success

Commissions hold

giving recommendations to its employees.

state-owned

was

extensive consultations with

central and state governments

and other stakeholders before

the government. The pay

commission has a key role in

deciding salary structures,

benefits and allowances for

government employees. Most

organisations follow the

commission's

recommendations. The 7th

Commission

constituted in 2014 and its

the

recommendations

From page 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the scientists for achievement. the "Congratulations to our scientists at ISRO and the entire space fraternity for the successful demonstration of space docking of satellites. It is a significant stepping stone for India's ambitious space missions in the years to

• said



Delhi residents suffer...

From page 1

"The GRAP Committee is really 'grappling' with fluctuating decision-makers. Traffic snarls and jams caused by e-rickshaws and autos, which contribute to stationary vehicular pollution, slow construction or digging of Delhi roads by civic bodies, and nonsensical traffic lights are the real issues, not Stage-III and Stage-IV vehicles," social media user, expressing his frustration, said.

the different stages under Another person added that for GRAP. They state that they the past 60 days, he has

against them and that they are unlikely to commit "If people who appear for the another offence while on bail.

However, the law includes a notable exception for certain categories of individuals.

Minister reviews metro can keep pace, and it is the residents who are harassed. Get a consistent policy for the November to February projects in This also leads to a halt in all

satellites as a single object is successful. Undocking and power transfer checks to follow in coming days." Hailing ISRO, Union Minister of State for Science,

Further, ISRO said: "Post 12, ISRO brought the two docking, control of two spacecraft to three metres and then moved them back to a safe distance in its trial attempt to dock the satellites. ISRO successfully launched Docking the Space (SpaDeX) Experiment

According to ISRO, the SpaDeX mission is a costtechnology effective demonstrator mission for the demonstration of in-space docking using two small spacecraft that were launched by PSLV.

internet usage in the country.

facing problems because of GRAP, which bans private vehicles. He urged that private vehicles be removed from the GRAP restrictions. "The administration has to stop switching GRAP stages on a weekly basis in Delhi. No one

and projects are getting delayed. Moreover, since the removal and implementation are uncertain, many drivers of commercial vehicles raise their prices, and people, with no other choice, have to pay them.

hear

Indic languages are driving India's internet growth

From page 1

Urban users were found to typically engage more digital frequently with content, averaging 94 minutes, while rural Indians spend only 89 minutes. Users spend an average of 90 minutes daily accessing the internet, with both urban and rural users spending almost the same time online, at 94% and 95%, respectively.

In terms of the gender gap, male internet users accounted for 53%, while female users stood at 47%. The report highlighted high internet penetration in southern states

such as Kerala (72%), Goa Lakshadweep), is an annual (71%), and Maharashtra report and the most (70%) compared to northern states, including Bihar (43%), Uttar Pradesh (46%), and Jharkhand (50%). Interestingly, the report

over 90,000 households across

Territories of India (excluding

and Union

states

all

335 million users, including revealed an increase in the 40 million more users in rural number of users accessing the areas. Social media usage in rural areas was found to be internet using someone else's mobile device. One in five 347 million, with 39 million users accessed the internet more rural users engaged in using a shared device, with social media. The report also rural shared device users noted a narrowing gender gap witnessing a 24% growth in internet usage, with 47% since 2024. The 'Internet in female and 53% male internet users. This signals a growing India' report, which covers

primary means of internet access, regardless of whether comprehensive survey of users are in rural or urban areas. Around 41% of the When it came to online Indian population reported communication, there were not accessing the internet with the highest reported reason being a lack of awareness of the benefits of internet usage (25%). Biswapriya Bhattacharya Biswapriya

Director of B2B and Technology, Kantar Insights -South Asia, commented, "AI has emerged as a significant game changer over the past year. Nine out of ten internet demand for local-language users have interacted with apps featuring embedded AI content across platforms. Mobile devices remain the capabilities?

From page 1

They are also examining the mobile phones of the house staff and have deployed tech intelligence, activated their informers' network, and are working to track down the attacker and uncover the motive behind the attack. Preliminary investigations suggest that the intruder did not break into the actor's flat but might have sneaked into the building earlier in the

night. It is believed that the intruder may have climbed the stairs to reach the 12th

floor, where Saif and his family reside, and entered

through a fire escape. 'We have questioned three staff members and also workers who have been coming to the actor's new apartment for some floor polishing work in recent days," a senior police officer said.

Saif Ali Khan lives with his wife, Kareena Kapoor, and their sons, Taimur Ali Khan (8) and Jehangir Ali Khan (4).

Unconfirmed reports Aghadi indicate that Ibrahim (23), Saif's elder son from a

previous marriage who lives law and order situation in nearby, rushed his bleeding the state.

Speaking to the media, Fadnavis said, "The incident father to Lilavati Hospital. Since the family's car driver was unavailable, Ibrahim is unfortunate, but it would hired an auto-rickshaw and not be accurate to say that took Saif to the hospital, Mumbai is unsafe. Of all the located about 2 km major cities in the country away from the actor's Mumbai remains one of the safest. The police are taking Meanwhile, Maharashtra this attack on the actor scriously, and an investigation is underway." Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the state's Home portfolio, faced "Police have provided all the criticism from opposition details

regarding the incident, including the type leaders of the Maha Vikas who of attack, the intention pointed to the incident as behind it, and what led to evidence of the worsening it," Fadnavis added.

Ceasefire deal hangs in balance in Gaza

From page 1

The military campaign has also levelled vast swaths of Gaza, and pushed around 90 per cent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people from their homes. Hundreds of thousands are struggling with hunger and disease in squalid tent camps on the coast, according to United Nations officials. faces heavy Netanyahu

internal pressure Netanyaĥu's office earlier Hamas accused of backtracking on an understanding that he said would give Israel a veto over which prisoners convicted of murder would be released in exchange for hostages

The Israeli prime minister has faced great domestic pressure to bring home the scores of hostages, but his farthreatened to bring down his government if he makes too many concessions. He has enough opposition support to approve an agreement even without overnight as people were those partners, but doing so celebrating the ceasefire deal. would weaken his coalition. One of his far-right allies, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, has already come out against the deal. Another, Bezalel Smotrich, posted on X late Wednesday that he was demanding "absolute certainty" that Israel can resume the war later, calling the current deal "bad (negotiations),"

and dangerous" for Israel. The departure of both of their factions would seriously destabilise the government right coalition partners have and could lead to early elections. A night of heavy Israeli strikes

Palestinians in Gaza reported heavy Israeli bombardment In previous conflicts, both sides have stepped up military operations in the final hours before ceasefires as a way to project strength. "We were expecting that the occupation would intensify the bombing, like they did every time there were reports on progress in the truce said

Mohammed Mahdi, who fled his home a few months ago and is sheltering in Gaza City. Ahmed Mattar, who lives near the city's Al-Ahly hospital, said he heard "massive airstrikes" overnight.

Gaza's Health Ministry said Israeli strikes have killed at least 72 people since the deal ceasefire was announced. It said the toll from Thursday's strikes only includes bodies brought to two hospitals in Gaza City, and that the actual toll is likely higher.

"Yesterday was a bloody day, and today is bloodier," said Zaher al-Wahedi, head of the ministry's registration department.

An Associated Press reporter on the Israeli side of the border near Gaza heard more airstrikes and artillery fire on Thursday.

A phased withdrawal and hostage release with potential pitfalls

Under the deal reached Wednesday, 33 of some 100 hostages who remain in Gaza are set to be released over the next six weeks in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Israeli forces will pull back from many areas, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians would be able to return to what's left of their homes, and there would be a surge of

hostages, including male soldiers, are to be released in a second - and much more difficult - phase that will be negotiated during the first. Hamas has said it will not the remaining release captives without a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal, while Israel has vowed to keep fighting until it dismantles the group and to maintain open-ended security control over the territory.

Ceasefire leaves questions about Gaza's future unanswered

Mediators from Egypt, Qatar and the US are expected to meet in Cairo on Thursday for talks on implementing the agreement, which came after schools, hospitals

residential areas for military a year of intensive talks with ourposes.

> Hamas, a militant group that does not accept Israel's existence, has come under overwhelming pressure from Israeli military operations, including the invasion of Gaza's largest cities and towns and the takeover of the border between Gaza and Egypt. Its top leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, who was believed to have helped mastermind the Oct. 7, 2023,

> attack, have been killed. But its fighters have regrouped in some of the hardest-hit areas after the withdrawal of Israeli forces, raising the prospect of a prolonged insurgency if the war continues.

humanitarian assistance.

The remainder of the





Congress promises free LPG, ration BJP calls Arvind Kejriwal's income

Ranjan Dimr



AICC in-charge of Delhi Qazi Nizamuddin, Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav and Telangana CM and Congress leader A Revanth Reddy

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

¬he Congress on Thursday I said it would provide Rs 500 LPG cylinders, free ration kits, and free electricity up to 300 units to city residents if voted to power in Delhi. The announcement was made by Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, who was addressing a press conference here with AICC Delhi incharge Qazi Nizamuddin and Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav.

"Congress will fulfill its five guarantees if it is elected to power in Delhi," Reddy said. He also mentioned that his government in Telangana waived farmer loans to the tune of Rs 21,000 crore in one year

"There is no difference between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. They have done nothing for the national capital," Reddy said. He added that the Congress guarantees were finalized after getting feedback from the residents of the Capital during Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra and Devender Yadav's Delhi Nyay Yatra. Urging a change of regime in

Delhi, Reddy told voters in the Capital that just like in his state, the Congress will deliver all five guarantees for the welfare of the poor in Delhi as well. The party on Thursday announced two more guaran-tees, bringing the total to five. Yadav said the party came up with these promises based on

Delhi Nyay Yatra.

people from inflation and ris-ing prices. He criticized the Aam Aadmi Party and the BJP feedback gleaned from the 'We took out the Delhi Nyay Yatra and learned about the for ruining the lives of families issues of the people, which in Delhi with skyrocketing helped us come up with these inflation, but assured that the five guarantees. Today, we have Congress guarantee would announced two more guaranremove inflation from kitchens. tees-'Mehangai Mukti Yojana' On January 6, the Congress and 'Free Bijli Yojana.' We will announced its 'Pyaari Didi implement these five guaran-Yojana,' promising a monthly monetary grant of Rs 2,500 to women if it is voted to power. tees in the first cabinet meeting if we come to power," he said. On January 8, the party announced its 'Jeevan Raksha Reddy stated that the Congress government fulfilled all its Yojana,' under which it promised to provide free health promises within 13 months of coming to power in Telangana. Similarly, he assured that insurance of up to Rs 25 lakh. Congress would fulfill all its five The party on Sunday also promised to give Rs 8,500 every promises in Delhi immediate-Îy after returning to power. He month to educated unememphasized that the guarantees ployed youths in Delhi for one announced today would free vear.

figures for 2020-21 questionable

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

s electioneering is in full swing for the A Delhi polls next month, the state BJP on Thursday raised doubts over AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal's declaration about his assets while filing his nomination on Wednesday.

The conference was conducted by media head Praveen Shankar Kapoor, who clarified that no accusations were being made on Thursday. However, it is hard for Delhiites to believe that a retired officer who served as Chief Minister and MLA could have an average income of merely Rs 2.5 lakh.

Kejriwal was first elected as an MLA in 2013, a term lasting until November 4, 2014. Since February 2015, he has served continuously as an MLA. In his income tax returns for 2013-14, Kejriwal declared his MLA salary as his primary source of income.

Interestingly, for the 2013-14 fiscal year, he would have received only two months of Chief Minister salary and allowances, followed by regular MLA salary and allowances from March 2014 to November 4, 2014, the BJP said.

When reelected in February 2015, Kejriwal began receiving the CM salary and allowances until September 17, 2024, when he resigned. Subsequently, he would have been drawing his MLA salary until now. Sachdeva highlighted that before the February 2023 pay hike, Delhi's Chief Minister received Rs 72,000 per month, which rose to Rs 1,70,000 per month after the hike.

When Kejriwal served as a regular MLA for seven months in 2014-15, he earned a salary and allowances of ?55,000 per month. Post-September 17, 2015, his MLA salary was Rs 90,000 per month.

Given these facts, Kejriwal's declared income from 2013-14 to 2024-25 in his affidavit dated January 15, 2025, does not align



Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva questioned Kejriwal's income affidavit in a press conference.

with these figures, the BJP claimed.

For example, his declared income for 2014-15 was Rs 7,42,884, despite being an MLA for only 9 months that year. In 2015-16, when his salary, including allowances, was Rs 72,000 per month, he declared an annual income of only Rs 2,46,946. Similar figures were reported in 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19.

In 2019-20, his income suddenly dropped to Rs 1,57,823, which is significantly below the taxable basic salary of Rs 3,60,000 annually as Chief Minister, Sachdeva said.

Kejriwal's 2020-21 income raises the most significant questions. He declared a 40-fold increase, amounting to Rs 44,90,040, during a time when incomes plummeted globally due to COVID-19.

Sachdeva reminded attendees of Kejriwal's new liquor policy during 2020-21 and the unaccounted expenses for constructing the "Sheesh Mahal" during this period.

BJP, Congress finalise Delhi candidates

The next fiscal year, 2021-22, saw Kejriwal's income drop by 40 times to Rs 1,62,976, and in 2022-23, despite the CM salary hike, his income remained almost stagnant at Rs 1,67,066. In 2023-24, his income rose sixfold to Rs 7,21,530.

Sachdeva concluded that Delhiites demand clarification from Kejriwal about his income growth anomalies in 2020-21 (40-fold) and 2023-24 (6-fold), especially since he claims his MLA salary as his only source of income.

In a sharp response to Sachdeva, the AAP said Kejriwal, is a three-time CM and former IRS officer, who does not own a per-sonal house in Delhi or even a car. "This a testament to his simplicity and commitment to public service. He has Rs 50,000 in cash and barely Rs 3 lakh in the bank. While, Parvesh Verma's total wealth

is Rs 89 crore—about 27 times more than Arvind Kejriwal.

HC reserves verdict on plea over placing CAG reports in Assembly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea by opposition MLAs seeking a sitting of the Delhi Assembly for tabling of several CAG reports on the city government. Justice Sachin Datta reserved the verdict after hearing senior lawyers appearing for the petitioners, the Speaker as well as the Delhi government. "Arguments heard. Judgement

reserved," the judge said. Opposition leader Vijender Gupta and BJP MLAs -- Mohan Singh Bisht, Om Prakash Sharma, Ajay Kumar Mahawar, Abhay Verma, Anil Kumar Bajpai and Jitendra Mahajan --filed the petition last year and

sought a direction to the Speaker to call a sitting of the assembly for the purpose of immediate tabling

of 14 CAG reports. The petitioners filed the plea through lawyers Neeraj and Satya Ranjan Swain.

The CAG, in its reports, was critical of some of the AAP-led Delhi government's policies, including its now-scrapped excise policy for reportedly causing losses to the exchequer. The senior lawyers for the Speaker as well as the government on Thursday opposed the passing of such a direction by the court and said there was no urgency to table the reports at a stage when the assembly elections

were to be held soon. The Speaker's counsel questioned whether any "fruitful purpose" would be served if a sitting

of the House was called "hardly 20 days" before its mandate ended.

He emphasised that the CAG reports were considered by the assembly in a manner which was set out and included referring them to the public accounts committee (PAC), and there was no bar on the reports being considered by the next assembly post polls. The senior lawyer appearing for the Delhi government said there was no urgency in the matter and the hurry was only political in nature.

The petitioners' senior counsel, on the other hand, accused the government of delaying the matter and said the upcoming elec-tions made the placing of the audit reports in the assembly even more pertinent.

Naresh Balyan withdraws election plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELH

AP MLA Naresh Balyan, arrested in a case lodged under the stringent MCOČA, on Thursday withdrew an application from a Delhi court seeking permission to sign election related documents, saying his wife was instead contesting the upcoming assembly polls. Special judge Kaveri Baweja who on January 15 issued notice to Delhi Police on Balyan's plea for signing docu-ments to open a bank account and other papers required to contest the elections, dismissed the application after his submission

STAFF REPORTER MEW

 $B^{\rm oth}$ the BJP and Congress have declared all their candidates for the upcoming Delhi assembly elections, with the former contesting elections on 68 seats and giving one seat each to its allies Janata Dal (United) and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas).

The BJP on Thursday named nine more candidates for the elections to the 70-member Delhi assembly The party fielded advocate

Shikha Rai, the first woman chairperson of the Standing Committee of the erstwhile South Delhi Municipal Corporation, against AAP government's Transport Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj from Greater Kailash (GK) constituency. Anil Vashisth will contest



Saurabh Bharadwaj files his nomination

Ravinder Kumar from the Bawana reserved seat, Poonam Sharma from Wazirpur, Bhuvan Tanwar from Delhi

Praveen Nimesh from the Gokalpur reserved seat. Soon after the BJP released its fourth list, its ally JD(U) named

PT

of its candidate from the reserved seat of Deoli, as the last date for filing nominations is Friday.

The Congress also announced its final list of candidates, with two names revealed on

Thursday. According to the latest list, Lokendra Chaudhary has been fielded from Timarpur, while Suresh Wati Chauhan will contest from Rohtas Nagar.

On Wednesday, the party had unveiled a list of five candidates. The party fielded Surender Kumar from Bawana (SC), Sumesh Gupta from Rohini, Rahul Dhanak from Karol Bagh (SC), Virender Bidhuri from Tughlakabad, and Arjun Bhadana from Badarpur.

On Tuesday, the party released a list of 15 candidates, fielding former Union minister Krishna Tirath from Patel Nagar and Okhla. Voting for the Delhi Assembly polls will be held on February 5, with the counting scheduled for February 8.

Parvesh Verma booked for distributing Two killed

after SUV overturns in south Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $T^{wo friends \ returning \ from}_{a \ trip \ to \ Himachal}$ Pradesh were killed after their SUV overturned in the Alipur area of outer north Delhi early Thursday, an official said

The deceased have been identified as Kartik Kakkar (20), a resident of Vikaspuri, and his friend Yashraj Sidhu (23), a resident of Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal, police said. The incident happened on the GT Karnal Road early Thursday when the two were returning after visiting Lahaul and Spiti Valley, and Kasol among other places in Himachal Pradesh. They were returning via Chandigarh. sarees to women voters in Delhi

citizen

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

day after BJP leader Aday after Bjr Jeace for allegedly distributing shoes to voters at a temple in Delhi, another non-cognizable report (NCR) was filed against him on Thursday. This time, the complaint accused Verma, the BJP's New Delhi candidate, of dis-

tributing sarees to women. District Magistrate Sunny Kumar Singh, who also serves as the returning officer for the New Delhi Assembly constituency, confirmed receiving the complaint regarding Verma's actions. "The com-plaint alleges that sarees were being distributed to women at his residence. We have forwarded the complaint to the police for further investigation," Singh said. As a result, an

NCR was filed at the Barakhamba police station, and the Delhi Police have launched an inquiry.



Unlike the earlier case involvvideo footage, has been foring the distribution of shoes, warded to the police for further where the complaint was filed by a political rival with video investigation and possible filing of an FIR. evidence showing Verma hand-

On Wednesday, Verma was already facing accusations of violating the model code of conduct and Section 123 of the ing out shoes to voters, the new complaint was submitted by a An officer on election duty Representation of People Act, reported that videos had sur-1951. This section prohibits faced showing women gathered candidates or their agents from outside Verma's residence, with offering gifts, rewards, or any some leaving while carrying red incentives to voters, considerbags believed to contain sarees. ing such actions corrupt prac-The complaint, along with the tices under the law.

Minister Gopal Rai in Babarpur constituency in northeast Delhi. Further, the BJP has fielded

Choudhary from Sangam Vihar, Ravikant Ujjain from the Trilokpuri reserved seat, Sanjay Goyal from Shahdara, and

date from the Burari constituency.

It is expected that the LJP (RV) will also soon release the name

Dikshit files defamation complaint against AAP leaders

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

city court on Thursday Aissued notice to Chief Minister Atishi and AAP MP Sanjay Singh on a criminal defamation complaint filed by former Congress MP Sandeep Dikshit. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Paras Dalal said the matter was at the stage of cognizance, and as per law, Atishi and Singh were to be given the opportunity to be heard.The judge directed the AAP leaders to file a reply by January 27, when the court will further hear the matter. "The

Sandeep Dikshit matter is at the stage of cognizance, and in compliance

accused persons are to be given the opportunity to be heard. with the first proviso to Section Accordingly... Let notice be issued to both proposed 223 BNSS, the proposed

Ranjan Dimri

accused persons, returnable for January 27, 2025," the judge said.According to the defamation complaint, Atishi and Singh "deliberately caused harm to the goodwill of Dikshit," "tar-nished his image," and "defamed" him.The complaint detamed him. The complaint claimed that at a press confer-ence on December 26, Atishi and Singh accused Dikshit of having colluded with the BJP to receive crores of rupees and to get the campaign for the Delhi Assembly election funded by the saffron party.Dikshit further alleged that Atishi, with Sanjay Singh's concurrence, publicly claimed that Congress and

highlighted that Atishi shared the press conference's live proceedings on her X handle (formerly Twitter) with the caption, "BJP is helping Congress in the Delhi election," a post that has reportedly garnered over 30,000 views. The widespread coverage of these statements by national newspapers and their online circulation was cited as further evidence of reputational harm. The complaint alleged that these remarks were part of a calculated effort to malign Dikshit and the Indian National

Congress (INC). Dikshit is contesting the Delhi Assembly polls against former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal New the from

Delhi's air quality improves slightly after overnight rainfall, coldwave worsens

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Overnight rainfall in the Delhi-National Capital Region brought a slight improvement in air quality and also a rise in temperature. So far, there are no reports of flooding or waterlogging. The national capital recorded a minimum temperature of 11.2 degrees Celsius due to cloud cover, as the cold wave intensified across northern India. Cold wave conditions prevail in Delhi and its surrounding areas. The air qual-ity index of Delhi also marginally improved to 343 from Wednesday's 386, both in the very poor category. According to the India Meteorological Department

at the Safdarjung observatory was 3.7 mm, while at the Pusa observatory, the recorded rainfall was 7.5 mm. At the same time, the Palam observatory recorded 9 mm of rainfall from midnight, and Mayur Vihar recorded 4 mm. Amid the rain, as many as 29 trains arriving at or departing from Delhi were running late, the Indian Railways said in a statement. The moisture brought by the Western Cyclonic Disturbance resulted in rain in various parts of Delhi and its satellite cities, including Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, and Faridabad,

(IMD), the rainfall recorded

the weather office said. erally cloudy sky with light mum temperatures are rain or drizzle for Thursday. expected to hover around 17



The IMD has forecast a gen- The maximum and mini- and 10 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The Commission for Air

Quality Management on Wednesday reimposed stricter pollution curbs in

the capital and surrounding areas, including the NCR, under GRAP-3 and GRAP-4. According to the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Annual Climate Summary - 2024, released on Wednesday, extreme weather events caused over 3,200 deaths in the country in 2024-the warmest year on record in India. Lightning record in India. Lightning and thunderstorms caused the highest number of fatal-ities (1,374), followed by floods and heavy rains (1,287) and heatwaves (459). Lightning and thunderstorms caused the maximum number caused the maximum number of deaths in Bihar, while floods and heavy rains caused the most deaths in Kerala. Besides these two states, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh,

and Maharashtra were also among the top five states reporting the largest number of casualties due to extreme weather events in 2024. The IMD report stated that the annual average land surface air temperature during 2024 was 0.65 degrees Celsius higher than the long-term average (1991-2020). This was the hottest year since nationwide records began in 1901, surpassing the previous highest recorded tempera-ture of 0.54 degrees in 2016. The average temperature across India was above normal, with anomalies recorded as 0.37 degrees Celsius in winter (January-February), 0.56 degrees Celsius in pre-monsoon (March-May), 0.71

degrees Celsius during the

southwest monsoon (June-September), and 0.83 degrees Celsius in the post-monsoon period (October-December). In most parts of the eastern coast, heatwave conditions were observed in April, while in May, they were widespread across northwestern India, and in June, most of northern and central India experienced heatwaves.

The temperature anomalies in most parts of the country remained within the range of -1.0 degrees Celsius to +1.0 degrees Celsius for maximum, minimum, and average

temperatures. In 2024, the highest average monthly minimum temperatures were recorded during July, August, September, and October.

Dikshit were working with the BJP to undermine AAP's elec-Delhi seat. toral chances. The complaint



Supreme Court to hear Godhra train burning case on Febuary 13

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will hear on February 13 the appeals filed by the Gujarat govern-ment and several other convicts in the 2002 Godhra train burning case.

A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Aravind Kumar made it clear that no adjournment will be given in the matter on the next date of hearing. On February 27, 2002, 59

people were killed when the S-6 coach of the Sabarmati Express was burnt at Gujarat's Godhra, triggering riots in the state.

Several appeals have been filed in the apex court challenging the October 2017 verdict of the Gujarat High Court which had upheld the conviction of several convicts and commuted the death penalties of 11 people to life term.

The Gujarat government had in February 2023 told the apex court that it will be seeking death penalty for the



11 convicts whose sentences The lawyer told the court in the case were commuted that some of the convicts to life imprisonment by the have filed remission pleas that are pending. high court. When the matter came for Refusing to adjourn the hearing on Thursday, a matter, the bench said, "We

lawyer, appearing for a convict, submitted that no evidence has been put on record. 'We don't know. We will hear

the matter and we had clarified this earlier. We will not adjourn this case. This case has been adjourned at least five times. (For the) last one year, I have been this matter," adjourning Justice Maheshwari said.

passed... My clients have not been awarded death. This bench will have to first confirm the guilt. Once that is confirmed, then comes the sentencing part. When we go through that, that will possibly take time. There will be repercussion if you were to send to three judges," Hegde said.

The court then deferred the matter for hearing to February 13 after the lawyers appearing for the convicts sought time.

During the hearing before the apex court earlier, the state's counsel said the 11 convicts were sentenced to death by the trial court and 20 others were awarded life term in the case.

The high court had upheld have instructions from the Chief Justice's office that the the 31 convictions in the case cases of criminal appeal and and commuted the death remission need not to be penalties of the 11 convicts to life term, the counsel had Senior Advocate Sanjay said.While the state has appealed against the commutation of death Hegde, appearing for one of the convicts, submitted that penalty to life term for the 11 the appeal filed by Gujarat against commutation of convicts, several convicts death penalty to life has to be have challenged the high court's verdict upholding Twenty-two years have their convictions in the case.

Government approves setting up of third launch pad at Sriharikota

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday The government on Thursday approved setting up of a third launch pad at Sriharikota to send heavier spacecraft in orbit as it aims to build a space station, carry out human spaceflight Gaganyaan and land an astronaut on the moon.

The third launch pad will be built at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota and will be capable of putting 30,000 tonne spacecraft in low earth orbit as against the existing capabilities of 8,000 tonnes as Índia eyes a larger pie in the global space

economy. The Union Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the setting up of the third launch pad at a cost of Rs 3,985 crore in the next four with maximum vears from the participation industry, Information and Broadcasting M Ashwini Vaishnaw said. Minister

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is also developing the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) which will be 91 m in height, taller than the 72-m tall



Outub Minar. established within a duration The launch pad is designed to of four years, the statement have a configuration that is as said. The project will boost the universal and adaptable as possible that can support not Indian space ecosystem by only NGLV but also the LVM3 enabling higher launch

vehicles with a semicryogenic frequencies and the national capacity to undertake human stage It will also be able to support spaceflight scaled up configurations of exploration missions. NGLV with capabilities of As on date, Indian Space hauling 70 tonnes payload to Transportation Systems are low earth orbit. completely reliant on the first

The launch pad will be built and second launch pads. with maximum industry The first launch pad was built participation fully utilizing 30 years ago for PSLV missions ISRO's experience in establishing the previous launch pads and maximally and continues to provide launch support also for the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle sharing the existing launch complex facilities. The third (SSLV). The second launch pad was launch pad is targeted to be established primarily for

Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH-Dhruv) will

GSLV and LVM3 and also functions as standby for PSLV. The second launch pad has been operational for almost 20 years and has enhanced the launch capacity towards enabling some commercial missions of PSLV/LVM3 along with the national missions including the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

nation 04

The second launch pad is also getting ready to launch the human rated LVM3 for the Gaganyaan missions. The expanded vision of the

Indian Space Programme, the government has announced plans to establish the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035 and achieve an Indian crewed lunar Landing by 2040. These ambitions require a new generation of heavier launch vehicles with new propulsion systems, which cannot be met by the existing launch pads, an official statement said.

The expeditious establishment of a third launch pad to cater to a heavier class of Next Generation Launch Vehicles and as a stand by second launch pad is highly essential so as to meet the evolving space transportation requirements for another 25-30 years.

Lalu case - Court

seeks sanction

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto to be chief guest at India's 76th Republic Day celebrations

heard together."

heard first.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto will be the chief guest at India's 76th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Thursday.

Subianto will visit India from January 25 to 26 in his first trip to the country as president.

As a comprehensive strategic partner, Indonesia is an important pillar in India's Act East Policy and its vision of the Indo-Pacific, the MEA said. The

"At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of the Republic of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto in will pay a state visit to India during January 25-26," the MEA said, "President Prabowo will also be the Chief Guest for India's 76th Republic Day celebrations," it said in a



Day celebrations. Last year, statement. "India and French President Emmanuel Indonesia share warm and friendly ties spanning over Macron was the Republic Day millenia," it said. chief guest while Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi MEA said the graced the occasion in 2023.

forthcoming visit of the Indonesian President will provide an opportunity for the Chief guest in 2021 and 2022 leadership of the two countries in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. to undertake a comprehensive review of bilateral ties as well as În 2020, President Jair Bolsonaro was to discuss regional and global the chief guest at the Republic issues of mutual interest. Every year, India invites world Day celebrations. In 2019, leaders to attend its Republic South African President Cyril

Ramaphosa was the chief guest at the Republic Day parade, while in 2018, leaders of all 10 ASEAN countries attended the celebrations.

In 2017, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was the chief guest at celebrations, while then French President Francois Hollande graced the occasion in 2016. In 2015, then US President Barack Obama watched the parade.

In 2014, then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was the chief guest at the celebrations, while Bhutan king Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck attended the parade in 2013. The heads of state and who government have attended the Republic Day celebrations include Nicolas Vladimir Putin, Sarkozy, Nelson Mandela, John Major, Mohammed Khatami and

Jacques Chirac.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

The indigenously designed and developed Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH-Dhruv) will not be part of the upcoming Republic Day flypast as the entire fleet of the military helicopters has been grounded following a crash of one of them this month. The Army, the Indian Air Force, the Navy and the Coast Guard are operating around 330 ALHs.

A Coast Guard ALH crashed at Gujarat's Porbandar on January five following which the armed forces grounded the entire fleet of the twinengine helicopters. The ALH Dhruv will not be part of the Republic Day flypast over Kartavya Path on January 26, an IAF official told reporters. The helicopters are likely to remain grounded till a highlevel probe panel finds the root cause of the crash that



killed two Coast Guard pilots and an aircrew diver. The helicopters have been part of the Republic Day flypasts for nearly one-and-half decades. The ALH-Dhruv, produced by state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is a multi-role, multimission new generation helicopter in the 5.5 ton weight class.

The official also said locally developed single engine Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas will also not feature at the Republic Day flypast. The IAF has stopped flying single engine aircraft at the R-Day

not be part of upcoming Republic Day flypast for prosecution

Manufactured by the HAL, the Tejas aircraft is a potent platform for air combat and offensive air support missions while reconnaissance and anti-ship operations are its secondary roles.

parade.

and

space

In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a Rs 48,000 crore deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd for the procurement of 83 Tejas MK-ÎA jets for the IÁF. In November last year, the ministry accorded an initial approval to procure an additional batch of 97 Tejas

jets for the IAF. The official said the Republic Day flypast will feature 22 fighter jets, 11 transport planes, seven helicopters, and three Dornier surveillance aircraft. A Rafale fighter jet will also be part of the flypast. IAF's The marching contingent at the parade will comprise 144 personnel.

in two weeks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $A_{granted}^{Delhi \ court \ on \ Thursday}$ authorities concerned to process sanction to prosecute an accused in a case related to the alleged land-for-jobs scam involving former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad. Special Judge Vishal Gogne said if the sanction is not processed by January 30, the next date, "the competent authority shall furnish a written explanation by the next date of

hearing." The judge passed the directions after the CBI informed the court that the rocessing of the regarding accused RK Mahajan, a public servant, was at an advanced stage. "The competent authority is directed to process the said matter by the next date as the present proceedings, which are required to be conducted on a weekly basis in terms of previous directions of the Supreme Court and Delhi High Court, are delayed only awaiting the said sanction in charge sheet which was filed in July 2024... The proceedings in the case are delayed only awaiting the said sanction in charge sheet which was filed in July 2024," the judge said.

abel Al-generated content for polls: ECI Justice (Retd) Arun Mishra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

With campaigns for the Delhi Assembly elections heating up, the Election Commission on Thursday advised political parties to uphold transparency and accountability in their use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)generated content, highlighting concerns over the increasing role of artificial intelligence in campaigns and its impact on voter opinion.

The poll body asked political parties and candidates to appropriately disclose and label AI-generated synthetic content.

This move comes amid the increasing use of AI technologies in political campaigning, raising their potential impact on voter



perception and the authenticity of campaign messages.

The advisory introduces labelling and disclosure norms requiring parties to clearly label any images, videos, audio or other materials generated or significantly altered by AI technologies with a notation such as "AI-Generated"/ Digitally Enhanced"/"Synthetic Content".

It also requires political parties to include disclaimers during dissemination of campaign advertisements or content, promotional wherever synthetic content is utilised. The use of AI has surged in the Delhi elections, with

There was no Republic Day

then Brazilian

political parties leveraging it to create high-impact campaigns. However, this has

also led to the emergence of deepfake videos and misleading content. Recently, the Aam Aadmi Party released an AI-generated video featuring PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, critiquing central government policies. While the video went viral, it sparked debates over ethical boundaries in election campaigning. Similarly, the BJP has been deploying AI-driven

strategies to craft targeted advertisements and posters attacking AAP's governance. While these tactics are effective, they also risk spreading misinformation

and polarising voters.Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become hotbeds of election activity, with AI tools playing a central role. Viral hashtags, memes, and targeted ads are shaping voter opinions like never before. The BJP's #KejriwalFailsDelhi and AAP's #AAPKaManifesto have dominated the digital space, engaging millions of users.

Election Chief Commissioner Rajiv Kumar had recently cautioned against the potential of AI and deep fakes in compounding the malaise of

misinformation. He had expressed concern that deep fakes and misinformation have the potential to erode trust in electoral processes. During last year's Lok Sabha elections, the Commission

had issued guidelines for responsible and ethical use of social media platforms. "In recent years, advances in artificial intelligence have

enabled the creation of highly convincing synthetic content, including images, video and audio. "With the increasing use of AI technologies in political campaigning, it is essential to maintain transparency and

accountability, as the AIgenerated content, including images, videos and audio, has the potential to influence voter opinion and trust," the EC told heads of recognised national and state parties.

appointed as BCCI Ombudsman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $F_{\rm Justice}^{
m ormer\,Supreme\,Court\,judge}$ has been appointed as Ombudsman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Mishra will also function as the BCCI Ethics Officer. He served in the apex court from July 7, 2014, to September 2, 2020 before being appointed as the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on June 2, 2021, a position he held until June 1, 2024.

Mishra, born on September 3, 1955 in Gwalior in a family of lawyers, had decided around 97,000 cases as a judge of high courts of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Calcutta.



He was appointed as a judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on October 25, 1999 and was later appointed as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court on November 26, 2010. He was later appointed as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court on December 14, 2012. A legal luminary, Mishra has also contributed immensely to betterment of legal education in the country.

The judge had on November 26 filed before the court requisite sanctions obtained from authorities concerned to prosecute 30 accused persons in the case, while submitting that sanctions regarding the prosecution of Mahajan was still awaited.

PM Modi's stellar start to 2025: Transforming vision into reality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has begun 2025 with a flurry of transformative initiatives, demonstrating his vision for a progressive, self-reliant, and united India. From advancing infrastructure and scientific research to empowering youth and celebrating India's cultural diversity, his leadership has set the tone for a remarkable year ahead. .

The year began with a strong focus on the welfare of farmers during the first Cabinet meeting of 2025. The government approved the extension of a one-time special package for Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), ensuring affordable fertilizer prices for farmers. This decision highlights the government's commitment to strengthening India's

agricultural backbone. On The the same day, PM Modi met commitment cultural icons such as singeractor Diljit Dosanjh and chess grandmaster Koneru

fields. Modi also handed over 1,675 newly constructed flats under In-Situ Slum the Rehabilitation Project in Delhi, ensuring better living conditions for thousands of leaders, including Microsoft families. He also laid the CEO Satya Nadella, who foundation stones for three transformative educational projects worth over Rs 600 crore, including the Eastern Campus at Surajmal Vihar, Western Campus at Dwarka, and the Veer Savarkar College in Najafgarh. These projects aim to enhance educational infrastructure inspire and future generations.

government's to rural development took center stage during the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav on January Humpy, underscoring his focus on promoting arts, solution and real of the solution of the solu

This initiative aligns with the goal of empowering rural India and integrating it into the global economy. Meanwhile, PM Modi engaged with global tech announced a \$3 billion investment in ΑI infrastructure in India. These discussions focused on indigenous fostering innovation and creating a self-reliant tech ecosystem. Infrastructure projects gained momentum with the inauguration of the Namo Bharat Train Corridor on January 5, connecting



Sahibabad to Ashok Nagar, multiple and rail infrastructure developments in Odisha, Telangana, and Jammu & Kashmir. These projects symbolize India's rapid progress in modernizing transport networks under PM Modi's leadership. Last week Modi launched two

Pradesh: the Bulk Drug Park, a Rs 1,877 crore initiative to reduce dependency on imported pharmaceutical ingredients, and the Green Hydrogen Hub, aimed at producing 1,500 tonnes of green hydrogen per day. These efforts position India as a leader in renewable energy and pharmaceutical landmark projects in Andhra manufacturing.

A significant step forward in youth. science came with the inauguration of the Genome India Project on January 9, which will map the genetic diversity of Indians and advance healthcare solutions for genetic disorders. On the same day, PM Modi addressed the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Bhubaneswar, celebrating the achievements of the Indian diaspora and their contributions to the global stage.

Thereafter on January 12, PM Modi participated in the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, coinciding with National Youth Day and Swami Vivekananda's Jayanti. This initiative united young innovators and achievers to exchange ideas and envision a developed India, reaffirming government's the commitment to empowering

Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defense.

On January 13, Modi inaugurated the Sonamarg On January 16, PM Modi's Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir, vision for India's space program reached another improving connectivity and boosting tourism while milestone with the successful demonstration of space docking of satellites completed by ISRO which is enhancing national security. He personally interacted with workers and engineers, expressing gratitude for their efforts. That evening, he celebrated Lohri, Pongal, and Makar Sankranti with diverse communities, emphasizing India's cultural unity and

By January 15, PM reached another milestone with the commissioning of advanced naval combatants, including new ships and submarines, reflecting India's growing maritime capabilities. These additions strengthen India's position as a dominant force in the Indian Ocean and are a testament to the government's commitment to

a significant stepping stone for India's ambitious space missions in the years to come. In just 15 days, Modi's leadership has delivered a transformative beginning to 2025. From scientific breakthroughs and infrastructure projects to youth empowerment and cultural celebration, his actions reflect a vision of a Viksit Bharat. As PM Modi

said, "Together, we are shaping a developed India, where every citizen plays a vital role in building a brighter tomorrow."

heritage.



nation 05

MAHAKUMBH 2025: SPECIAL COVERAGE International delegates take a dip at Triveni Sangam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

21-member delegation from 10 countries, on Thursday, visited the various Akhadas in the Sangam region during the ongoing Mahakumbh and took the holy dip at Sangam The representatives not only gained an understanding of the religious significance of the Kumbh but also experienced the extraordinary elements of Indian culture.

After taking a dip at the Triveni Sangam, the delegation toured the vast Mahakumbh area, witnessing the immense scale of the event. The international visitors lauded the Uttar Pradesh government for the grand arrangements made for the world's largest religious gathering. They said that the Mahakumbh sends a powerful message of unity to the world and encouraged people from all nations to visit Mahakumbh Nagar to witness and understand Indian culture. Azab. Sally Al

а

representative from the Arab Emirates extraordinary United (UAE), shared that she has

event. She described it as an moment. highlighting that the Kumbh come from the Middle East Mela is the world's largest to India for this remarkable religious gathering

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

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

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

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

the Kumbh, the role of the akhadas, and the glory of Indian culture. The international representatives were profoundly impressed by the saints' teachings and expressed their admiration Indian religious for traditions.

This gathering erepresentatives sent powerful message to the world, showing that people from different cultural backgrounds can come together in harmony. This included representatives from Fiji, Finland, Guyana, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The international delegation experienced the diversity of Indian culture and the unity in religion during their visit. They were deeply moved by the culture and traditions on display. For them, the trip was not just a religious experience but also a precious opportunity to be part of a historical and cultural heritage



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

BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAGAKUMBH NAGAR

Lapple co-founder and bil-

from her guru, Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Temple in Varanasi, where she auren Powell Jobs, wife of Kailashanand Giri, who performed a boat ride on the imparted the Mahakali Beej Mantra to her She has been instructed to chant "Om Kreem Mahakalika Namah" as part of her spiritual practice. Acharya Kailashanand Giri praised Powell Jobs for her humility and simplicity, emphasizing that despite being historic one of the wealthiest and most famous individuals in the Prayagraj Airport, marking the first such departure in 93 world, she remains free of ego years. The flight, which carried Powell Jobs to Bhutan, and does not indulge in pretentiousness. He described her as very gentle and kind, adding that her quest for spirituality led her to the Maha Kumbh, where she was given the name "Kamala." He noted her low-key approach to life, often ucogring clubba international often wearing simple clothes and interacting with others in a modest manner. In her journey before the first time.

received a spiritual initiation Maha Kumbh, Powell Jobs visited the Kashi Vishwanath Ganges and received blessings from the temple's oute

milestone

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

BISWAJEET BANERJEE MAGAKUMBH NAGAR

Data from Frequency (RF) wrist-Kumbh has provided critical insights into crowd behavior. revealing that, on average, each devotee spent 45 minutes at the bathing ghats during significant festival days like Makar Sankranti and Paush Purnima.

This duration accounts for the time from a devotee's arrival at the ghat to their departure after performing the ritual bath.

The data was collected wristbands through equipped with RFID chips, which were distributed to devotees as part of an effort to better manage the sive influx of



unexpectedly cut short her visit to the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj after experiencing

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

sanctum, adhering to the the event.

traditional practice of not This technology not only touching the Shiva Lingam as a non-Hindu. helped calculate the average time spent at the ghats but The Maha Kumbh also saw a also assisted in accurately counting the total number on Wednesday with the launch of of visitors at the Maha an international flight from Kumbh.

SSP Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi emphasized the importance of this data for effective crowd management.

"The average time spent by devotees at the ghats is invaluable for planning crowd flow and ensuring was part of a growing trend, as visitors, including expatriate Indians and foreign nationals, can now safety.

travel directly to Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh. This By understanding how long development also led to the people spend in the area, we deployment of immigration can determine the best officers at the airport for the times for implementing regular traffic plans or

shifting to emergency measures if needed," he said. Dwivedi further explained that the data will also help in the logistics of entry and exit points.

"With this technology, we can better manage when and

where devotees should enter or exit, reducing congestion and improving the overall experience for everyone," he

utilize technology for a smoother and safer Kumbh kev experience.

"This year, we are using three different methods to been a part of the number of devotees, and RF authorities' strategy to wristband data analysis

part of this," said an official overseeing the event. The information gathered

will continue to play a crucial role in managing one of the world's largest

religious gatherings.

Devotees flock to Ayodhya and Kashi while taking part in Mahakumbh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

A fter attending the Mahakumbh Prayagraj, devotees from across the country and abroad are now flocking to other sacred sites in Uttar Pradesh.

In the past three days alone, around 10 lakh devotees visited Ayodhya, 7.41 lakh paid their respects at the Kachi Vichwarth tomale 5 lakh Kashi Vishwanath temple, 5 lakh visited Vindhyavasini Dham, and more than one lakh devotees visited Naimisharanya Dham in Sitapur. As over seven crore devotees have bathed and prayed at the Mahakumbh so far, the devotees, following their ritual baths, have visited places like Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Kashi, Maa Dham, Vindhyavasini Naimisharanya, and Ayodhya for darshan and worship. This surge of devotees is also

boosting local employment in these regions. More than 7.41 lakh devotees visited the Kashi Vishwanath temple from January 13 to 15, with 2.19 lakh arriving on the 13th, 2.31 lakh on the 14th, and over 2.90 lakh on the 15th. Meanwhile, over 5 lakh visited Vindhyavasini Dham, and more support.

than one lakh visited Naimisharanya Dham.

known also Ayodhya, Ramnagari, has seen an overwhelming influx of devotees, radiating a palpable sense of faith. Thousands are gathering to witness the darshan of Ramlala and Hanumangarhi

Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the district administration has ensured all necessary arrangements for the visitors.

Over 10 lakh devotees have arrived in Ayodhya in the past three days, drawn by the historic occasion following Ramlala's enthronement after 500 years.

A long line of devotees continues to form as they wait to pay their respects.

CM Yogi Adityanath has instructed top officials, including Commissioner Gaurav Dayal, IG Praveen Kumar, District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh, SSP Rajkaran Nair, and Municipal Commissioner Santosh Sharma, to oversee the administration of key routes such as Dharmapath, Rámpath, and Bhaktipath, ensuring that people in need are provided shelter and





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PAPER WITH PASSION-

Hope and dread

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

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



the population—approximately 2.3 million people homeless. Entire neighbourhoods lie in ruins, and the lack of basic necessities has pushed residents to the brink of famine.

The proposed truce, brokered by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar, outlines a three-phased agreement. The first phase involves the exchange of hostages and Palestinian detainees, with the release of women, children, and the elderly prioritised. Subsequent phases would address the release of soldiers and other male captives, along with broader discussions to halt hostilities. A crucial component of the ceasefire includes a surge in humanitarian aid to Gaza. This would enable

displaced Palestinians to return to their homes and help rebuild critical infrastructure. Yet, the long-term success of this agreement hinges on both sides' willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations during the second phase. The fragile nature of previous ceasefires—such as the one in November 2023 that lasted only a week—underscores the difficulty of achieving lasting peace. Key obstacles include Hamas's insistence on maintaining its military capabilities and Israel's objective to dismantle Hamas's governing structures. Both sides are under immense domestic and international pressure, but deeply entrenched mistrust makes compromise elusive. For hostages' families, uncertainty looms large. Many remain haunted by the possibility that their loved ones may not survive captivity if the true fails. Meanwhile, Palestinians fear that a breakdown in talks could trigger renewed violence, exacerbating an already catastrophic situation. If the ceasefire holds, it could mark the beginning of a much-needed reprieve for Gaza's beleaguered population. Immediate priorities include addressing food insecurity, medical shortages, and the rebuilding of homes and infrastructure. International aid would play a critical role in alleviating the humanitarian crisis, but long-term recovery would require substantial investment, political stability and lasting peace.

Diplomacy: The pillar of India's global aspirations.



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

ndia, the world's most populous nation and the largest democracy is emerging as a pivotal force in global affairs. As a leader of the Global South, its growing economic might, strategic autonomy, and commitment to peace have positioned it at the centre of international diplomacy.

However, despite these achievements, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)-the critical institution shaping and executing its foreign policy-remains under-resourced. With only about 850 diplomats, the MEA is inadequately equipped to handle the complexities of a rapidly evolving global landscape. For India to realize its potential as a global leader, it must significantly expand its diplomatic infrastructure, scaling the MEA to at least 5,000 personnel. Such an expansion would align with India's ambitions and its stature as a major international power.India's diplomatic requirements have grown substantially alongside its global ambitions.

As the world's largest democracy and one of its fastest-growing economies, India's foreign policy must address a wide range of global issues. From trade negotiations and climate change to digital diplomacy and global security, the MEA serves as the nerve center of India's international engagements. India's foreign policy has traditionally been guided by strategic autonomy and a commitment to peace, rooted in the Nehruvian tradition of nonalignment. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and VK Krishna Menon laid the foundation of an independent foreign policy that prioritized non-violence while asserting India's sovereignty. This legacy of non-alignment, which positioned India as a bridge between competing superpowers, remains a cornerstone of its diplomatic

approach. However, the global order is shifting, and India must adapt its foreign policy apparatus to meet challenges. modern Strengthening the MEA is vital not only for safeguarding India's needs diplomats capable of interests but also for crafting a vision capable of influencing global politics. With a population evolving global role. India's for-



exceeding 1.4 billion and leadership roles in key international forums, India's current diplomatic infrastructure is insufficient for the demands it faces.Countries like the United States, China and Russia deploy thousands of diplomats and foreign policy experts to maintain their global influence. In contrast, India's diplomatic corps, though skilled, is a fraction of the size required. This gap underscores the urgent need for a larger, more specialised MEA capable of shaping global discussions and providing strategic depth across multiple domains. Expanding the MEA to 5,000 personnel would ensure that India's foreign policy is both proactive and comprehensive. Such an expansion is not merely about increasing numbers; it is about cultivating strategic expertise across diverse fields.

India's diplomacy must address trade, defense, environmental sustainability, cybersecurity, humanitarian aid, and more. To achieve this, the MEA must recruit specialists who can navigate these complex issues. During the Cold War, figures like US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger demonstrated the transformative power of strategic brilliance in

eign policy must anticipate global trends rather than merelv react to events. To compete with global powers like the US, Russia, and China, India requires a diplomatic team adept at building alliances, leveraging emerging opportu-nities, and addressing global challenges. This necessitates investments in strategic thinking and specialised knowledge. The MEA must develop expertise in fields such as space diplomacy, climate change negotiations, global THE NEED FOR A trade, and defense strategy. Moreover, diplomats must **DIPLOMATIC CORPS** engage with governments, THAT CAN SHAPE businesses, think tanks, and civil society to shape decisions GLOBAL in India's favour. A well-staffed MEA would **DISCUSSIONS AND** enable India to better engage

PROVIDE THE with key global issues and deepen its relationships with INTELLECTUAL AND major powers. Just as the US relied on figures like Robert STRATEGIC DEPTH McNamara and John Foster **REQUIRED IN AN** Dulles to shape its diplomacy, India must nurture a genera-INCREASINGLY tion of visionary diplomats. These individuals should pos-COMPLEX sess deep understanding of global security, international INTERNATIONAL law, multilateral organisations, **ENVIRONMENT HAS** and global trade-qualities exemplified by VK Krishna **NEVER BEEN MORE** Menon, who championed URGENT India's interests on the international stage during the 1950s. cratic ideals, and values—can Expanding the MEA is not just amplify its global influence and about addressing immediate challenges but about aligning India's diplomatic capabilities

with its evolving priorities. Experts in climate change, energy security, trade relations, and technology diplomacy are essential to ensuring a forward-thinking foreign policy.

The expanded MEA must also prioritise collaboration with think tanks, academic institutions, and media professionals. These partnerships can provide the intellectual foundation for strategic decisions and help India anticipate emerging global trends. Think tanks and universities-both domestic and international-can offer critical insights into shifting geopolitical dynamics, new economic policies, and other developments. global

Engaging with these institutions will ensure that India's foreign policy remains agile and informed. Public diplomacy is another critical component of modern foreign policy. Beyond government-togovernment negotiations, India must focus on shaping global perceptions and building relationships with international audiences. The MEA should work closely with media professionals to effectively communicate India's vision and policies to the world. Leveraging India's soft power-its rich culture, demo-



diplomacy. Similarly, India long-term thinking and crafting policies that reflect its

ensure its voice is heard. (The writer is an associate

professor; views are personal)

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

India's projector demand soars with eco-friendly innovations



These next-generation projectors not only offer enhanced energy efficiency

and sustainability but also excellent output redefining the visual experience

ndia is rapidly becoming one of the fastest-grow-Ling projector markets globally, with an anticipated annual growth rate of 8.10 per cent over the next five years. This surge is driven by the increasing demand for projectors in both commercial and personal spaces. Technological advancements are playing a key role in this trend, as new, more ecofriendly projector alternatives are replacing traditional lamp-based models. These older models, while effective, had significant drawbacks such as high power consumption, reliance on hazardous materials, and limited recyclability. In contrast, modern projectors are designed with sustainability

in mind, making them an attractive option for a wide range of applications. The rise in digitization across businesses and households further accelerates the need for effective display solutions. Eco-friendly pro-

jectors not only address this projectors. need but also offer a greener, more sustainable alternative to conventional options. With advanced production standards grounded in sus-



tainable development, these projectors are perfectly positioned to meet India's growing demand for high-tech, energy-efficient devices. Eco-friendly projectors are designed to tackle many of the issues associated with traditional models.

They operate with much higher energy efficiency, significantly reducing power consumption. The manufacturing process also minimizes carbon footprints, with materials sourced responsibly. Innovations such as LED and laser light sources have significantly improved these devices' energy efficiency and lifespan, making them superior to traditional lamp-based

These advancements appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and businesses alike, offering a more sustainable solution to their lower total ownership costs

display and entertainment needs.Compared to earlier generations, eco-friendly projectors offer several clear advantages. Their energy efficiency makes them much more cost-effective in the long term, as they consume far less power and do not

require frequent replacements of parts like traditional bulbs. Additionally, the longevity of these projectors reduces waste, further decreasing their environmental impact. Importantly, many eco-friendly projectors do not contain harmful substances like mercury, which is found in conventional models, thus contributing to safer disposal practices.

Furthermore, these projectors are built to last longer and require less maintenance, thanks to technologies like LED and laser, which do not degrade as quickly as traditional bulbs. As a result, maintenance costs are significantly lower, and users benefit from reduced downtime and increased durability.

This is an appealing factor for both businesses and consumers, as it translates to

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

(The writer is MD Optoma Technology; views are personal)

RUPEE LOSING SHEEN

Madam — There is an ongoing concern over the rupee sharply losing value against the dollar. But then a nation's currency intrinsically represents two notions of value: one for the purchaser and seller in the domestic market and the other for the external one. China, in its monetary parlance, has the yuan and the renminbi. In layman's terms, the domestic standing of the rupee is broadly propped up by an incremental rise in GDP and per capita income, with the purchasing power sustained by low inflation.

Compared to most economies, we are far better placed. Our current concern would be more reining in inflation and fiscal deficit to retain the value of the rupee. The exchange value of the rupee with other cur-rencies is a matter of the difference between the inflow and outflow of foreign currency for our external buying or selling, be it products, commodities, or services. The crux lies in developing our niche in any one of them to reverse the trade deficit. China found it in manufacturing and commodities and dares to keep its currency highly depreciated. The US despite its huge debt has the privilege of printing the dollar, the global currency. We must find it in diligence, research, and human potential

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

NGO SUSPECTED FOR BOMB THREAT

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

Meta offers apologises on election remark



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist who carried out the Parliament attack in 2001 earned sympathy for those vying for Delhi rule. It is the most unfortunate for the country and the ugliest face of our political ecosystem.

Hitherto, a part of the INDIA bloc, AAP must clarify the role of its Delhi CM. The Khalistani links of the Aam Aadmi Party and Arvind Kejriwal are already in public awareness. There seems to be no end to the revengeful acts of sympathisers of the terrorists, so the strongest punishment should be ensured against the culprits. We are aware that a team of leading advocates will protect the NGO behind the Delhi school bomb threats. Such an ecosystem should be exposed. Delhi has been targeted by the extremist forces; it is very obvious and evident.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

B'DESH AG'S ANTI-SECULARISM PITCH

Madam — Bangladesh's Attorney General Mohammad Asaduzzaman has demanded the removal of the word secularism from policy of the Union Government. The the Constitution. He has said that 90 peron a global scale. Zuckerberg's comments on Joe Rogan's podcast regarding economic challenges and democracy in India are being seen as damaging to India's image.

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

R K Jain | Barwani

cent of Bangladesh's population is Muslim, so it should be a Muslim country by removing the word secular. The Attorney General has said that words like socialism and secularism do not present the correct picture of Bangladesh. He has suggested making major changes in the constitution and removing 'secularism'

He will make these changes before the next elections. Because Yunus is an educationist later and is first a fundamentalist Muslim. Earlier, in the year 2010, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh had ruled that the removal of secularism in 1977 was illegal. The court had reinstated secularism in the constitution. Just as Bangladesh is attacking temples in its country, similarly in India too, deities are being searched for in mosques. The destination of both the neighbours is the same. Bangladesh wants to become an Islamic nation while preparations are on in India to make it a 'Hindu Rashtra.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRSTCOLUMN

US EXPORT CONTROLS: IMPACT ON INDIA'S AI

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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



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

Indian companies seeking US technology will face heightened scrutiny under the IFR, including stringent checks on supply chain security, personnel vetting, and cybersecurity compliance. These requirements will increase the complexity of partnerships with US firms and may delay India's efforts to scale its AI ecosystem. India's plans to establish advanced data centers and high-performance computing clusters will be directly affected by the new regulations. The IFR mandates compliance with US security standards, such as NIST guidelines, adding operational costs and potential delays. India's ambition to lead global AI collaborations, as demonstrated by its participation in initiatives like the Global Partnership on AI (GPAI), faces friction under these controls. With international partnerships playing a crucial role in India's technological growth, the restrictions on high-performance computing components and AI models could disrupt progress. To mitigate these challenges, India must consider alternative strategies, including strengthening domestic research and development, partnering with non-US technology providers, and leveraging diplomatic channels to negotiate favorable terms with the US The path forward will require Indian companies to adapt rapidly, focusing on self-sufficiency and fostering collaborations beyond traditional partnerships. While the IFR offers limited flexibility through license exceptions and potential adjustments, India's advanced computing and AI ambitions will require resilience and innovation to overcome the regulatory hurdles imposed by these new export controls.

The war they waged, the price we paid



analysis 07

ILANGAMUWA

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



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

His administration orchestrated covert operations and military interventions with reckless abandon, leaving a trail of devastation across continents. In Grenada, a minuscule island nation, the U.S. flexed its muscle in a laughable display of overkill. Yet, the price for the people of NEIGHBOURHOODS

ed 500 civilians, while strikes on critical infrastructure plunged the THE GULF WAR OF 1991 KILLED

TENS OF THOUSANDS **OF IRAQI** SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS, WITH ENTIRE

region into chaos. În Somalia, Clinton inherited and expanded a disastrous intervention that culminated in the infamous Black Hawk Down incident. The fallout was not limited to American soldiers—it cost the lives of an estimated 10,000 Somali civilians caught in the crossfire. The Bush-Cheney years saw the bloodbath reach industrial levels. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, based on falsified intelligence, unleashed a catastrophe of staggering proportions. By conservative estimates, 200,000 Iraqi civilians died in the war, though many argue the real number exceeds half a million. Afghanistan, initially framed as a righteous response to 9/11, turned into a graveyard for American credibility. The war cost over

thing but peaceful. Under his watch, NATO's bombing cam-paign in Kosovo killed an estimatsoared, with independent monitors estimating at least 4,500 civilians killed in 2017 alone.

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

The withdrawal from Afghanistan, while ending America's longest war, was executed with callous disregard for human life. At least 170 civilians were killed in a single ISIS-K bombing during the chaot-ic evacuation. Biden's continued 70,000 Afghan civilian lives, with drone strikes and military presence in Syria ensure that civilians remain collateral in America's unending "war on terror." In Ukraine, US military aid fuels a war that has already claimed tens of thousands of lives on both sides, with no end in sight. Across these decades, the pattern is unmistakable: the United States does not fight wars for freedom or democracy.

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

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

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

Grenada was far from numorous—nun dreds of civilians died in an operation sold as a "rescue mission." In Lebanon, Reagan's deployment of U.S. Marines ended in catastrophe, with 241 servicemen killed in a suicide bombing. The retaliatory shelling of Lebanese villages left countless civilians dead, their stories erased from the official narrative.George H. W. Bush brought the carnage to Panama and Iraq. Operation Just Cause in Panama left at least 3,000 civilians dead, according to independent estimates-numbers far higher than the official U.S. tally.

The Gulf War of 1991 killed tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians, with entire neighbourhoods flattened by American airpower. The sanctions that followed—a form of economic warfare—led to the deaths of an estimated 500,000 Iraqi children, as reported by UNICEF. But these deaths were dismissed by then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as a price worth paying.

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

many more lost to starvation and FLATTENED disease caused by the destruction of infrastructure.

BY AMERICAN These numbers, while horrifying, barely scratch the surface.Barack AIRPOWER. Obama, heralded as a harbinger of THE SANCTIONS change, instead became the drone king. Under his administration, THAT drone strikes killed an estimated FOLLOWED—A 3,800 people in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. These numbers FORM OF include as many as 800 civilians, though independent investiga-ECONOMIC tions suggest the real toll is much WARFARE—LED higher. Libya, once a stable if repressive state, was reduced to a TO THE failed state after NATO's intervention, with Obama admitting it was DEATHS OF AN his greatest foreign policy mistake. ESTIMATED Yet his admission did nothing to rebuild Libya, now a haven for 500,000 human traffickers and militia warlords.Donald Trump's first term IRAQI shattered even the pretence of

restraint. Civilian casualties from CHIDLREN U.S. airstrikes in Syria and Iraq

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

The Delhi workshop served as

a follow-up to the Dehradun

Declaration and brought

together disaster management

scholars, international organ-

isations, and corporate repre-

sentatives engaged in CSR activities. Participants praised

Uttarakhand's efforts to con-

vene diverse stakeholders,

emphasising that protecting

the Himalayan ecosystem is a

tourism and resource exploita-

tion. Recommendations

included regulating plastic use,

promoting organic farming,

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

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

Uttarakhand's initiatives to strengthen climate resilience in the Himalayas

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

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

"Dehradun Declaration," a

aimed at fostering collaboration, innovation and effective strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change and natural disasters in Himalayan states. Uttarakhand's proactive approach to uniting stakeholders on these critical issues is both commendable and necessary.

Rationale Behind Uttarakhand's Initiatives

Uttarakhand's unique geographical and cultural significance drives its commitment to addressing climate resilience. With the secondlargest Himalayan boundary after Arunachal Pradesh, the state plays a pivotal role in supporting Northern India's vast hinterland.

The region's popularity as a hub for tourism, religious pilcomprehensive action plan grimages such as the Char



DINESH KUMAR TYAGI

Dham Yatra, and adventure activities exerts considerable pressure on its fragile ecosystem

The state faces recurring natural calamities, including forest fires, landslides, cloudbursts, and glacier shrinkage. These disasters significantly impact local communities, strain state resources, and demand robust measures to minimise their devastating

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

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



Protecting the Himalayan Ecosystem

Merging indigenous knowledge with traditional community practices. Promoting nature-based solutions and active community engagement. Enhancing institutional collab-

oration for project monitoring and execution.

Empowering Communities Establishing community-

based early warning systems. Educating and equipping com-munities to take local measures

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

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

Formulating policies based on national and international best practices.

Coordinating among state, central, and international organisations.

Promoting Innovation Supporting startups and entrepreneurs in developing tools and technologies for climate

resilience. The Delhi Workshop and

Global Consensus

imposing green taxes on vehicles, and training locals to mitigate post-disaster damage. National Perspectives on **Climate Resilience**

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

shared responsibility. The Himalayas, often referred bon emissions. to as the "Soul of India" and the Training volunteers at the vil-"Third Pole," are crucial for lage level and connecting them maintaining ecological bal-ance. Workshop attendees through a centralised platform can foster trust and conagreed on the need for collecfidence in disaster preparedtive action to address chalness efforts. lenges such as unchecked

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



Trump and Biden both claim credit for Gaza ceasefire deal

PTI WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump are both claiming credit for Israel and Hamas agree-ing to a ceasefire deal in Gaza on Wednesday after the White House brought Trump's Middle East envoy into negotiations that have dragged on for months.

Trump wasted no time in asserting he was the moving force behind the deal. Biden, meanwhile, stressed that the deal was reached under "the precise contours" of a plan that he set out in late May. "This EPIC ceasefire agree

ment could have only happened as a result of our Historic Victory in November, as it signaled to the entire World that my Administration would seek Peace and negotiate deals to ensure the safety of all Americans, and our Allies, Trump wrote on social media. "I am thrilled American and Israeli hostages will be returning home to be reunited with their families and loved ones? Trump added that his incom-

ing Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff - who was participating in the talks in Doha, Qatar would continue "to work closely with Israel and our Allies to make sure Gaza NEVER again becomes a terrorist safe haven." Biden said from the White House that "my diplomacy never ceased in their efforts to

get this done. 'It is the result not only of the extreme pressure that Hamas has been under and the changed regional equation after a ceasefire in Lebanon and weakening of Iran - but also of dogged and painstaking American diplomacy," Biden said

The jostling comes with both Biden and Trump determined to see the deal become a set piece of Middle East success for the legacy of their presidency. Biden's administration worked for months to broker peace in talks that inched frustratingly close to success before repeatedly breaking down. Trump, for his part, had warned of "hell to pay" if a deal wasn't done by his inauguration - in five days.

While Biden's refusal to impose meaningful restrictions on sending arms to Israel may have helped the key U.S. ally seriously degrade Hamas and fellow Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon, it also came with enormous suffering for innocent Palestinians and Lebanese who have been caught in the crossfire of the 15 months of grinding war.

Jonathan Panikoff, director of the Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council, said Biden deserves praise for continuing to push the talks despite repeated failures. But Trump's threats to Hamas and his efforts through Witkoff to "cajole" Netanyahu deserve credit as

well, he said. 'The ironic reality is that at a time of heightened partisanship even over foreign policy, the deal represents how much more powerful and influential U.S. foreign policy can be when it's bipartisan," he said. "Both the outgoing and incoming administration deserve credit for this deal and it would've been far less likely to happen

without both pushing for it." In his White House remarks, Biden said his administration negotiated the deal but that Trump's team will soon be charged with making sure it's implemented.

'For the past few days, we have been speaking as one team," Biden said in a nod to Witkoff being part of the talks.

Trump's team pushed back, saying Biden couldn't get the deal done until Trump and Witkoff intervened. The Biden administration was

handing the Trump administration a detailed roadmap to win a lasting peace that has broad support in the region, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said

The involvement of Presidentelect Trump's team has been absolutely critical in getting this deal over the line," Miller told reporters. "And it's been critical because obviously, as I stand today, this administration's term in office will expire in five days." Israeli President Isaac Herzog

offered his gratitude to both the incoming and outgoing U.S. presidents

Nancy Okail, head of the U.S.based Center for International Policy, said acceptance of the deal in the face of Trump's insistence that a ceasefire be in place when he takes office 'ironically shows how effective actual pressure can be in changing Israeli government behavior.

The Biden administration's open embrace of the Trump team's involvement in the talks was rooted in far more than the president-elect's influence with Netanyahu and his threats to get a deal done before he's back in the White House, three current U.S. officials said.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to offer candid details, said their inter-est in having Witkoff partici-pate in the talks alongside Biden's Mideast pointman, Brett McGurk, was primarily designed to ensure that an agreement - which will require a lengthy American commitment - would have continued U.S. support after Biden leaves office.

Standoff in South Africa ends

latest round of talks alongside McGurk, these U.S. officials have downplayed Trump's relevance to the process, apart from the importance of ensuring his support for a deal painstakingly negotiated over the past year. They also want backing for a plan pushed by the Biden administration for the governance, reconstruction and security of Gaza that will take many months - and significant U.S. backing - to succeed.

involved in the talks.

anonymity.

Hamas

said.

Negotiations intensified over

the past four days, according to

the official, who was not autho-

rized to comment publicly and

spoke on the condition of

The official described McGurk

and Witkoff's coordination as

a "fruitful partnership" in which the two closely coordi-

nated as they pressed parties to come to terms. At at critical point last week, Witkoff left

talks in Doha for Israel to meet with Netanyahu. That

allowed McGurk to remain in

Doha and continue to work

with Qatari negotiators who

were chief interlocutors with

The U.S., Qatari and Egyptian negotiators, along with Israel's team nearby, worked until the

wee hours of Wednesday

morning, just a floor above

where the Hamas negotiators were holed up, the official said.

Later Wednesday, Hamas made

several last-second demands,

but "we held very firm," and the

group eventually agreed to the terms of the deal, the official

Authorities now believe that

nearly 2,000 miners were work-

ing illegally in the mine near the

town of Stilfontein, southwest of

Johannesburg, since August last

year. Many of them resurfaced

on their own over the last few

months, police said, and all the

survivors have been arrested,

even as some emerged this week

badly emaciated and barely able

to walk to waiting ambulances.

A convoy of mortuary vans

arrived at the mine to carry away

Mathe said at least 13 children

had also come out of the mine

before the official rescue oper-

Police announced Wednesday

that they were ending that oper-ation after three days and said

they believed no one else was

the bodies.

ation.

One fear about not including Trump officials in the negotiations was that the post-conflict plan for Gaza that has been worked out over the past year might be abandoned by the new administration. It calls for an international presence in Gaza to help the Palestinian Authority with governance and reconstruction as well as a temporary foreign security presence to address Israeli security concerns.

Implementation of the agreement could begin Sunday, when the first group of hostages may be freed, accord-Yet, since Witkoff entered the ing to a senior U.S. official

YouTube fraud theories fuel impeached S Korean Prez

Seoul (PTI): Thousands have braved the frigid January weather in Seoul protests, waving South Korean and American flags and shouting vows to protect their embattled conservative hero, the impeached South Korean president facing imprisonment over potential rebellion charges.

The swelling crowds in South Korea's capital are inspired by President Yoon Suk Yeol's defiance, but also by the growing power of right-wing YouTubers who portray Yoon as a victim of a leftist, North Korea-sympathiz-ing opposition that has rigged elections to gain a legislative majority and is now plotting to remove a patriotic leader.

Out with fraudulent elections and a fake National Assembly!' read one sign, brandished by an angry man in a fur hat during a recent protest near Yoon's presidential residence, the site of a massive law enforcement opera-tion Wednesday that made Yoon the country's first sitting president to be detained in a criminal investigation.

Many at the pro-Yoon rallies, which are separated by police from anti-Yoon counter-protests, are significantly influenced by fictional narratives about election fraud that dominate conservative YouTube channels - claims that Yoon has repeatedly referenced in his attacks on election officials A placard hanging from an over-pass read: "Martial law was declared to investigate election fraud; lawmakers impeached (Yoon) to stop it." There were also "Stop the Steal" signs, a slogan associated with the US Capitol attack by a mob of Donald Trump supporters on Jan 6, 2021, who were angry over false claims that Joe Biden had stolen

the election. There have long been worries about Yoon's close ties with rightwing YouTube personalities, some of whom were invited to his inauguration ceremony. One has even boasted that Yoon listens to his show "even while sleeping". Those worries, however, have been heightened since Yoon's shocking martial law declaration on Dec 3, which led to the dispatch of hundreds of troops to encircle the legislature and the country's election commission and which dredged up memories of military-backed dictatorships that ended in the 1980s.

New US NSA signals continuation of Biden policies, calls India key partner

PTI WASHINGTON

Incoming national security advisor Mike Waltz has indicated that the Trump administration will continue with several elements of Joe Biden's policies, particularly on China and India, which he described as a critical partner for the US in the future.

Waltz would take charge as National Security Advisor to Donald Trump when he is sworn in as the 47th president of the United States on January

Making an appearance at the US Institute of Peace (USIP), Waltz identified China as the "great-est adversary" of the United States and India as a critical partner of the US in the future. The President-elect firmly believes we can avoid conflict with the Chinese Communist Party because they need our markets. We are going to use the leverage in a way that's in line that we have that's in line with our national security while we

still can," Waltz said at the panel discussion with the out-

going NSA Jake Sullivan. Waltz was quick to point out to the moderator Stephen J Hadley, former national security advisor, that he was also the Republican chair of the US-India Caucus, in the last Congress.

Sullivan, who was in India last week, told the audience that Waltz is very popular in India. "I was just in India last week. They love you there as a cochair of the India Caucus. They love the India Caucus, so they're excited to have you come on board. I told them I could be the chair of the India Spouses Caucus in Congress going for-ward. They were a little less than that, but we'll do our best," Sullivan said jokingly. AUKUS and the Quad are areas that have continued from one administra-

tion to another, Waltz said. Aukus is a trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States intended to promote a free and open Indo-

Pacific

The Quad is a multilateral framework comprising India, Australia, Japan, and the US, with a shared commitment to upholding a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, amidst China's aggressive behaviour in the strategically vital South China Sea. Waltz also stressed that the incoming administration would make sure that the USD 20 billion backlog of US weapons for Taiwan would be delivered "as a deterrent measure".

'Then thirdly, to really continue to reinforce those partnerships and those alliances where I certainly give this administration some credit is the trilateral dialogue between South Korea the United States and Japan, and then also between the United States, Japan, and the Philippines, really helping those countries and those governments overcome historic ani mosities with a shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific," he said

with 87 miners dead

PTI STILFONTEIN

The death toll in a months-long standoff between police and miners trapped while work-ing illegality ing illegally in an abandoned gold mine in South Africa has risen to at least 87, police said Thursday.

Authorities faced growing anger and a possible investigation over their initial refusal to help the miners and instead "smoke them out" by cutting off their food supplies.

National police spokesperson Athlenda Mathe said that 78 bodies were retrieved in a courtordered rescue operation, with 246 survivors also pulled out from deep underground since the operation began on Monday. Mathe said nine other bodies had been recovered before the rescue operation, without giving details.

Community groups launched their own rescue attempts when authorities said last year they

would not help the hundreds of miners because they were "criminals'

The miners are suspected to have died of starvation and dehydration, although no causes of death have been released. South African authorities have been fiercely criticised for cut-ting off food and supplies to the miners in the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine last year. That tactic to "smoke them out," as described by a prominent Cabinet minister, was condemned by one of South Africa's

biggest trade unions. Police and the mine owners were also accused of taking away ropes and dismantling a pulley system the miners used to enter the mine and send supplies down from the surface. A court ordered authorities last year to allow food and water to

be sent down to the miners, while another court ruling last week forced them to launch a rescue operation.

Many say the unfolding disaster underground was clear weeks ago, when community members sporadically pulled decomposing bodies out of the mine, some with notes attached pleading for

food to be sent down. "If the police had acted earlier, we would not be in this situation, with bodies piling up," said Johannes Qankase, a local community leader. "It is a disgrace for a constitutional democracy like ours. Somebody needs to account for what has happened here?

South Africa's second biggest political party, which is part of government coalition, called for President Cyril Ramaphosa to establish an independent inquiry to find out "why the situation was allowed to get so badly out of hand?

'Many Americans doubt Trump on Spacewalk after can lower prices in first year' 7 months in orbit

underground A camera was sent down on "The scale of the disaster underground at Buffelsfontein is rapid-Thursday in a cage that was used ly proving to be as bad as feared," the Democratic Alliance to pull out survivors and bodies to ensure no one was left behind, party said. Mathe said

Sunita steps out Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin launches massive

world 08

New Glenn rocket on first test flight

Cape Canaveral (PTI): Blue Origin launched its massive new rocket on its first test flight Thursday, sending up a proto-type satellite to orbit thousands of miles above Earth. Named after the first American to orbit Earth, the New Glenn rocket blasted off from Florida, soaring from the same pad used to launch NASA's Mariner and Pioneer spacecraft a half-century ago

Years in the making with heavy funding by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, the 98-metre rocket carried an an experimental platform designed to host satellites or release them into their proper orbits. All seven main engines fired at liftoff as the rocket blazed through the predawn sky, drawing cheers from spectators lining the nearby beaches Company employees erupted in shouts and frenzied applause once the craft successfully orbit



Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket lifts off from Launch Complex 36 at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Thursdayin Cape Canaveral AP/PTI

13 minutes later, a feat that drew quick praise from SpaceX's Elon Musk.

Bezos - taking part in the launch from Mission Control – declined to disclose his personal investment in the program. He said he does not see Blue Origin in a competition with Elon Musk's SpaceX, long the rocketlaunching dominator. He stood much of the time at his seat in Mission Control, looking anxious and happy at the same time. "Congratulations on reaching orbit on the first attempt!" Musk said via X.

For this test, the satellite was expected to remain inside the second stage while circling Earth. The mission was expected to last six hours, with the second stage then placed in a safe condition to stay in a high, out-of-the-way orbit in accordance with NASA's practices for minimising space junk.

Cape Canaveral (PTI): One of NASA's two stuck astronauts got a much welcomed change of scenery Thursday, stepping out on her first spacewalk since arriving at the International Space Station more than seven costs.

months ago. Indian-origin Sunita Williams, the station's commander, had to tackle some overdue outdoor repair work alongside NASA's Nick Hague. Plans called for Williams to float back out next week with Butch Wilmore.

Williams and Wilmore launched aboard Boeing's new Starliner capsule last June on what should have been a weeklong test flight. But Starliner trouble dragged out their return, and NASA ordered the capsule to come back empty. Then SpaceX delayed the launch of their replacements, meaning the two won't be home until late March or early April — ten months after launching.

about everyday expenses helped return President-elect Donald Trump to the White House. But with his second term quickly approaching, many US adults are sceptical about his ability to bring down Only about 2 in 10 Americans

are "extremely" or "very" confident that Trump will be able to make progress on lowering the cost of groceries, housing or health care this year, according to a survey from The Associated Press-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research, while about 2 in 10 are "moderately" confident. Faith in Trump's ability to create jobs is a little higher about 3 in 10 are extremely or very confident the Republican will make progress on this in 2025 — but the poll indicates that despite his sweeping promises about lowering prices, a substantial chunk of

high confidence in his ability to quickly alleviate the economic pressures that continue to frustrate many households. Those tempered expectations haven't dampened Republicans' hopes for Trump's second presidential term, though. Ând Democrats' pessimism about his return to office is more muted than it was when he exited the White House in 2020. About 8 in 10 Republicans say Trump will be a "great" or "good" president in his second term, according to

the poll. And while Democrats' assessments are much more negative – about 8 in 10 sav he will be a "poor" or "terrible" president they are less likely to say he'll be a "terrible" president in his second term than they were at the end of his first. Much of the 2024 presidential

campaign revolved around

prices — whether President Joe

blame for inflation and whether Trump could fix it. AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of voters and nonvoters that aims to tell the story behind election results, showed that about 4 in 10 voters in the November election identified the economy and jobs as the most important issue facing the country and that about 6 in 10 of those voters cast their ballot for Trump.

As Trump takes office, though, the poll shows that many Americans don't anticipate that he will be able to immediately bring costs down. That includes some of his own supporters. Less than half of Republicans are at least "very" confident that Trump will make progress on lowering food costs, housing costs or health care costs, although about 6 in 10 are at least "very" confident in his ability to create jobs

Oligarchy taking shape in America, warns Biden in his farewell address

PTI WASHINGTON

Outgoing President Joe Biden has warned of a rising ultra-wealthy "oligarchy" in America that poses a threat to the nation's democracy, as he prepared to cede power to President-elect Donald Trump. In his farewell address to the nation, Biden also pushed for amending the Constitution to make clear that no president is immune from criminal liability — an apparent reference to

Trump, 78. In July, the Supreme Court ruled that presidents cannot be prosecuted for "official acts" during their time in office. The court's ruling stemmed from the Justice Department's case against Trump over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Biden, 82, on January 20 will hand over the power to Donald Trump who won the presiden-tial elections by defeating Vice

President Kamala Harris in both popular votes and the electoral college.

Biden said that he wanted to warn the country of dangers that are concerning him. "That's a dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a very few ultra-wealthy peo-

ple," he said. There are dangerous conse-quences if their abuse of power is left unchecked. "Today, an

oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead," Biden said.

Biden's warning came as billionaire tech entrepreneurs have exerted increasing influence in US politics including Elon Musk, who is set to play a key role in Trump's second term.



President Joe Biden hugs Vice President Kamala Harris after giving his farewell address from the Oval Office of the White House Wednesday, in Washington. AP/PTI

"We see the consequences all across America, and we've seen it before," said the president seated behind the resolute desk in the Oval Office.

First Lady Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Second Gentlemen Dough Emhoff, President's son Hunter and some of the senior officials in his administration were also present in the room. Just before speaking, Biden waved to a grandchild and Jill Biden told him "you look

great, Joe." Šingling out social media com-

panies, President Biden warned of the potential rise of a "tech industrial complex," comparing it to the "military industrial complex" that President Dwight D Eisenhower warned about in his 1961 farewell address.

"I'm equally concerned about the potential rise of a tech industrial complex that could our very democracy from the

pose real dangers for our coun-try as well," Biden said in the 17-minute speech

"Americans are being buried under an avalanche of misinformation and disinformation, enabling the abuse of power, he said, referencing Mark Zuckerberg's recent announcement his company Meta would stop fact-checking on its social media platforms such as Facebook

The free press is crumbling. Editors are disappearing. Social media is giving up on fact-checking," Biden said.

The truth is smothered by lies, told for power and for profit. We must hold the social platforms accountable to protect our children, our families and our very democracy from the abuse of power," Biden said.

We must hold the social plat forms accountable to protect

abuse of power," said the president.

Noting that unless safeguards are in place, Artificial Intelligence (AI) could spawn new threats to human rights, way of life, privacy, how they work and how to protect the nation

As the land of liberty, America, not China, must lead the world in the development of AI, he said.

Biden listed out some of the key achievements of his administration in the last four vears.

'You know, it will take time to feel the full impact of all we've done together, but the seeds are planted," he said.

Biden said powerful forces want to wield their unchecked influence to eliminate the steps his administration has taken. "We must not be bullied into sacrificing the future, the future of our children and our grandchildren. We must keep pushing forward and push faster. There's no time to waste," he said.

In his remarks, Biden also talks about the works and reforms that need to be done in the months and years ahead. 'In the years ahead it's going to be up to the president, the presidency, the Congress, the courts, the free press and the American people to confront these powerful forces. We must reform the tax code. Not the need to get dark money, that's that hidden funding behind too many campaign contribu-

tions," he said 'We need to get it out of our politics. We need to enact an 18-year time limit, term limit,

time and term for the strongest ethics reforms for our Supreme Court. We need to ban members of Congress from trading stock while they are in Congress," he said.



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

PTI KYIV

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

The British government said Starmer and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will sign a "100-Year Partnership" treaty in Kyiv covering areas including defence, science, energy and trade.

Starmer's unannounced visit is his first trip to Ukraine since he took office in July.

He visited the country in 2023 when he was opposition leader, and has twice held talks with Zelenskyy in London since becoming prime minister. The war will be three years old next month.

The Italian defense chief was also in Kyiv on Thursday, two days after Germany's defence minister visited and three days after Zelenskyy talked by phone with French President Emmanuel Macron.

The flurry of diplomatic activity came in the run-up to Trump's inauguration next

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

Starmer arrived at Kyiv railway station on a gray and frosty morning. "We're a long way into this conflict," Starmer said. "We mustn't let up." During the visit, Starmer and

Zelenskyy laid flowers at a wall of remembrance for those killed in the war. The wall outside St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, a Kyiv landmark, is covered in photos of the slain, stretching for

a city block. It has become a place of pilgrimage for families paying tribute to their lost loved ones. Starmer also visited a Kyiv hospital specialising in burn treatment. While Starmer was later meeting with Zelenskyy at the presidential palace, a car and

a building were damaged elsewhere in Kyiv by debris from Russian drones shot down by Ukraine's air defences, according to city adminstration chief Tymur Tkachenko. The UK, one of Ukraine's

brutal torture.

added.

biggest military backers, has pledged 12.8 billion pounds (USD 16 billion) in military and civilian aid since Russia's full-scale invasion three years ago, and has trained more than 50.000 Ukrainian troops on

Starmer is to announce another 40 million pounds (USD 49 million) for Ukraine's postwar economic recovery. But the UK's role is dwarfed by

that of the United States, and there is deep uncertainty over the fate of American support for Ukraine once Trump takes office on January 20. The president-elect has balked at the cost of US aid to Kyiv, says he wants to bring the war to a swift end and is planning to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, for whom he has long expressed admiration. Kyiv's allies have rushed to flood Ukraine with as much support as possible before Trump's inauguration, with the aim of putting Ukraine in the strongest position possible for any future negotiations to end the war. Zelenskyy has said that in any peace negotiation, Ukraine would need assurances about its future

protection from its much bigger neighbour.

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

The deal commits the two sides to cooperate on defense -

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

All person/s having any claim against or in respect o the said Property, or any part thereof, by way o 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 howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been winved and/or shandownd.

een waived and/or abandoned. Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351

Pak soldier

killed, 4 injured in rocket attack on aid convoy

ment. Several workers, includ-Peshawar (PTI): One soldier was killed and four others ing Sami Wazir, have faced were injured when a convoy "We demand that human of 35 vehicles carrying food and medical supplies to rights organisations take action against these violations Pakistan's Kurram district, of law and human rights. We hit by sectarian violence, have filed petitions in the was attacked by rockets on Supreme Court, Lahore High Thursday, officials said. Court, and Islamabad High After the attack, the miscre Court, but have not been granted a hearing," Khan claimed, adding that PTI now ants also burnt some of the vehicles carrying the relief material to Parachinar in has no option but to raise voic-es on international platforms. the Bagan Bazar area of the strife-torn district in Khyber "I will write to global human Pakhtunkhwa province. rights organisations to ensure Sectarian clashes between that these innocent citizens are Shia and Sunni tribes have heard. I also urge overseas claimed at least 130 lives Pakistanis to raise their voicsince November, with food es in this regard. In the process and medicine shortages of crushing PTI, the entire sys-tem has been violated," he reported due to weeks-long road blockades in the region.

A peace agreement was reached on January 1, but the route connecting Parachinar remained blocked.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the general public that I Sandeep Talwar Son of Late Sh. Baldev Raj Talwar permanent resident of 2852, New Housing Board, Sector 13, Bhiwadi, Haryana is absolute owner and undisputed possession of property

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

The treaty also includes a system to help track stolen Ukrainian grain exported by Russia from occupied parts of

the country. "Putin's ambition to wrench Ukraine away from its closest partners has been a monumental strategic failure. Instead, we are closer than ever, and this partnership will take that friendship to the next level," Starmer said ahead of the visit. "This is not just about the here and now, it is also about an

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

also would discuss a plan pro-

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

world 09



INTERNAL CLEANING RADIATORS OF POWER E-Tender Notice No. /04_2025/K/1144 Dated: 2025. E-Tenders are invi the undersigned for the fo works: Tender No. 04 2025 of work: Internal Clean Radiators of Power Car by OG & ID27/Radiwash at & New Jalpaiguri Depot. Value: ₹40,71,000/-. Ea Money: ₹81,500/-. Date & of Closing of Tender: hrs. of 31-01-2025 & op at 15.30 hrs. of 31-01-The complete informatio

ASHWANI KOMAN (ADVOCATE)	VINIA	1111 V	ihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi-110024				,		EEN, SAFE & SECUR				
NAL CLEANING OF	Ģ	5	CSB Bank Trusted Heritage Smart Future			CTION OF		78 79	KAWALJIT KAUR SANGEETA KOMAL	7969744 7971093	001	6,96,902.08 6,99,633.00	129.31 124.38
r Notice No. EL/29		The borrower/s in specific and interested bidders, in general, are hereby informed that on account							VED PARKASH PRABHAAV VATS	7978117 7982921	001 001	1,09,506.72 8,34,494.63	19.77 158.25
K/1144 Dated: 08-01- enders are invited by			repayment of the Banks due by the borrow auction notice issued by the Bank, the gold					82	GOPI SINGH	7994163	001	1,42,931.55	31.68
signed for the following			spective borrowers for the loan avalled by the id "non-recourse" basis through e-auction						PATEL N. PRASHIDH KUMAR YAADAV	4532027	001	96.549.14	16.80
der No. 04_2025. Name	28	₿ th Ja	nuary 2025 at 10.30 AM. The auction may	be adjourn	ned to a	any other later	date at the	84	SACHIN KAPANIA NIDHI THAKUR	4573553	003 001	8,31,281.35	170.82 44.67
Internal Cleaning of of Power Car by using	are	discreation of the bank upon publication of the same in the Bank's notice board. The borrowers are hereby further inform that the gold ornaments will be disposed of by private sale if the public						86	SHAFID ALI	4757653 4757658	003	2,37,069.35 7,89,822.39	148.63
7/Radiwash at Katihar			n is not successful and if there is a further ba initiated against the borrower/s for recover						SAROJ DEVI SUMAN	4774671	001 001	27,26,713.97 1,07,284.62	617.95 21.36
lpaiguri Depot. Tender	ca	ise c	of diseased borrower, all conditions will be app			s.		89	MANISH KUMAR	4914659	001	35,728.14	6.21
40,71,000/ Earnest	S		Account Name		No.of	Bal. Outstan- ding as on	weight	90 91	AMIT SETHI MOHD SAFIQ	4933450 7680736	001 001	3,45,718.30 65,539.05	67.04 12.61
81,500/ Date & Time ng of Tender: 15.00		0.	GAUTAM		Acc.	15/01/2025	(grams)	92 93	RAKESH CHHABRA DEEPANSHU SINGH	7752080 7768432		6,69,404.99 7,84,839.05	120.03 176.08
-01-2025 & opening	1		BIJU VARGHESE	586516			30.00	94	AKSHAY SUNIL TARARE	7988679	001	3,07,744.97	54.17
hrs. of 31-01-2025.	2		KANHIYA LAL GAUTAM VISHAL GUPTA	587252 3882348		5,11,322.31 16,28,258.84	104.00	95	KISHOR KUMAR SHARMA TILAK NAGAR,	7990464 NEW DEL		2,13,164.70	41.33
plete information with r documents of above	4		SURAJ PRAKASH	3939512	001	80,827.45	19.55		MUKESH KUMRA	4430627	001	92,004.35	18.39
will be available upto	6		SARIKA SAINI VIKAS SAINI	4070589 4071729	002	1,74,659.65 1,05,940.14	36.70 20.20	97 98	JYOTI ARCHANA RAINA	4443926 4601636	001 001	4,17,478.65	72.85 27.35
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s.gov.in r. DEE/G&Chg/Katihar	9		OM PRAKASH KASHYAP	7837678			55.00	101	PRAVI	7975046	001	5,84,736.21	110.37
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ng Customers With A Smile	1	1	SARBATI	4928364	001	1,41,687.51	25.88		KSHAMA RANA	7999990	001	9,05,727.97	214.43
UPREME COURT OF INDIA	1		BIKRAM JEET SINGH GILL ROHAN SAINI	4935006 4935016		27,745.05 45,217.90	4.94 8.05	105	RAJOURI C	3955728	003	20,90,936.64	362.70
PPELLATE JURISDICTION PPEAL No. 4927 OF 2023		4	AJAY KUMAR YADAV	7879150 7970948	001	3,05,736.75	55.13 86.81	106	INDERJEET SINGH	4562432	002	5,41,258.43	94.70
DRA MEHTA	1	6	VIKRANT PREETI KUMARI	7993167	001	5,55,229.90	99.22		BNE HASAN	4580042 4608567	001 001	1,05,448.42 6,64,619.21	22.71 126.54
Petitioner(s)/Appellant(s) VERSUS			NIKITA SHARMA BHAGWATI	7993351 8100312	001 001	6,36,296.50 1,38,608.60	118.27 25.96	109	PRAKASH BAHADUR	4750677 4875938	001	98,986.40 46,287.20	21.45
R LIMITED AND OTHERS			DUSHYANT TANDON	8102162		11,19,780.20		111	PAWAN	4892299	001	33,282.04	6.59
Respondent(s)	2	01	ROHINI S SACHIN SINGHAL	4323053	001	96,879.90	17.70	112	RAKESH KUMAR ROHAN KUMAR	4907136 4910925		29,469.07 67,757.25	5.40 17.00
IMITED.	2	1	SUMEET AGARWAL	4334988	001	74,451.17	14.70	114	NEELAM MEHTA	4916050	001	1,94,097.44	35.50
THORIZED REPRESENTATIVE R[1] IFFICE AT NO. 512-512A, TOLSTOY	2		NAVEEN PANDEY DEEPSHIKHA	4344596 4481349		1,74,455.75	37.80		RANI DEVI VINAY KUMAR	4922852 4926923	001 001	27,892.59 59,718.85	5.10 12.20
LSTOY MARG, JANPATH,	2		RAGHVENDRA KUMAR SINGH SUDESH RANI	4510166 4554514		4,13,222.31 2,43,848.70	77.92 54.25		VALSALA RATISH HARLEEN KAUR	4928878 7628752		1,97,981.90 21,28,405.10	35.40 382.21
PLACE, DISTRICT-NEW DELHI, 11 (PROCESS ID:292075/2024)	2	6	JYOTI	4651365	001	2,16,800.70	49.73	119	RAJDEEP KAUR	7645295	002	5,77,441.06	100.80
//2023/XVII)	2		MOHD FAISAL RAHUL GUPTA	4705615 4798136		8,00,245.00 1,66,736.59	166.50 36.20		SHAILJA PUROHIT AMIT MARWAH	7893121 7957643	001 001	10,41,734.00 4,64,160.71	219.50 82.80
appeal above-mentioned filed try by Mr. SOUMYA DUTTA,	2	9	KRISHNA SUNITA AGGARWAL	4896050 7079324	001	1,08,647.32 9,52,259.11	19.84 216.00		NAND LAL DHARMENDER	7991769 7995640	001 001	1,85,237.71 73,105.25	32.54 13.00
behalf of the Appellant above-	3	1	DEEPAK KUKREJA	7544524	001	8,35,284.48	155.17		TRI NAGAR			73,103.23	13.00
sted for hearing before this Court ugust, 2023, when the Court was	3		KANTA DEVI SHARMA ZAREENA	7645677 7825894	002 001	7,52,917.08	138.44 378.55	124	IRFAN PREM LATA	4498752		3,13,622.70	66.07
pass the following Order:	3	4	HARCHARAN SINGH	7856350	001	36,45,389.05	739.58	126	NITIN SHARMA	4746829 4851544	004	56,368.05 1,50,501.85	14.77 31.10
idoned. :e, returnable in four weeks.	3	6	DEVENDER KUMAR GUPTA REKHA	7871796 7975138	002	5,29,120.20 6,75,556.84	128.00 126.01		FIROJ ALI RAVI VERMA	4927017 7164844		2,69,811.15 69,937.00	53.98 13.30
ddition, is permitted. vil Appeal on 4 September	3		AKANKSHA JAI KISHAN RATHI	7983547 7991075		3,06,648.03 5,46,393.80	55.80	129	JEET PRAKASH SINGH	7553308	001	27,662.73	6.20
			MOHIT KUMAR	8123582					PREETI GOLA SUMIT KUMAR	7621635 7827118	001	28,557.93	9.00 7.00
S, the matter above-mentioned ted before Hon'ble Court on	SHALIMARBAGH 40 AMIT KUMAR 4243458 001 32,291.24 7.45									7992975		2,45,407.60	57.55
ber, 2024, When the following	4	1	SUBODH JAIN	4349101	001	13,32,339.74	298.90	133	SHYAM NAGAR	4437379		51,609.35	10.10
ssed:- counsel for the appellant	4	3	SUMIT BHATIA SHIVAM BANSAL	4389960 4442160	001	1,16,318.72 8,16,480.55 2,32,416.31	22.44 156.59	134	RAMA SHIDHU INDERJEET SINGH	4525230 4562432	001 001	13,962.02 1,03,403.21	3.60 18.05
granted permission to effect	4	4	AMAN KHERA PRIYA CHANDRA	4460810 4535167		2,32,416.31 8,51,012.02	44.12 158.89	136	NEELAM	4575273	001	1.03.144.18	30.41
n respondent nos.R-1 and R- tion.	4	6	PRAKHAR BHARDWAJ	4536872	001	2,48,401.79	43.06	137	AVI JAHIR AHAMAD	4649054 4651896	002 001	1,99,720.59 41,569.75	40.14 9.60
ounsel for the appellant shall	4	8	KUNAL BHARDWAJ PRIYA KAUR	4537709 4557970	002	97,440.22 3,03,631.34	19.11 62.26	139	AKHTAR ALI VIJAY KUMAR	4664919 4732015	001	78,534.65	17.70
riate steps. er affidavit of proof of	4	9	KALPANA SHARMA SHAHJAD ALI	4562854 4622876	001	8,55,104.80 3,75,278.17	162.10 75.10	141	JAYDEEP DIXIT	4752318	001	2,22,004.45	30.50 46.93
is filed."	5	1	DHARMBIR	4625084	001	61,017.58	11.21		ROSHI SUNNY	4904803 4907226	001 001	94,836.35 92,887.39	18.44 18.04
ORE, TAKE NOTICE that the Civil e-mentioned will be posted for	5	3	KASAR KHAN GAUTAM KUMAR	4631302 4665467	001 001	1,08,643.23 31,636.11	20.92 6.43	144	ASHA KAUR	4907322	001	1,84,144.19	38.48
e this Court in due course when	5	4	MANMEET SINGH	4679072 4732728	002	11,23,268.75 1,08,918.04	224.60 26.60	146	PINTOO KUMAR RAZIYA BEGUM	4918721 4920277	001 001	36,494.64 2,06,375.10	7.35 59.86
ear before the Court either in ough an Advocate-on-record of	5	6	REKHA TEJVEER SINGH SISODIA	4777064	001	1,56,322.59	27.59	147		4935390 7530087	001 001	52,379.25 16,88,751.47	11.40 372.43
ly appointed by you and show	5		SURENDER KUMAR JAHANGIR KHAN	4803888 4905888		1,57,716.17 1,80,755.13	37.63 33.40	149	GAURAV AHUJA	7531741	001	1,44,779.85	29.66
e Court on the day that may be specified as to why the appeal	5	9	NARGIS	4916356	001	2,56,180.82	49.39	150	AHMAD HUSSAIN IRAM AZIZ	7831050 8187848		2,04,174.68 8,16,691.41	50.21 189.32
lowed.	6 6		SHAMA PARVIN ARUNA CHAKRABORTY	4916386 4918233	002	2,61,649.51 1,38,443.34	55.98 25.38		KALK	ÁJI			
our affidavit in opposition to the hwith but shall do so only by	6	2	VISHAKHA GUDIA	4919514 4920215		1,39,532.95	33.49 39.50	152	AKASH GUPTA	4627248		1,09,720.30	19.50
ne grounds in opposition to the	6	4	SANJEEV KUMAR DASS	4923877	001	2,09,956.57	42.77	153	MODEL TOWN -	4704754		83,387.75	17.92
law or grounds set out in the ay produce such pleadings and	6		PREETI RAHUL BANA	4927377 4927398	001 001	77,401.64 58,455.71	15.60 10.72	154	SUMIT	4924539	001	60,588.72	11.79
led before the Tribunal against	6	7	ARYAN SETHI	7354408	001	7,36,603.80	140.72		ARVIND KUMAR SUNIL KUMAR SHARMA	4926250 4930821	001 001	40,419.94 3,56,134.35	8.64 70.45
the appeal is filed. R NOTICE that if you fail to enter	6	9	SARAVJEET SINGH PRIYANKA	7401733 7575450	001	2,06,045.25 1,48,478.00	42.41 25.72	157	SHIVAM SHARMA AAGRI	4933936	001	1,03,909.15	21.40
as aforesaid, no further notice	7		SUMIT KHANNA SAGAR KUMAR NAGARWAL	7613897 7663274	003	8,01,554.90 71,151.70	147.28 14.00		AAKASH SHEKHAR KUMAR	7860671 7958262	001 001	37,965.51 2,86,231.20	6.66 52.84
to you and the matter above- shall be disposed of in your	7	2	MOHIT BANSAL	7695991	001	1,81,414.45	34.80		KUNAL DHINGRA	8104821		2,00,231.20	43.00
absence.	7		VIKAS RAMAN SHARMA	7797106 7941625		7,54,620.33 8,51,906.48	132.25 158.65		more details/account wise information b				
Dated : 23rd December, 2024	7	5	NEERJA MEHROTRA	7945637	001	8,24,073.87	149.76		ective branches and for participating in the al https://csbegold.auctiontiger.net	e auction, p	ease	visit/login to the	e-auction
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR	7		SAPNA ROHTAN SHASHI RANJAN KUMAR	7961157 7968711		7,71,952.76 1,53,205.08	142.09 32.46		OF DELHI 17.01.2025	Sd/- /	Author	rized Officer, C	SB Bank
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Imran says he's no Nawaz Sharif, vows not to strike deal with military

PTI 📕 LAHORE

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

Sharif, the three-time former prime minister, left Pakistan in self-imposed exile twice in past — first after striking a deal with then military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf in early 2000, and with then Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa in 2019.

"I want to make it clear that no matter what tactics are used, I will not make any deal. I am not Nawaz Sharif who seeks to get his billions made through corruption forgiven. I have lived in and will die in Pakistan... I will always stand for my nation," Khan said in a post on X on Wednesday.

Foreign investment is at a his-Khan's remarks came amid toric low. The SIFC and Uraan the ongoing talks between his programmes have failed mis-Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) erably. Unemployment is risparty and the military-backed Shehbaz Sharif government, ing due to stagnant growth rates. Khan added that brilliant wherein it is speculated that he in the it of iail mind wake of success of the talks. Shehbaz Sharif is the younger brother of Nawaz Sharif. Lambasting the military estab lishment and the government for the "inhuman" treatment of his incarcerated party workers, Khan said he would take the matter to international fora.

83.61 sq. meters., out of Khasra no. 2657M situated in the village Karhera, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P.from Arti Chauhan who is the owner of above said property is by Khatoni year 1424-1429 issued by Patwari & Sale Deed dated 21.12.2020 and intend to get a financial Assistance from Aditya Birla housing Finance Ltd. If any person/Institute have any objection or claim with respect to the right tittle or interest in the said propert may please contact with us within 07 days from the date of the notice on the address mention below failing which my client shall

not be responsible in the manner what Aditya Birla Housing finance Noida-8307442962//7042038471

2nd Time

"Political prisoners in Pakistan are being treated inhumanely. Our workers in military custody have been subjected to severe mental and physical torture. I, too, have been subjected to extremely poor treat-



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Abhay Raj Singh Rawat S/o Late Shri Rampal Singh Rawat R/o: D-961, Gali No.6, Nathupura, Delhi-110084. Have Changed my name from Abhay Raj Singh to Abhay Raj Singh Rawat for all future purposes.

PD(1259)A

Assam.

R/o-

I, Rahul Jain S/o Dhram Chand, R/o 224, POCKET B-8,SECTOR-5, VTC: ROHINI, District: North West Delhi. State: Delhi-110085, have changed the name of my minor daughter Buggu Jain aged 3 years and she shall hereafter be known as Raaisha Jain.

PD(1260)A

I, Raghu Nath Singh F/o-Service No.15786716Y HAV (DMT) Ranjan Kumar, R/o-Vill- Balua, Post- Lagma, Teh-Dumra, Dist- Sitamarhi, Bihar- 843323, have changed my name from Raghu Nath Singh to Raghunath Singh, affidavit vide dated 10/09/2024 before Notary Tezpur, Sonitpur, Assam. PD(1261)C

pearing No. 5, road No. 26, Punjabi Bagh rapidly leaving the country Delhi 26 having acquired the same from my late mother Smt. Pushpa, who prior to because no one trusts the nations' stability anymore. erself had purchased the same from its Pakistani companies are moving their businesses to Dubai. The PTI chief also said that no economic stability can ever be time with my vehicle and some articles parked in it from last few years. achieved in a country where rule of law does not exist. "Pakistan is buried under an

investments

Talking on Pakistan's econom-

ic woes, Khan said, "The coun-

try's economy is at its worst.

and

economic crisis. There is no solution to this problem except for a government that enjoys public confidence," he said. Khan has been in jail since publically declared and notify that the said August 2023 in multiple cases.

property is my exclusive estate and any person whosoever does not have any claim whatsoever with it. I also reserve m I, Sudha Devi M/o- Service right to enquire and contest all or any No.15786716Y HAV (DMT) itigation ongoing, if any, with respect to Ranjan Kumar, R/o- Villmy said property, any person intending to deal with the said property in any manne Balua, Post- Lagma, Tehshall do so at his own risk and peril Dumra, Dist- Sitamarhi, Yogesh Sharma, Advocate Bihar- 843323, have changed

my name from Sudha Devi to Notice to respondent of the day fixed Fo Sudha Singh, vide affidavit the hearing of the Appeal dated 10/09/2024 before (Order 41, Rule14) Notary Tezpur, Sonitpur, In The Court of: IIIrd Additional District Judge, Gautam Budh Naga

Civil Appeal No. 30 Of 2018 PD(1262)C Dalchand Sharma S/o Sh. Ramp I, Urkavala Perumal, Father harma (Deceased), 1/1 Smt. Shant of-No.14684796X Perumal U, N/o Late Sh. Dalchand Sharma, 1/2 Mamchand S/o Late Sh. Dalchand Sharma,**1/3** Rajesh S/o Late Sh. PO-Melakuttudankadu, Teh & Dalchand Sharma, **2.** Horam Sharma S/o Sh. Ramphal Sharma, **3.** Jai Kishar Dist- Tuticorin, Tamilnadu-628103, have changed my /o Sh. Ramphal Sharma All Residence name from Urkavala Perumal f Village- Gulawali, Pargana - Dankaur, to P Urkavala Perumal, vide ehshil- Shikandrabad, District- Gautan affidavit dated 16/01/2025 Budh Nagar. ...Appellant ٧s

Baradwai Madrash

e hearing of this appeal

and decided in your absence.

his 10-01-2025.

ehalf by yourself, your pleader o

IIIrd Additional District Judge

Gautam Budh Nagar

PD(1263)C I, Swati Goswami R/o A-14, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi-110013, have changed my minor son's name from Aaryash Dhawan Vajrapaani Goswami. PD(1264)A

before Notary Public Delhi.

Vill

&

I, Saha Devi Nougai mother of no. 4103956P Rfn Birender Nougai presently Residing at W-84, Noida Sec-12, PO-Sec-19 Noida Tehsil-Dadri Distt Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh Pin-201301 have changed my name from Saha Devi to Saha Devi Nougai vide affidavit dated 16-01-2025 before. PD(1266)C e-tender will be availabl 15.00 hrs. of 31-01-2025 in v

www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE/G&Chg/ previous owner namely C S Ahluwalia and Jagjit Kaur in late 90s. The said property is NORTHEAST FRONTIER R 0 ying in unattended condition from some ers With A ing Cu

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF I **CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICT** Recently, some anti-social elements CIVIL. APPEAL No. 4927 OF 2 forcefully barged into my said property to ATISH CHANDRA MEHTA establish their unlawful possession by . Petitioner(s)/Ap emoving my belongings. They also VERSUS claimed to have been contesting some TDT COPPER LIMITED AND itigation in Delhi High Court with respect ... Resp my property. Accordingly, I not only complained against them before the TDT COPPER LIMITED. police concerned but also hereby THROUGH AUTHORIZED REPRESENTA REGISTERED OFFICE AT NO. 512-512A HOUSE, TOLSTOY MARG, J. CONNAUGHT PLACE DISTRICT-NE DELHI-110001 (PROCESS ID:2920 (C.A. NO.4927/2023/XVII) WHEREAS the appeal above-mention in the Registry by Mr. SOUMYA Advocate, on behalf of the Appella named was listed for hearing before on the 04th August, 2023, when the pleased to pass the followin "1 Delay condoned. 2 Issue notice, returnable in fou 3 Dasti, in addition, is permitte 4 List the Civil Appeal on 4 Sept 2023. AND WHEREAS, the matter above-n was again listed before Hon'ble (18th November, 2024, When the order was passed "1. Learned counsel for the au seeks and is granted permission service upon respondent nos.R 5 by publication. 2. Learned counsel for the appel take appropriate steps. 3. List after affidavit of p publication is filed." Sanjay Saxena S/o Sh. Haridash NOW, THEREFORE, TAKE NOTICE that Saxena R/o 13A. Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi, 2. Pooja Jhavar D/o Sh. Vinay Appeal above-mentioned will be p hearing before this Court in due cou (ishan Jhavar, 3. Vidha Jhavar D/o Sh you may appear before the Court Radha Kishan Jhavar. 4. Aarti Jhava person or through an Advocate-on /o Sh. Dev Kishan Jhavar All R/o 118 this Court duly appointed by you ...Responden Take notice that an Appeal from the cause to the Court on the day ecree of Sale Deed Canceliation the subsequently be specified as to why t case has been present by Civil Judge may not be allowed Senior Dievion) Gautam Budh Nagar Case No. 196 of 1992 Dalchand You may file your affidavit in opposit petition forthwith but shall do so Sharma Vs Sanjay Saxena & others bassed order dated 29.11.2016 and setting out the grounds in opposit questions of law or grounds set o gitered in the court and that the 30-Appeal and may produce such plea D1-2025 has been fixed by this court for documents filed before the Tribuna whose order the appeal is filed. If not appearance is made on your TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if you fai appearance as aforesaid, no furth ome one by the law authorized to act shall be given to you and the matt r you in this appeal, it will be hear mentioned shall be disposed o absence. Dated : 23rd Do Given under my seel of this cour



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

PTI NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



which is an appellate Competition Commission of India

Platforms

Meta

authority over the orders On November 18, the CCI passed by the CCI. Senior Advocates Kapil Sibal imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore on social media Mukul and Rohatgi, and Mukul Ronatgi, appearing for Meta and WhatsApp, contended that the CCI had overstepped its major Meta for unfair business ways with respect to the WhatsApp privacy policy update done in 2021. jurisdiction by ruling on WhatsApp's privacy policy as and Whatsapp have challenged this order before the NCLAT, the matter is sub-judice before a Constitution Bench

of the Supreme Court.

"CCI has gone into the entity's privacy policy. It is before 5 judges of the Supreme Court. It has no jurisdiction to deal with it," he said. Moreover, there is no

complaint in this case and CCI has come to an "erroneous conclusion" on dominance but it did not take into account 'effect analysis' of

Without an effect analysis, you cannot come to the conclusion," said Sibal, adding the CCI has not even examined what is the data that is being shared. He further said CCI has

that

He further said CCI has barred WhatsApp from sharing data collected on its platform with other Meta companies or Meta company products for advertising purposes for five years and alleged: "they are trying to destroy the business model." "No app can survive without monetisation," he said, adding the similar platforms as the similar platforms as Telegram and Signal have their own models of monetisation. Moreover, search apps also monetise in their own ways.

further sought an He immediate stay on the CCI order, which was directed to be implemented by February 19

Sibal said: "Let the Supreme Court decide on the privacy policy and let the statutory rules come, then you can (NCALT) take up the matter and decide. Moreover balance of convenience in our favour as we have been operating this for years.



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

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said faulty road construction should be made a nonbailable offence and road contractors and engineers should be held responsible for accidents and sent to prison. Addressing an event organised by industry body CII, Gadkari further said India is number one in road accidents in the world.

"Faulty road construction should be a non-bailable years age bracket while 10,000 deaths were of children,"

offence and road contractors. concessionaires and engineers should be held responsible for accidents and sent to prison," he said. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways aims

to reduce road accident fatalities to half by 2030.

According to the minister, the

ministry data of road accidents in 2023 shows five

lakh mishaps in the country resulting in 1,72,000 deaths.

"Of this, 66.4 per cent, or

1,14,000, were in the 18-45

that could shape the

government's policy in the

consumption emerged as a

key priority. A review of the

current tax structure including rates (both direct and indirect taxes) in the Union Budget 2025-26 is

called for with a view to enhance disposable income

and stimulate consumer

continued

upcoming budget.

Reviving

He pointed out that 55,000 deaths were reported due to absence of helmets and 30,000 were due to non-use of seat belts.

Gadkari said.

Gadkari also said the highways ministry spending Rs 40,000 crore to rectify black spots on highways.

Gadkari urged the industry and other stakeholders to partner with the government for setting up of driver training and fitness centres to address the acute shortage of drivers in the country.

Sensex, Nifty extend gains for India's economy to grow at 6.4 per cent in current fiscal: FICCI third day on strong global cues PTI 📕 NEW DELHI growth. this Against



 $E_{\text{Sensex and Nifty rallied for}}^{\text{quity benchmark indices}}$ the third session on the trot on Thursday, helped by a rally in global markets after lowerconsumer than-expected inflation in the US ignited hopes of more rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

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

The 30-share BSE index d 31874 points per cent to revisit 77,000 level at 77,042.82. During the day, it jumped 595.42 points or 0.77 per cent to 77.319.50 On the similar lines, the NSE Nifty rallied 98.60 points or 0.42 per cent to 23,311.80. As many as 2,778 stocks advanced, while 1,188 declined and 101 remained unchanged on the BSE.



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

Meanwhile, Adani group stocks rallied on Thursday after Hindenburg Research founder Nate Anderson announced that he would disband the firm, which made international billionaire Gautam Adani that wiped billions from the market value of his group companies. Shares of NDTV surged 9.15 per cent, Ambuja Cements jumped 3.88 per cent, Adani Green Energy rallied 3.35 per cent Sanchi Industrias climbed cent, Sanghi Industries climbed 3.34 per cent and Adani Power went up by 2.45 per cent on the BSE. The stock of Adani Ports advanced 2.03 per cent, Adani Total Gas (1.78 per cent), Adani Enterprises (1.74 per cent), Adani Energy Solutions (1.54 per cent) and ACC (0.77 per cent). Shares of Adani Wilmar, however, declined 1.19 per cent. "Nifty has regained momentum, closing at 23,312, buoyed by demand and reclaiming the 23,300 mark, as

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

ndustry body FICCI on

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

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

The survey was conducted in December 2024 and drew waves with campaigns targeting responses from leading conomiete hort-term ren esentii banking industry, and through exports, foreign capital flows, and input costs for the US trading partners financial services sector. participating The economists observed global economy in 2025 to present including India. The likelihood of tax cuts reasonable growth



with trajectory, an underlying note of caution. Sharing their perspective on the expected impact of US President Donald Trump's policies on the Indian economy, the economists indicated the possibility of disruptions

(personal and business) could inflate the US fiscal deficit, while higher tariffs and stricter immigration norms could push up labour costs and inflation, they term. However, economists observed.

The Federal Reserve, in calibrated approach towards Cut the India resp could channels like policy rates by less than opined. The Union Budget what was anticipated. This may reduce capital inflows into emerging markets, arrives amidst global including India, causing economic uncertainties and rupee fluctuations

Trade tensions, including a potential US-China trade conflict, could disrupt supply chains and raise input costs in the short expect US to take a economiste

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

spending, they said.

Additionally,

in the upcoming budget. Economists also commended

supply chain efficiency were backdrop, economists shared their expectations underscored as critical to managing inflationary pressures and minimizing food wastage. the According private

India's participants, economic outlook for 2025 presents cautious optimism, amidst the backdrop of persisting external headwinds.

spending is Consumer expected to gain momentum, driven by an improved outlook for the agriculture sector, which is likely to bolster rural consumption and sentiment in the first half of the next

fiscal year. Food inflation which has remained elevated for over a year and strained household budgets, is expected to ease. Furthermore, monetary easing by the RBI, resulting in lower interest rates, could also provide an additional impetus to consumption.

To address risks and unlock opportunities, recommended that India should evaluate reducing tariffs on select and specific US imports while ensuring revenue stability an minimal domestic impact. stability and

soars ₹2,300

old prices rallied Rs 500

on Thursday amid fresh buying from jewellers and

retailers and rupee depreciation, according to the All India Sarafa

The precious metal had

PTI 🗖 NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Wall Street's strong performance helped bulls take charge. Risk-on sentiments were sparked by cooler-than-expected US CPI inflation data for December, easing concerns about rising inflation and boosting expectations that the Fed might continue its ratecutting cycle throughout the year.

for 2025-26, set to be presented on February 1, global strengthen agricultural inties and value chains. Investments in domestic cold storage facilities and moderating

increase agri productivity, rural improve infrastructure, and

Rupee declines 16 paise to settle at 86.56 against US Dollar **Gold rallies ₹500, silver**

PTI 📕 MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 16 paise to close at 86.56 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, dragged down by a strong American currency overseas, elevated crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows

However, positive domestic equity markets provided some cushion at the lower level, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.42 and touched the intraday high of 86.37 before ending the session at 86.56 (provisional) against the greenback, 16 paise lower from the previous

Meanwhile, in a separate filing, DB Corp informed

about management changes. It has appointed Runit

DB Corp is one of the

media

print

the quarter.

sales.

largest

radio station.



close

The local unit settled with a gain of 13 paise at 86.40 against the dollar on Wednesday, a day after rebounding 17 paise from

its lowest-ever level. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset

importers.

'Importers may continue to buy dollars, which may further pressurise the rupee. Traders may take cues from retail sales and weekly unemployment claims data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 86.35 to Rs 86.75," he said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.05 per cent higher at 108.97.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.12 per Sharekhan, said the rupee cent but stayed elevated at

declined due to increased USD 81.93 per barrel in demand for dollars by futures trade.

Analysts said concerns over geopolitical uncertainties are likely to add volatility in the dollar and crude until US gets a new the administration under

Gold prices railed RS 500 to hit over a two-month high of Rs 81,300 per 10 grams in the national capital President Donald Trump next week. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE

Sensex climbed 318.74 points, or 0.42 per cent, to settle at 77,042.82 points, while the Nifty rose 98.60 points, or 0.42 per cent, to 23,311.80 points.

institutional Foreign investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,533.49 crore on Wednesday

closed at Rs 80,800 per 10 grams on Wednesday. The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 500 to Rs 80,900 per 10 grams. It settled at Rs 80,400 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. Silver also surged Rs 2,300 to Rs 94,000

Association.

per kg from the previous close of Rs 91,700 per kg on Wednesday. Gold contracts for February delivery rose Rs 297, or 0.38 per cent, to Rs 79,007 per 10 grams in the futures trade on the MCX on Thursday.

"Gold surged higher trading above Rs 79,000 in MCX, supported by a rupee depreciation," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities,

said. On Thursday, the rupee depreciated 16 paise to close at 86.56 (provisional) against the US dollar, at dragged down by a strong American currency overseas, elevated crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows.

DB Corp Q3 profit down 4.6 per cent to ₹118 Crore Spencer's Retail Q3 loss narrows to ₹47.3 Crore

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



business was down marginally to Rs 594.17 crore in the quarter. However, revenue from the radio business was up 5.47 per cent at Rs 48.64 crore. Total income of DB Corp, includes other which income, was down 1.37 per 1.06 per cent from the cent to Rs 655.64 crore in previous close.

PTI NEW DELHI

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

Kishor Shah as an Additional Director and Vijay Kumar TV as Chief Operating Officer in Ad The company posted net loss of Rs 51.20 crore in the October-December period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Spencer's Retail, a RP Sanjiv Goenka firm.

companies and publishes five newspapers - Dainik Bhaskar, Divya Bhaskar, However, its revenue from Divya Marathi, Saurashtra Samachar and DB Star. It also owns 94.3 MY FM operations was down 20.9 per cent at Rs 516.97 crore during the quarter under review. It was at Rs 654.01 crore in the Shares of DB Corp Ltd were year-ago period. on Thursday trading at Rs 267.15 apiece on BSE, down

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



presentation.

Total expenses of Spencer's Retail was down 20.2 per cent to Rs 567.44 crore in the December quarter as against Rs 711.54 crore a year ago. Retail's total Spencer's income, which includes other income, was marginally down 21.23 per cent to Rs 520.03 in the December crore quarter.

"Despite a soft festive trading environment wherein LFL sales growth was flat, Spencer's delivered a very strong operational performance on the back of strong good delivery (19.7 per cent), strong control on all cost lines operational resulting in a milestone EBITDA positive positive Chairman achievement,"

Shashwat Goenka said. "This is a strong validation of our decision to focus on core

Its total store count, along with Natures Basket, is 131

with a total 10.34 lakh square

feet in over 27 cities in India.

Shares of Spencer's Retail Ltd

on Thursday were trading at

Rs 86.76 on the BSE, down

6.48 per cent from the

previous close.

geographies, exit from loss-making, non-strategic regions & drive improvement across all operating metrics such as margins, sales productivity, and costs and to bring the business to operational profitability," he added. Spencers started its quick delivery proposition JIFFY and opened two stores during the quarter for Natures Basket. NEW DELHI | FRIDAY | JANUARY 17, 2025

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ne pioneer

LBOOK2

Η A U Ν



Honouring Legal Luminaries

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

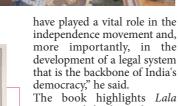
he Society of Indian Law Firms (SILF) commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Republic of India with a memorable event highlighted that the significant contributions of lawyers to the nation's democratic journey. The occasion witnessed the launch of an extraordinary book titled Lawyers of India in Freedom Struggle & in Independent India (1872-2022): 150 Years and Glorious Continued Contribution Toward the Centennial - 2047

The launch brought together luminaries of the legal fraternity. The highlight of the evening was the book's formal launch by K.K. Venugopal, former Attorney General of India, who presented the first copy to his successor, R. Venkataramani, the current Attorney General of India.

Addressing the distinguished gathering, K.K. Venugopal praised the legal profession's crucial role in shaping India's democratic ethos. "The



researched book chronicles 150 years of the legal profession's impact on India's socio-political landscape, from the colonial era to the present day. It pays homage to legendary figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, whose advocacy during the independence movement laid the foundation for India's freedom. Equally, it sheds light on post-independence lawyers and educators who



The book highlights Lala Lajpat Rai's leading advocacy for social reform and the rights of Indians and explores how post-independence legal professionals have upheld the principles of democracy, justice, and fairness in the evolving Indian Republic.

As India approaches its centennial of independence in 2047, the book serves as both a historical record and a call to action. It underscores the continuing role of lawyers in addressing modern challenges and ensuring the rule of law prevails.

A Literary Prelude

Curtain-Raiser for Jaipur Literature Festival 2025



By SAKSHI PRIYA

he curtain-raiser for the Jaipur Literature Festival 2025 at The Leela Palace New Delhi offered an engaging preview of what promises to be another remarkable edition of the world's most celebrated literary gathering. Hosted at one of Delhi's most prestigious venues, the event

This year marks the fourth consecutive partnership between the Jaipur Literature Festival and Teamwork Arts with The Leela Palace New Delhi. The event brought together distinguished authors, poets and intellectuals, creating an atmosphere filled with creativity

The evening featured insightful speeches by key figures associated with the festival, who reflected on the significance of literature in contemporary society. Their words highlighted the festival's mission to preserve cultural heritage and encourage dialogue through storytelling and ideas.

The venue provided a fitting backdrop for discussions about the role of literature as a bridge between the past and the present. The event underscored the Jaipur Literature Festival's role as a global platform for literary excellence and its dedication to the written word. As a preview of the main event, the curtain-raiser successfully built excitement among attendees. It highlighted the festival's significance for readers and writers alike, continuing to inspire and promote intellectual exchange

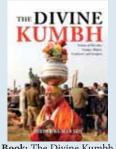




Book: Ananda: An Exploration of Cannabis in India Author: Karan Madhok Publisher: Alpha book company Price: ₹999



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



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



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



celebrated the enduring power of literature and its ability to spark meaningful conversations.

and inspiration.



contributions of lawyers have always transcended the courtroom. They have been instrumental in guiding India towards its democratic ideals, especially during times of struggle," he said. comprehensively The

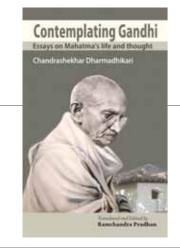
legal framework. Dr. Lalit Bhasin, President of SILF, emphasised the book's significance in preserving the history of Indian legal professionals. "This book is an homage to the lawyers who

have fortified the country's BOUT THE BOOK Compiled, Edited and Authored by Dr. Lalit Bhasin (President) Society of Indian Law Firms

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

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

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



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

Publisher: Anugya Books

with Justice Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari and the Institute of Gandhian Studies in Wardha. Through his reflective and eloquent writing, Pradhan reveals a deep and abiding respect for Dharmadhikari's unwavering dedication to Gandhian values and principles. Pradhan's preface is not merely an introductory passage' rather, it chronicles his decade-long journey of engaging with Gandhian thought, a journey characterised by mutual affection, intellectual camaraderie, and a shared reverence for the Mahatma's enduring legacy

Pradhan affectionately recounts Dharmadhikari's poignant anecdotes, including the inspiring words spoken by Dharmadhikari's mother to his father, Dada Dharmadhikari, during the pivotal Non-cooperation Movement. Such compelling narratives serve to enrich the book's historical context, offering readers a valuable glimpse into the familial and philosophical underpinnings that have so profoundly shaped Dharmadhikari's own perspective. Moreover, work and Pradhan's translation, which Dharmadhikari himself has described as enhancing the original text, underscores Pradhan's vital role in preserving the nuances and essence of Gandhian philosophy for a contemporary audience. The essays of this collection, written on various occasions, range from reflections on Gandhi's principles to portraits of significant figures in the Gandhian movement, including Jamnalal Bajaj's wife, Jankidevi. They explore themes like the Non-cooperation Movement, the challenges of India's independence, and Gandhi's response to partition. While Dharmadhikari's writings exhibit repetition, as acknowledged by the translator, this reiteration reinforces the profundity and timelessness of Gandhian ideas.

Dharmadhikari emphasises the dynamic

The Relevance of Principles

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



nature of Gandhian philosophy. Drawing on his father's wisdom, he argues that ideas must evolve with the times to remain relevant. This approach challenges readers to engage critically with Gandhi's teachings, urging them to reinterpret his principles in contemporary contexts.

The book's philosophical core lies in Dharmadhikari's insightful and nuanced reflections on the profound concepts of Anasakti Yoga and Karma Yoga, which Gandhi himself so eloquently embodied and exemplified throughout his life. These essays also powerfully highlight Gandhi's unwavering humanism, his inspiring ability to transcend personal sorrow during times of immense national crisis, and his steadfast commitment to living amidst and in service of the people. Dharmadhikari's deeply personal



recollections and experiences with the Mahatma himself, such as the cherished moments of walking alongside Gandhi and the profound anguish of mourning his tragic assassination, add an indelible emotional dimension to the essays. These poignant accounts elevate the book from a mere academic endeavour, transforming it into a living, breathing bridge that connects the revered past with the present day, allowing readers to forge a genuine, visceral connection to Gandhi's enduring legacy.

Hence, the book titled Contemplating Gandhi is not merely a collection of essays' rather, it is a profound philosophical exploration and a heartfelt, reverent homage to the life and enduring legacy of the Mahatma. Through the insightful of Chandrashekhar writings Dharmadhikari, enriched by the meticulous and evocative translation of Ramchandra Pradhan, this volume inspires readers to view Gandhi's teachings not as relics of the past, but as a living, dynamic philosophy that continues to

guide and shape the present-day world. This book is a necessary read for scholars, students, and anyone deeply interested in Gandhian thought and principles. It challenges readers to think critically, to embrace the fluid and evolving interpretations of Gandhi's ideas, and to strive to embody his timeless values and principles in their own lives. Through this reflective work, Dharmadhikari and Pradhan remind us that the true relevance of Gandhi's legacy lies not in the provision of ready-made solutions, but in the offering of a transformative framework for ethical, purposeful and meaningful living in an ever-changing, dynamic global landscape. A book that deserves serious reading.

— Shaleen Kumar Singh (shaleensingh.in) teaches English at Swami Shukdevanad College, Shahjahanpur, India, edits creativesaplings.in an online journal



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

PTI MELBOURNE

ga Swiatek rushed through the first set in 26 minutes and completed her 6-0, 6-2 second-round win over Rebecca Sramkova in an hour at the Australian Open.

The five-time Grand Slam champion makes a habit of advancing quickly through the early rounds at the majors. She's won almost 12 per cent of her sets in Grand Slams by 6-0, which puts her in exclusive company.

when No. 49-ranked Sramkova ended a seven-game

"It was good to play in such an

Second-seeded Swiatek next faces

losing run by holding serve on Thursday, she raised her arm to acknowledge the applause from the Rod Laver Arena crowd. It was one of the few chances she had to celebrate.

efficient way and just finish it quick," Swiatek said. "Also, you know, just feel the court and how it is in RLA.

2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu, who recovered from

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

half.

PTI BARCELONA

 $B^{\text{arcelona followed up its}}_{\text{rout of Real Madrid in the}}$ Spanish Super Cup final with a comfortable 5-1 victory over Real Betis in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey. Gavi and Jules Koundé scored

a goal each in the first halfhour and Raphinha, Ferran Torres and Lamine Yamal added to the lead in the second half to give the Catalan club the win and a spot in the quarterfinals.

It was the fourth straight victory in 2025 for Barcelona, which on Sunday defeated Madrid 5-2 in Saudi Arabia to WINNING

win the Spanish Super Cup. "We wanted to keep the momentum from the Super without many regular starters, Cup here at home in front of routed second-division club Elche 4-0 to extend its record Barce "We Pau Cubarsí said. continue like this and keep the foot on the throttle. The (Christmas) break did well for us, we were able to refresh." Barcelona had lost its last two games in 2024 before going on a winning streak against Barbastro in the Copa del Rey and Athletic Bilbao and Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup. Playmaker Dani Olmo, registered in the last minute after a long battle between Barcelona, the Spanish league and Spain's federation because of a missed deadline by the club, helped set up Gavi's opening goal in the third minute at Montjuic stadium. Yamal gave the pass for Kounde's goal in the 27th. Koundé thought he had added to the lead in first-half

an early break in the second set to hold off Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 7-5.

Taylor Fritz hasn't wasted any time advancing to the third round, dropping just eight games across two rounds and spending just over three hours on court.

The 2024 U.S. Open runner-up and No. 4 seed beat Cristian Garin 6-2, 6-1, 6-0 to move into a third-round match against 38year-old Gael Monfils, who last week became the oldest player to win an ATP Tour title.

Also advancing on the men's side were local hope Alex de Minaur, seeded 8th, No. 16 Lorenzo Musetti, No. 19 Karen Khachanov and No. 21 Ben Shelton, who beat Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-4.

Raducanu has struggled with injuries since her breakthrough major in 2021, when she became the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam singles title.

She didn't play a warmup tournament ahead of this year's Australian Open because of a muscle strain and needed time



match against during her Anisimova to get treatment on her back from a trainer. After advancing beyond the

second round for the first time at Melbourne Park, the No. 61-ranked Raducanu was confident "It'll be a very good match for me, another opportunity to test my

challenge against Swiatek.

she'd recover in time for her next game," she said. "Going into it, I

have nothing to lose. I'm just

going to swing." Swiatek is moving on from the doping infringement which led to her one-month ban last year. And she's not showing any signs of it being a distraction.

She did everything at pace in the second round, including quick claps of her racket to acknowledge the crowd after her win. Swiatek didn't face a break point against Sramkova and converted five of the six she had. She finished off points with winners off both sides, and also hit some clean volleys on her

ventures to the net. She's feeling slightly less pressure this year, too, after losing the No. 1 ranking to two-time defending Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka.

"Yeah, there was a lot of pressure starting the year as No. 1, but I think overall last year I didn't think about it this much anyway, she said. "Also, I realized last year that I don't have 100% influence on what happens with my ranking sometimes. So now I just

focus on tennis.

Emma Navarro, a U.S. Open semifinalist last year and seeded in the top eight for the first time at a major, was in trouble after two service breaks early in the third set before she reeled off four straight games to beat Wang Xiyu

sports 12

6-3, 3-6, 6-4. She hopped from the baseline toward the net, and made a big, swirling swing of her arm to underline another tough, threeset victory.

"It was really tough the whole time ... Super tough there at the end," Navarro said. "Found some good tennis there in the last

games." She'll next play Ons Jabeur, a three-time Grand Slam runnerup, who struggled with asthma but held off Camila Osorio 7-5, 6-3.

Sixth-seeded Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion and runner-up in Australia two years ago, registered her 50th win in a Grand Slam main draw singles match when she beat American qualifier Iva Jovic 6-0, 6-3.

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

PTI RAJKOT

Smriti Mandhana believes India's back-to-back 3-0 series wins against the West Indies and Ireland have provided the perfect momentum for making it their "best year in onedayers" as the team gears up for the 50-over World Cup at

home. India will host the women's ODI World Cup later this year and the team, which has been able to rediscover its form with six consecutive ODI wins, should drive home

stoppage time but his effort was disallowed by video review because he was offside. the advantage now, says Mandhana.

"Two 3-0 sweeps are definitely really good in a Yamal also had one called back by the VAR because of World Cup year especially. We have to like keep going offside early in the second and have this for the best year Barcelona's third goal finally counted when Raphinha for one-days (dayers)," Mandhana said in a video

in the 58th. Torres scored the fourth from inside the area in the 67th, a few minutes after coming off the bench, and Yamal sealed it after a nice run in the 75th.

Vitor Roque scored Betis' lone goal by converting an 84th-minute penalty kick. ATLETICO KEEPS

found the net in a breakaway

women's hockey teams Atletico Madrid, playing will commence their international assignments this year with the high-profile FIH Pro League matches here from February 15 The Indian men's team will face Spain, while their women counterparts will take on England on February 15 at the Kalinga Stadium. Most of the Indian men's and women's team players are currently playing in the Hockey India League (HIL) in Rourkela and Ranchi respectively. The Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League will be after the Australia leg (February 04-09) in Sydney. Between February 15 and 25, the men's teams of India, Spain, England, Germany and Ireland will go head-to-head with all teams reaching the season by the end of the Bhubaneswar stage.



shared by BCCI. Mandhana (135) and Pratika Rawal (154) put on 233 for the first wicket for the third highest opening wicket partnership for India in ODIs, setting up their highest ever total of 435/5 and eventually for their biggest ever ODI win by 304 runs on Wednesday.

"I wanted to go out and bat with a lot of freedom. I said in the dugout before I went in about that you know, I'm going to try and play my shots because not many times you get an opportunity to do that," Mandhana said. Rawal, who notched up her

one six, admitted she slowed down nearing her century but gained pace of scoring once she was past the landmark. "As a batter I always wanted to score more runs and doing that for your country is actually a privilege and I am very happy," she said. "After (crossing) 70 (runs) I

was a bit conscious that there was a hundred (on the cards). I was taking singles and going slow but when I got the hundred, I was like, let's just go for it. The 50 runs after the hundred came a bit quicker. I was able to score the way I score," she said.

Talking about her 233-run opening stand with the senior batter, Rawal said, "It felt like that it was happening with the flow, we didn't think about it.

"We got to know stats now. actually," Mandhana added.

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

PTI MUNICH

eroy Sané answered critics Lby scoring two goals as Bayern Munich routed Hoffenheim 5-0 to restore its four-point lead in the Bundesliga.

Sané is subject to increased attention with his contract due to expire at the end of the season. Pundits including former Bayern great Lothar Matthaeus say he hasn't lived joining from Manchester City in 2020, making a contract extension unlikely. Matthaeus was speaking to broadcaster Sky before before kickoff.

current season by winning Sané wasted little time in the FIH Hockey Nations Cup responding with the opener China women will look to in the seventh minute when he fired a fierce shot inside the far post after Thomas moved a point behind the Müller laid the ball off. Sané's visitors. Benjamin Šeško gave Leipzig an early lead, but the home celebrations showed the criticism had perhaps taken its toll.

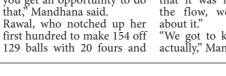
LEAGUE QUALIFICATION Fourth-place Leipzig finished with nine players after squandering a lead to lose (at Stuttgart, which

and substitute Serge Gnabry

scored minutes after going on for Kane. Sané went off to applause from the Bayern fans after Gnabry's goal. "In the end, you get praised if you give a good performance

and you might get a bit of flack if things don't go so well," Sané said. "I always try to help the team, to give a good performance. And I'm the first one who's unhappy when I don't give a good performance and can't help the team."

S T U T T G A R T PRESSURING LEIPZIG FOR CHAMPIONS



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

PTI BHUBANESWAR

The Indian men's and half-way point of their

winning streak to 15 matches. The club had never won more than 13 games in a row across all competitions before.

Alexander Sorloth scored from close range in the eighth and converted a 29th-minute kick. penalty Rodrigo Riquelme scored the third from long range in the 61st, and Julián Álvarez closed the

scoring in the 75th. Elche played a man down from the 50th after Nicolás Fernández was sent off with a second vellow card. **OTHER RESULTS** Alvaro Rodríguez scored two minutes into the match as Getafe won 1-0 at fourthdivision club Pontevedra. The visitors played a man

down from the 41st after a straight red card was shown to Rodríguez.



"Following the Australian leg, the league will move to Bhubaneswar, India, renowned for its passionate hockey fan base. It will be the same in the women's competition for India, Spain, England, Germany and Netherlands," FIH said in a release.

"With 24 matches over the 11 days, the action will be unceasing among the top ranked teams in the world, which will be a true showcase of the 'League of the Best."

The FIH Pro League action this year will begin in Australia. The Kookaburras, who won the title in the previous edition, will start off their defence against reigning Olympic champions Netherlands, and Spain. The Hockeyroos will also start their 2024/25 campaign

simultaneously, facing off against China and Spain. Both the Spanish teams will play their first matches of the season in the Sydney stage of the Pro League, with the

ontinue their strong start to the season after taking eight points from the opening four games of their season, played at home in Hangzhou.

women's team making their

first appearance since 2020 having qualified for the

in 2024.

Netherlands men. meanwhile, will be hoping to return to their best, after an uncharacteristic start slow saw them pick up no wins in their opening four games, totalling six points through three draws and a loss.

The FIH Pro League action will also simultaneously continue in Argentina as the Bhubaneswar stage goes on, with Santiago del Estero hosting the final stage from the first half of the season from February 19 to 24.

Locking horns in front of the large crowds will be Argentina, Belgium and Australia, in both the men's and women's competition.

'You always want to shake him, that he just does something and doesn't think too much. And today he did a lot and didn't think too much and he looked good," Müller said.

Raphaël Guerreiro was celebrating five minutes later as a long evening beckoned for Hoffenheim. Guerreiro played a one-two with Harry Kane before scoring his first Bundesliga goal of the season.

Kane made it 3-0 with a penalty in the 26th. It was his 16th goal of the season. Sané got his second after the break, set up by Mathys Tel,

team was irate that play had continued after an apparent foul by Ridle Baku on Deniz Undav in the buildup. Referee Sascha Stegemann booked Stuttgart assistant coach David Krecidlo for complaining. Undav set up winter signing Jacob Bruun Larsen to equalize in the 50th and Nick

Woltemade completed the comeback 10 minutes later when he poked home the rebound from an Undav effort. Šeško and Loïs Openda were sent off late as Leipzig slumped to its fifth defeat of the season. Both will miss the next match at Bochum on Saturday.

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

PTI LONDON

rsenal closed the gap on APremier League leader Liverpool to four points after a 2-1 victory over Tottenham. Mikel Arteta's team took advantage of Liverpool's draw with Nottingham Forest on Tuesday, with Leandro Trossard firing the winner in the north London derby at the Emirates Stadium. "Everybody knows you need

to win these games, the fans are buzzing and it's a great night for us," Trossard said. "It's an amazing feeling, especially to get the winner as well, it had to come and now we need to look forward." Arsenal was runner-up to Manchester City in the last two seasons and is in

contention for the title again this year. But it was given a fright by Spurs when Son Heung-min opened the scoring for the visitors in the 25th minute. A Dominic Solanke own goal

when trying to defend a corner leveled the game in the 40th and Trossard struck low from just inside the box four minutes later to put Arsenal ahead.

Liverpool still has a game in hand on second-place Arsenal but has dropped points by drawing its last two league matches and is on a run of just one win in four in all competitions. That was fourth-division against Accrington Stanley in the FA

Cup.

after the disappointment of being knocked out of the FA Cup by Manchester United on penalties and opened up a two-point lead over Forest in third.

"Less than 72 hours ago we played 120 minutes in another competition that we went out of — that is not easy psychologically. So the way we performed and played today was exceptional," Arteta said

Tottenham has won just one of its last nine games in the league.

'The losses hurt me but they aren't acceptable. We have had too many losses this year and too many games that have got away from us. That needs to stop," head coach Ange

Arsenal bounced back quickly Postecoglou said.



ISAK ON TARGET AGAIN Alexander Isak scored for the eighth straight league game to propel Newcastle into the top four.

The Sweden international

struck twice in a 3-0 victory over Wolverhampton to take his season total to 17 in all competitions. He became the fourth player to score in eight

consecutive games in the

Premier League, following Ruud van Nistelrooy, Jamie Vardy and Daniel Sturridge. Vardy scored a league record 11-straight games.

"Like most strikers, Isak wants to practice his finishing. It is an art form. He is there after training every day trying to do more," Newcastle manager Eddie Howe said.

Isak's form has pushed Newcastle into Champions League contention. He's scored 12 in his last 10 games in all competitions and Newcastle is on a nine-match

winning streak. Isak opened the scoring in the 34th against relegationthreatened Wolverhampton at St James' Park. He got his second in the 57th and

the bottom three. Anthony maintained his own scoring form with his fourth Moyes' immediate priority is find goal in successive games. to Howe's team is now one point ahead of fifth-place Chelsea. somewhere. Everton has failed to score in nine of its last 11 league games. LEICESTER SLUMPING

UNHAPPY HÔMECOMING FOR MOYES David Moyes' return to

The hiring of Ruud van Nistelrooy hasn't paid off for Everton didn't get off to the start he wanted after a 1-0 loss Leicester yet. A 2-0 loss at home to Crystal to Aston Villa.

In his second spell at the Merseyside club, Moyes took charge of his 519th game as Everton manager and was welcomed by the Goodison Park crowd. But he couldn't inspire his

relegation-threatened team to victory as Ollie Watkins' goal six minutes into the second half sealed Villa's win.

Everton is 16th in the standings and a point above champion second from bottom of the standings and without a league win since Van Nistelrooy's first game in charge at the start of December. It's now six straight defeats in

Palace leaves the 2016

goals from

Stadium.

the league, with Jean-Philippe Mateta and Marc Guehi scoring for Palace in the second half at the King Power

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