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MONEY 10
INDIA'S FISCAL CONDITIONS TO
CONSTRAIN CREDIT STRENGTH
IN 2025: MOODY'S RATINGS

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: DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA

Bhagwat sparks Cong, BJP row Meta apologises over Zuckerberg comment

fresh round of war of words began between the BJP and Congress as the Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat saying that his remark that India got "true independence" after the Ram temple consecration amounts to treason and is an insult to every Indian.

Rahul said his party was fighting the "BJP, RSS and the Indian state itself", triggering a row with the ruling BJP alleging that everything the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha does or says is in the direction of breaking India and dividing the society.
Rahul's criticism of RSS as well

as BJP drew a sharp response from the BJP president JP Nadda and his cabinet colleagues including Nirmala Sitharaman who asked what for the Congress and Rahul Gandhi carry a copy of the Constitution when the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha is using such a language. Nadda alleged that it is not a secret that Rahul Gandhi and his ecosystem have close links with urban Naxals and the deep state who want to "defame, demean and demean and discredit" India.

"Mohan Bhagwat has the audacity to say to the country what he thinks about the independence movement and the Constitution. What he said yesterday is treason... Because he is stating that the Constitution is invalid and the fight against the British was invalid," Rahul said speaking at the inauguration of the new Congress headquarters in the national Capital.

"He (Bhagwat) has the



audacity to say this publicly. In keep shouting," he said.

Rahul said every party worker is fighting this battle of ideologies under difficult circumstances where institutions have been captured by the BJP and the RSS and investigative agencies are being used against opposition leaders.

president Mallikarjun Kharge also condemned Bhagwat's remarks and warned that "it would become difficult for him to move around in the country if he continues to make such statements". The leader of

"It is the duty of the EC to transparency in ensure elections. If there is an increase of one crore in (the number of) voters in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha in Maharashtra, it is the duty and sacred responsibility of the EC to show us exactly why this has happened. There is a serious problem with our election

Nadda who is also Union Health Minister in Narendra Modi cabinet said Congress' ugly truth now stands exposed by their own leader. Everything he has done or said has been in the direction of breaking India and dividing our society,

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A midst the raging controversy over comments by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the social media giant on Wednesday tendered apology. Meta India vice president Shivnath Thukral apologised for Zuckerberg's

remarks and said it was an 'inadvertent error".

BJP leader Nishikant Dubey said he treated the matter of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's remarks on Indian elections as "closed" after the official of the social networking platform tendered the apology. Zuckerberg, in a podcast, had claimed that the incumbent government in India lost power

in the 2024 elections due to its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had debunked Zuckerberg's remarks misinformation, and made it clear that Meta must uphold facts and credibility.

"A Meta India official has finally apologised for the mistake. This is a victory of the common citizens of India," Dubey, who chairs the Parliamentary Committee on Information

Technology, said in a social media post. Dubey had on Tuesday said that the panel will summon the firm following its chairman's comments that India's ruling dispensation lost the Lok Sabha election last year.

On Wednesday, Dubey said people elected Narendra Modi as prime minister for the third consecutive term which was a

testimony to his strong leadership. "Now the responsibility of our committee ends on this issue. We treat this issue closed. However, we will continue to hold these social platforms to account in the future on other issues," Dubey added. Earlier, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had called out the remarks made by Zuckerberg on the Joe Rogan podcast.

Zuckerberg's claim that most incumbent governments, including India in 2024 elections, lost post-COVID is factually incorrect," Vaishnaw had said in a social media post.

"As the world's largest democracy, India conducted the 2024 elections with over 640 million voters. People of India reaffirmed their trust in NDA led by PM Narendra Modi's leadership," said Vaishnaw, who is Minister for Information and Broadcasting as well as IT.



Noida parking dispute ends in gun violence

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI/NOIDA

On late Monday night at Radha Sky Gardens, a residential complex in Greater Noida, a parking dispute took a violent turn, resulting in a resident opening fire. The altercation, which had been building for days, finally escalated when Gaurav Sisodia, a resident of the society, fired six shots from his licensed firearm.

Fortunately, none of the security guards, who were the targets of the gunfire, were injured, managing to escape the scene unharmed. The confrontation began when Sisodia, reportedly intoxicated, engaged in a heated verbal and physical altercation with the security personnel.

Tensions between Sisodia and the guards had been rising, with multiple reports indicating that minor disagreements had flared up into serious conflicts. The dispute finally reached its peak on Monday night when Sisodia, feeling provoked, brandished his gun and fired

Continued on page 8



of the new All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters 'Indira Bhawan', in New Delhi

any other country, he would be arrested and tried. That is a fact," Rahul Gandhi said at the inauguration of the Indira Gandhi Bhawan. "To say that India did not get independence in 1947 is an insult to every Indian. And it is time to stop listening to this nonsense that these people think they can parroting out and

Congress

opposition in the Lok Sabha also hit out at the Election Commission and alleged that there is a "serious problem" with the country's election

system," Rahul said.

Nadda alleged.

Sitharaman said the LoP, who was sworn in by taking oath on the Constitution, is now saying that grand old party is fighting the BIP, the RSS and the Indian State itself. Sharing a video clip of Rahul's remarks. BIP IT department head Amit Malviya said, "Rahul Gandhi has now declared an open war against the Indian State itself. This is straight out of George Soros's playbook."

The BJP president charged that the Congress has a history of encouraging all those forces who want a weak India. "Their greed for power meant compromising the nation's integrity and betraying the trust of the people," Nadda said, adding, people of India are wise, and they have decided they will always reject Rahul Gandhi and his rotten ideology. At a press conference, BIP

spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said Rahul Gandhi had taken oath to preserve the country's sovereignty and integrity but is now speaking fighting the

GRAP IV implemented WEATHER LUCKNOW

The Centre on Wednesday re-imposed Stage-IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) after air quality deteriorated. GRAP Stage IV curbs include a ban on all construction activities, the entry of non-essential polluting trucks into Delhi, and mandatory shifting of school classes, except for classes 10 and 12, to hybrid mode. Non-essential diesel trucks are prohibited from entering Delhi, while Delhi-



registered BS-IV and older diesel-run heavy goods vehicles are banned, except for essential services, exceptions for essential services and adapted vehicles for persons with disabilities under Stage IV.

Continued on page 8



MAX 19.3°C(-1.4)

MIN 11.5°C(-4.4)

India to take legal action against

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi during the commissioning ceremony of

three Indian Navy warships INS Surat, INS Nilgiri and INS Vaghsheer, at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai

Modi commissions three naval warships

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

Stressing the importance of enhancing and modernising India's military capabilities in the 21st century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on recognized as a reliable and Wednesday that "be it land, water, air, the deep sea or infinite space," India was safeguarding its interests well.

Speaking at a ceremony after

Speaking at a ceremony after

said that "India operates with a spirit of development, not speaking at a commissioning three expansionism, frontline naval combatants country had always supported an open, secure, and prosperous of Army Day, the Prime Minister said that as part of its continuous reforms in the defence and security of the defence sector, India had entire region as

established the Chief of Defence Staff and was commands to make the responsible partner globally, especially in the Global South," the Prime Minister inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific Region. He said that India considered the

responsibility. Modi said that when it came progressing towards the to the development of coastal implementation of theatre nations, India introduced the mantra of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region) and advanced with this vision. "During India's leadership during its G20 presidency, we promoted the mantra of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. We also implemented India's vision of 'One Earth, One Health' during the global fight COVID-19, against underscoring India's belief in treating the world as one family and its commitment to

inclusive development."

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Kejriwal files nomination, has ₹4.2 Crore in assets



AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal file his nomination for Delhi Assembly Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener, Arvind Kejriwal Wednesday filed nomination from the New Delhi constituency, declaring a family net worth of Rs 4.2 Crore. In 2020, Kejriwal had declared assets worth Rs 3.4 Crore, a marginal increase of Rs 1.3 Crore from 2015. Kejriwal's total assets were worth Rs 2.1 Crore in 2015. On the other hand, BIP candidate from the New Delhi seat and former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma has a total of Rs 77,89,34,554 in movable assets, including Rs 2.2 Crore in cash, while his wife, Swati Singh, has Rs 17,53,60,937 in movable assets, including jewelry worth more than Rs 45

According to Kejriwal's affidavit submitted to the Election Commission (EC), Kejriwal has a total of Rs 3,46,849 in movable assets, including Rs 50,000 in cash-in-hand. His wife, Sunita Kejriwal, has movable assets worth Rs 1,00,89,655, including Rs 42,000 in cash-inhand. His immovable assets are worth Rs 1.7 Crore. The affidavit also revealed that Kejriwal owns no house or car. According to the affidavit, Kejriwal's income for the financial year 2023-24 was Rs 7.21 Lakh. Sunita Kejriwal's total assets are worth Rs 2.5 Crore, with over Rs 1 Crore in movable assets, including 320 grams of gold worth Rs 25 Lakh and one kilogram of silver worth Rs 92,000, and Rs 1.5 Crore in immovable assets. Continued on page 8

Ex-RAW Officer over Pannum plot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

high-powered enquiry committee set up by Athe Government has recommended legal action against former RAW officer Vikash o was named by FBI for engaging persons, caught for attempt to murder Khalistani separatist and designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in New York in 2023. However the official statement did not name him. The statement issued by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said after a long enquiry, the committee has recommended legal action against "an individual, whose earlier criminal links and antecedents also came to notice during the enquiry".

The probe was ordered after the US alleged there was an attempt to kill Khalistani separatist Pannun by Indian agents in New York in 2023. US already arrested Nikhil Gupta and facing charges for attempts to murder Pannun, who has dual citizenship of America and Canada. Pannun's outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) is banned

The MHA said on receipt of information provided by US authorities regarding activities of some organised criminal groups, terrorist organisations, drug peddlers, etc., who undermined the security interests of both India and the US, a high-powered enquiry committee was set up by the government of India in November 2023. The committee conducted its own investigations, and also pursued leads provided by the US side and it received full cooperation from US authorities and the two sides also exchanged visits. It further examined a number of officials from

different agencies and also scrutinised relevant documents in this connection. "After a long enquiry, the Committee has submitted its



legal action against an individual, whose earlier criminal links and antecedents also came to notice during the enquiry," the statement said. The committee has recommended that the legal action must be completed expeditiously.

The Committee has further recommended functional improvements in systems and procedures as also initiation of steps that could strengthen India's response capability, ensure systematic controls and coordinated action in dealing with matters like this," the statement said. While announcing the constitution of the high-powered committee in November 2023, the External Affairs Ministry had said it will look into all relevant aspects of the matter (security concerns raised by the US).

Earlier, the US said it had stopped a plot to kill a Sikh separatist and warned India about concerns about New Delhi's involvement. The US said it was treating the plot with utmost seriousness and raised the issue with the Indian government "at the senior-most levels".

In December 2023, Yadav was arrested by Delhi Police in a case of kidnapping and extortion lodged against him. He is currently on bail in this case.

Continued on page 8

Helmet fuels power cut in UP pump

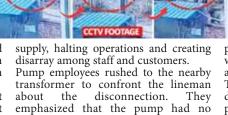
BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ HAPUR

A petrol pump in Hapur's Partapur Road faced an unusual disruption when a lineman, angered by the denial of fuel for not wearing a helmet, cut off the pump's power supply. The incident led to a 20minute shutdown, causing chaos and heated exchanges. The situation intensified after a video of the altercation went viral on social media.

In compliance with government directives, two-wheeler riders without helmets are not allowed to purchase fuel at petrol pumps. This rule was being enforced at the petrol pump on Partapur

According to Golu, a pump employee, the lineman from the local power station arrived at the pump to refuel his vehicle without a helmet.

Upon being informed about the rule, the lineman became irate and demanded fuel, which was denied. In retaliation, he reportedly cut off the pump's power



outstanding electricity dues, questioning the rationale behind the disruption. After heated discussions, the power supply was restored. The incident gained traction after a

video of the event went viral, sparking widespread criticism. Authorities are such cases.

power supply can be cut arbitrarily. We will investigate the matter thoroughly power to an industrial unit.

now facing scrutiny over the lineman's actions and the lack of accountability in Arvind Kushwaha, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), stated, "We have not

received any formal complaint about the disruption of supply at the petrol pump. If a complaint is filed, necessary action will be taken. The matter is currently not under official scrutiny." Superintending Engineer S.K. Agrawal added, "Such actions are unacceptable. No establishment's

and take appropriate action."

This is not the first time power supply disruptions have occurred without due process. In a previous instance, several officials, including a superintending engineer, were suspended for cutting off

The incident underscores the challenges in enforcing government directives and the potential abuse of authority by officials. With the viral video drawing attention, public pressure on authorities to act decisively has increased. Residents and pump operators now await swift and transparent action to prevent such incidents in the future.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI/RAJKOT

Indian women's cricket team on Wednesday scripted history by scoring highest ever total of 435 runs in the third and last one day international (ODI) match against Ireland in Rajkot. It was defeated by a whopping 304 runs and Indian team notched up its biggest ever ODI win and completed a three-nil clean sweep. Indian skipper Smriti Mandhana scored a century in just 70 balls thereby setting the stage for the massive total.

Incidentally, it was highest total by an Indian team men's or women's - in ODIs. India men's highest ODI total is 418/5 made against the West Indies in Indore in 2011. The result of the match was a mere formality once India set



Ireland a massive target of 80b, 12x4, 7x6) and her 436, and Ireland could only opening partner Pratika garner 131 before getting bundled out in 31.4 overs. India put the first step forward towards a crushing victory through record-breaking Mandhana (135, and there was no looking

opening partner Pratika Rawal (154, 129b, 20x4, 1x6), reaching 435/5. Mandhana and Rawal added a

whopping 233 runs for the

Then spinners Tanuja Kanwar (2/31) and Deepti Sharma (3/27) took over, sharing five wickets among them to decimate the Irish line-up, which was well short on experience.

Orla Prendergast (36) and Sarah Forbes (41) added 64 runs for a fluent third wicket stand that helped Ireland to recover from a shaky 24 for two to reach 88 without further damage. But once Prendergast was cleaned up by Kanwar, India were all over the tourists like a bad rash, claiming the remaining seven wickets for just 33 runs. It also helped India eclipse

their previous largest margin of victory (by runs) - 249 registered against the same opposition in 2017 at Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Continued on page 8



development of the city, it was

necessary to further improve

the efficiency of the sewage

treatment plant. She instruct-

ed the officials to ensure prop-

er treatment of the sewage

coming to the plant and to pay

special attention to the quality

The team also inspected the

functioning of various equip-ment installed in the plant and

gave necessary instructions

regarding their maintenance.

The mayor also interacted with the employees working in the

plant and listened to their

problems. On this occasion, the

mayor said that it was the pri-

ority of the Jalkal Department

of the municipal corporation to

provide better facilities to the

city residents and also ensure

protection of the environment.

of the treated water.

Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta lays a wreath at Smritika War Memorial in Lucknow on Army Day

Provide better facilities to city residents: Mayor

Inspects Bharwara STP

PNS LUCKNOW

Mayor Sushma Khakharwal carried out a surprise inspection of Bharwara sewage treatment plant on Wednesday.This inspection is treatment an important step towards making the city's water and sewage system more robust. During the inspection, a special team of senior officials of the municipal corporation was present with the mayor. The team mainly included Additional Municipal Commissioner Lalit Kumar, Jalkal General Manager Kuldeep Singh and Jalkal Executive Engineer Vikas. Along with this, Project Director Rajesh Matpal, Project Manager of Suez India Ashwini Dogra with his team and executive engineer and junior engineer of Jal Nigam were also present.

The mayor closely inspected various parts of the sewage treatment plant. She made a detailed review of the plant's current functionality, available resources and future needs. During the inspection, she gave many important instructions to improve the functioning of the plant.

The mayor said that in view of the increasing population and

Bhuvnesh Singh takes charge as ADRM (Infra)

PNS LUCKNOW

 $B^{h\,u\,v\,n\,e\,s\,h}_{Singh\ has}$ taken over as Additional Divisional Railway



Manager (Infrastructure) in Northeastern Railway's Lucknow Division. Prior to this, he was working as senior divisional engineer (coordination) in Agra Division of North Central Railway. Bhuvnesh Singh received his BTech (Civil) degree from Govind Ballabh Pant University at Pantnagar and MTech (Geo Tech) degree from IIT, Delhi. Apart from this, he received his MBA degree from IGNOU and MBL degree from National Law University, Bangalore. He joined the Railways as an Indian Railway Engineering Service (IRES) officer in 2005 batch. His first appointment was as assistant divisional engineer (I) at North Central Railway in Mathura.

He has received training in high speed train operation in Japan under a technical course. Besides, he has a special interest in sports and travelling. He has deep experience in railway management and is popular among railway officers and employees.



NOTICE

I have changed my name from RESHMA PARVIN to RESHMA PARVEEN W/o NIHAL AHMAD R/o- 130/283-A Ajeet Ganj, TP Nagar, Kanpur. In future I would be known & recognise by this name only.

77th Army Day

The 77th Army Day was commemorated in Lucknow in a solemn wreath-laying ceremo-ny at Smritika War Memorial

homage to the fallen heroes on the occasion.

commemorated

rupees on interest. The accused took about Rs 8

on Wednesday. Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta, the Army Commander, Surya Command, laid a wreath at the War Memorial honouring the bravehearts who laid down their lives in service of the nation. Senior military personnel of Lucknow station also paid

On this day in 1949, Gen KM Cariappa (Later Field Marshal), who led Indian forces to victory in the 1947 war, took over the command of the Indian Army from General FRR Bucher, the last British commander-in-chief, and became the first commander-in-chief of the Indian Army of Independent India. Since then, January 15 is celebrated as Army woman leaves home A moneylender took to bullying tactics to realise more money from a woman to whom he had lent one lakh

lakh from the woman and then started demanding more to defame her in society and money as interest on the loan amount. When the woman protested, he threatened to defame her in society. Fed up with this, the woman left the house. The incident came to light after the woman was recovered. The police are investigating the matter.

According to the woman, identified as Richa Shukla, a resident of Vinay Nagar in Krishnanagar area, she met one Akash Sonkar about a year back and was introduced to him by Shivani Sharma, daughter of Bhairo Singh of the locality. During this time, Richa needed one lakh rupees due to family reasons. Akash Sonkar gave the money to her on interest.

It is alleged that in return,

Akash extorted jewellery worth Inspector Krishnanagar said about Rs 6 lakh, Rs 1.80 lakh in that it was a mutual matter between both the parties. cash and Rs 1 lakh as interest from Richa in about a year. The woman's missing report was registered and now a case Even after this, Akash continued to pressurise her for has also been registered on her money. When she victim refused to give more money, request. Akash allegedly started tortur-ing her mentally by threatening from both the parties, on the

the neighbourhood. Scared by his threats, Richa left the house with the intention of committing suicide and went to Prayagraj. She wrote all the details on a piece of paper and kept it at home. She also mentioned Akash's mobile number in the slip so that everyone could know about Akash's harassment.

After Richa left home, her husband and family searched for her a lot but could not find her anywhere. On this, a missing report was lodged in Krishnanagar police station. Meanwhile, the family continued the search and traced Richa in at Sangam in Prayagraj and took her to the police station. She told the entire incident to the police.

Forest dept trying to localise tiger in Rehmankhera buffalo calf but could not drag we require the weather to be

PNS LUCKNOW

cent villages.

The Forest Department is adopting the strategy of localising the tiger within the Central Institute of Subtropical

Horticulture so that it neither

moves towards the main city of

Lucknow nor towards the adja-

DFO (Awadh) Sitanshu Pandey

said that they wanted the tiger to move in a radius of 10 km in Rehmankhera. "The previ-

ous tiger operations in 2012

saw the tiger being caught in the month of April hence sun-

shine is required during the operations. We either tran-

quilise the tiger in the after-

noon or do it early morning

and in the evening but for that

PNS LUCKNOW

good," he said. Pandey said that on Wednesday the tiger came up to 500-metre distance from the bait which it had killed but could not be seen from the machans. "The doctors can at the maximum dart it from a distance of 50 metres from the machans," he added. The DFO said that the leopard operations were quicker but tiger operations took time as it was a very clever animal. "It will take time because we are expecting that it will make a mistake. Today it moved from behind the camera trap and not in front of it but then it might make a mistake tomorrow," he

Additionally he said that when

people spot the tiger they do not inform the Forest Department.

He said that they had technology at hand but were unable to see the live cameras because of the fog. "As far as the drone is concerned it works well in a sugarcane fields but here when the tiger sits under the dense canopy of a tree drone is ineffective in catching its image. Hence technology is also not working under the present conditions," he said. Chief Wild Life Warden

Anuradha Vemuri said that their current strategy was to keep the doctors in three shifts to closely monitor the bait kept below the machan.

She said that the tiger killed a

it so it made another kill. "Now it has eaten so much and it is lazy, so we expect it will not make another kill for the next two to three days. We are trying to tranquilise the tiger within the institute so that it does not prey outside and hence we are trying to famil-

sets of doctors and they have got some more trackers from Dudhwa. "We are carrying out a rostering of the doctors so that some people get rest," she added. She said that with the weather clearing they were putting men on machans from early morning and late evening because NTCA guidelines prohibit the tranquilizing of the animals after darkness sets in Harassed by moneylender, since it requires some time to get the animal into the cage once it has been tranquilized.
"Tracking the animal after it

has been tranquilized is a difficult job," she said. She said that both the Wildlife Trust of India and Wildlife SOS were supporting them. "The pit is also in place" she said.

iarise it with the baits in the

Public Notice
This is to inform the general public that Sri Pradeep Kumar Agnihotri is the owner of Plot No. 35, Part of Knasra No. 341, rase measuring 131 Sq. Mir., sibuated at Village- Makscoda Bad, Pargana & Terbsil- Kanpur Sadar & Distinct -Kanpur Nagar, IJP, through Sale deed dated 02.07.2022 regd. as doc. No. 6359 executed by Smt. Beens Katiyar in favour of Sni Pradeep Kumar Agnihotri in respect of Said Plot.
The above-said owner has missplaced the (1) Original Sale Deed dated 28.04.2014 regd. as doc. No. 2566 executed by Sni Ram Naresh Pali & Sri Dilseep Yadav in favour of Snit. Beens Katiyar in respect of Plot No. 35, Part of Khasra No. 341, area measuring 167-22 Sq. Mtr.. Application No. - 20250000034662, registered at Police Computer Centre, Technical Services HO, Lucknow on dated 15.01.2025 Anyone who finds the above-mentioned documents, kindly handover the same to the Manager of ART Housing Finance India Ltd, Branch- D-2/104, 1st Floor, Vilbruli Khand, Mantri Awas Road, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh - 226010
Sni Pradeep Kumar Agnihotri is in the process of mortgaging the said property with ART Housing Finance India Ltd. Any obiections or concerns reparating this same area," she said.
She said that they have three

Sri Pradeep Kumar Agnihotri is in the process of mortgaging the said properly with ART Housing Finance India Ltd. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 7 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 7-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property of the interests of our client. If anynone withers to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 7-days period by contacting Law Verifass: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. 4-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-3101683, e-mail: accounts@kvnorth.in

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE FOR SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENTS

Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of naturally Ventilated Poly-house and Cycling Equipment be submitted online latest by 30-01-2025 upto 4:00 p.m. Detailed information can be obtained from website www.eproc.punjab.gov.in. Any corrigendum/ addendum related to these e-tender will be uploaded, if required, on Punjab Govt. website: eproc.punjab.gov.in

Director of Research

NA/12/27499/2023/40790 Dated CHD :- 1/15/2025



will be taken.

Evidence has been sought

basis of which further action

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,
EASTERN CIRCLE-II, CHANDIKHOLE
Email ID: - seec2chandikhole@gmall.com
"e" Procurement Notice No. ACE, EC-II 05 of 2024-25 (On-line)

1.	Name of Work	:	Work list attached in the Technical Bid Document.
2.	Total No. of package	:	15 nos. individual package.
3.	Tender Cost of Packages varies from		Rs.206.19 Lakhs to Rs.787.60 Lakhs
4.	Cost of Bid Document	:	Rs.10,000/- (On-line Payment)
5	Bid Security varies from	:	Rs.2,06,200/- to Rs.7,87,600/-
6.	Class of Contractor	:	"A" Class & "Special" Class for SI. No.1&2 and "B" & "A" Class for SI.No.3 to SI.No.15 of Work list attached in the Bid Document
7.	Period of completion	:	12 (Twelve) Calendar months for packages SI. No.1&2 & 06 (Six) Calendar Months for packages for SI. No. 3 to 15

Procurement Officer	Availability of Tender	Date of Opening of		
	From	То	Technical Bid (Cover-I)	
Additional Chief Engineer, Eastern Circle-II, Chandikhole	16/01/2025 at 10 AM	30/01/2025 up to 5.00 PM	31/01/2025 at 11.30 AM	

seec2chandikhole@amail.com e-mail id 10. Further detailed conditions can be seen from the Govt, website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

11. Any corrigendum/add ve notice if any can be seen from the OIPR-32322/11/0010/2425



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspected the condition of the destitute staying in night shelters at Mill Colony and Laxman Mela Road distributed blankets and food to

Man tries to crush friend by jeep over money dispute

man tried to crush his Aman tried to crush his friend by running a jeep over him over a money related dispute, injuring him seriously. The police registered a case on Tuesday on the complaint of the victim.

As per reports, one Golu Gupta of Bachhrawan in Rae Bareli, had lent Rs 5.75 lakh to his friend Swapnil Soni sometime back. Even after a long time, Swapnil was not returning the money.

On Saturday, both friends came to Lucknow in Swapnil's Thar jeep and there was a heated argument between the two over money at Telibagh market. Following the argument, Swapnil told Golu get out of the jeep. Golu was walking towards Shani Mandir intersection when Swapnil hit him from behind with the Thar. In the accident, Golu suffered injuries on his legs and head. As Golu fell, Swapnil tried to crush

him under the jeep.
People present at the spot caught Swapnil, who was trying to escape. The injured Golu was admitted to Apex

dition remains critical. The police arrested Swapnil for breach of peace at Shani Mandir intersection in Telibagh.

Trauma Centre, where his con-

According to PGI police station in-charge Ravi Shankar Tripathi, on the day of the incident, Swapnil's Thar was seized and a challan was issued for disturbing the peace. Now a case has been registered against him on the complaint of the victim's mother and the matter is being investigated.

SUICIDE

A 22-year-old man ended his life at his house in Indira Nagar on Wednesday. A police spokesperson identified the man as Sanjeev Trivedi, son of Umesh Trivedi, of Hardoi.

Body exhumed

The Madeyganj police exhumed the body of the auto driver from the grave on Wednesday morning in the presence of family mem-bers. The body was then sent for post-mortem, which could not be conducted for some reasons. The deceased auto driver Rizwan, a resident of Mahanagar

Bhikampur, was shot dead on the night of December 30, 2024.

The Madeyganj police solved the murder case and arrested the accused Aftab, resident of Para, Krishnakant, of Rae Bareli

and Mohd Yasir, a resident of Hussainganj, on Sunday morning. When the links were connected, it was found that Aftab had conspired to kill his retired railway father of Madeyganj to call his girlfriend living in Delhi to Lucknow. Rizwan's son Fayan, expressing doubt on the post-mortem report, had given an appli-

cation for re-postmortem of the body.

On Wednesday morning, Madeyganj police dug the grave in the presence of family members after which the body was sent for re-postmortem. The post-mortem will be conducted on

According to police, when the deceased's brother Sanjay Kumar Trivedi woke up at about 9:30 in the morning, he

saw Sanjeev hanging from the ceiling in his room. The police sent the body for post-mortem.

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ीदा

Regional Office Kanpur Dehat Region: 118/330, Bank of Baroda 2nd Floor, Kaushalpuri, Gumti No. 5, Kanpur -208012

Possession Notice Branch : Jhinjhak, Kanpur Dehat Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13

4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules. property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount &

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and Out Standing Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date

Borrower: M/s Alok Medical & General Store, Address: Om Nagar, Ward No. 8, Jhinjhak, Kanpur Dehat, Proprietor: Shri Alok Kumar Awasthi S/o Shri Om Prakash Awasthi, R/o: Om Nagar, Ward No. 8 Jhinjhak,Tehsil Derapur, Kanpur Dehat, Guarantor: Shri Sandeep Kumar S/o Shri Arvind Kumar, R/o Kanchousi Road, Bhola Nagar, Jhinjhak, Tehsil Derapur, Kanpur Dehat. Demand Notice Date: 05-06-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 13.01.2025

Property: Land Situated at Plot/Arazi No. 492, Situated at Lauwa, Tehsil Sikandra, Kanpur Dehat in the name of Shri Alok Kumar Awasthi S/o Shri Om Prakash Awasthi, Area: 0.05040 Heacate/5040 Sq. Mtr., Bounded: North: Agri Land Motilal, South: Agri Land of of Sowaran Pal, East: Nali then Agri Land Chinta Mani, West: Agri Land Pratap Singh. Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 9,49,311.05 + Intt. +Others Charges Total Dues Amount as on Dated 05-01-2025: Rs. 10,53,984.71 + Intt. +Others Charges

Note: Possession Notice Dated 07-01-2025 is hereby stands withdrawn. Place : Kanpur Dehat **Authorised Officer**

	THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE ABLA 2003 FRANK NO. 017	
	SCO 153-155. SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 017: Notice Inviting Tender	www.verka.coc
Sr. No.	ders are hereby Invited for the purchase and supply of following items:- Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative
1.	For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Construction of Milk Bar Complex at Verka Patiala Dairy.	Ten Months
2.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy a) Pest Control Services. b) Hiring of: i. Insulated road milk tanker for lifting milk from BMC (Cap. 9 Ton). ii. Cars (Swift Dzire or Equivalent) for procurement & marketing section.	Annual/ 01 complete job 01 No. 02 No's
3.	For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy Engaging for labour contractor for outsourced job i.e. Ghee filling in different pack size, Milk/Lassi/ Dahi pouch/ matka/matki/cup filling, milk reception, can washing etc. city supply loading, packing material unloading, milk products loading and unloading.	21
4.	For Verka Ferozepur Dairy Supply of fresh cut firewood for boiler.	11,100 Quintals
5.	For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy a) Labour contract for different jobs in Prod., Engg., Mktg, Cleaning & Housekeeping of factory. b) Providing of security manpower as per required. c) Hiring of car (dzire) for marketing section (Sedan vehicle only) d) Supply, Installation and Commissioning of solar water heater at	Annual Annual 01 No. 25 No's (Cap.250
6.	different sites under Verka Gurdaspur Dairy. For Verka Jalandhar Dairy	LPD) & 16 No's (Cap.300 LPD)
0.	a) Outsourcing of all activities of city supply despatch dock. b) Labour contract for loading/unloading of milk products (SMP/WMP, Dairy whitener, White butter, Ghee, Pio etc.) and empty tins, cartons, jars etc.	Annual Annual
7.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana a) Vehicles i.e. 2.5 MT, 4.5MT, 9MT, 15MT, 20MT, 27MT and 32 MT for the transportation of UHT milk, milk products, beverages, juice and other Verka Ambient Products etc. from Verka Mega Dairy Bassi Pathana to other Verka Dairy units, Milkfed branches & depots (In the state of Punjab & upcountry level) and defence units. b) Loading/Unloading of Verka milk & mlik products corrugated boxes,	Annual
8.	SMP bags. For Cattle Feed Plant, Bhattian (Khanna)	A.2.2.24
9.	Disposal of Old Bardana (Jute Bag & P.P Bags) For Cattle Feed Plant, Ghania-Ke-Banger Fire Wood (Fresh cut)	12000 Qtls (1000 qtls per month approx)

e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.

2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only

Dy. General Manager (Purchase) NA/12/27503/2023/40794

Chilling water fails to freeze enthusiasm at Maha Kumbh

 $B_{
m tees}^{
m raving}$ the biting cold, devotees brimming with energy and enthusiasm converged at the Triveni Sangam to take a holy dip at the Maha Kumbh on Wednesday.

Chants of 'Har Har Mahadev', 'Iai Shri Ram' and 'Jai Ganga Maiyya' were heard as the devotees took a dip in the bone-chilling water.

"It was for the first time that I took a dip in Sangam. After taking the dip, I really felt refreshed," said Nibar Chaudhary, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Basti district. The 62-year-old was escorted by two persons, as he walked towards the Sangam area to take a dip.

Shivram Verma, who accompanied Chaudhary, said that his experience was good, adding the administration here has made proper arrangements for the devotees.

Lucknow resident Nancy, who came here for the first time. echoed similar sentiments. "My experience at the Maha Kumbh has been good so far,"

she said. Abhishek, a resident of neighbouring Fatehpur district, said the "overall experience was good" and added that he "did

not face any problems". Vijay Katheria, a resident of Kanpur, lauded the security arrangements made at the Maha Kumbh. "My experience was good. Proper safety arrangements were made for the devotees and adequate police force was maintained from the secu-

rity point of view," he said. Despite Wednesday being a non-major bathing day, the religious from across the country and abroad gathered here in large numbers to attend the Maha Kumbh Mela taking place in the vicinity of Sangam - the confluence of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. Kaushambi resident Mahesh Pasi, who took the holy dip along with his brother

bers, said that his family decided to come here after 'Makar Sankranti' due to the cold weath-

"Initially, the children in our family wanted to take a dip at the Sangam on 'Paush Purnima' and Makar Sankranti, but the elders suggested that staying there under the prevailing cold weather may result in children falling ill and the massive turnout of people will also result in family members getting separated from one another. So, it was decided that we will come a day after Makar Sankranti," he said. He added that this family would come here again if the weather condition improves on Basant Panchami. Mohit Kumar, a resident of Sitapur district, said that he had planned to come here with his sisters. But unfortunately two weeks

ago, my grandmother broke her leg. So, my sisters have postponed their plans for the time being. Hopefully, they will be able to take a dip either on Basant Panchami or on the day of 'Maghi Purnima'," said Kumar, who works in Lucknow. Gonda resident Sushil Kashyap, who came here with his family members late on Tuesday night, said that they had the "privilege of taking a dip during sunrise".

"However, we were not able to offer our 'pranaam' (salutation) to the Sun God in person as the sky was cloudy. But we did perform the puja as per the timing mentioned in the 'panchaang' (traditional Hindu calendar)," he added.

Earlier on Tuesday, the seers belonging to various akharas took the first 'Amrit Snan' at the Maha Kumbh on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

Around 3.5 crore devotees took a dip in the Triveni Sangam on Makar Sankranti.

Leading most of the akharas were ash-smeared Naga sadhus, who mesmerised the onlookers with their mastery of traditional weapons.



Devotees take a holy dip at Sangam during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj on Wednesday.

Commissioner Grade 2, Sushil

Kumar Singh, explained the use

of "Food Safety on Wheels" to

stop spoiled or unsafe food

from being given to pilgrims. These mobile labs test food and

drinks on the spot. Regular

checks are done at hotels,

dhabas, and small food stalls,

and food safety complaints are

dealt with quickly to ensure action is taken. Key points

about food safety measures:-

The fair area is divided into five

zones for easy monitoring,

food safety officers are in each

sector, chief officers oversee

every five sectors and a maxi-

mum of 14 sectors are closely

monitored in the Jhunsi area.

These steps show the govern-

ment's commitment to provid-

ing a safe and enjoyable expe-

The Brahmacharya Deeksha

Samaroh commenced at Shri

Shambhu Panch Agni Akhara,

the akhara of 'brahmacharis'.

located on the fair premises of

their applications to the

instructing them to ensure

prompt and satisfactory dis-

posal of the issues. Chief Minister Yogi assured

the attendees that the government was committed to resolving the problems of every individual in need. During the Janata Darshan, several individuals sought financial assistance from Chief Minister Yogi for medical treatment. Assuring them of the government's full support, he promptly forwarded their applications to the officials concerned, instructing them to expedite

the treatment estimation

process and submit it to the

government at the earliest. The chief minister directed

officials to address revenue and police matters with complete transparency and fairness, ensuring no injus-

tice is done. He also empha-

sised strict legal action

officials

concerned.

rience for all devotees.

SAMAROH KICKS OFF

BRAHMACHARYA

From skilfully wielding spears and swords to energetically playing the damru, their demonstrations were a vibrant celebration of age-old traditions, an official statement said. In addition to the male Naga sadhus, female Naga ascetics were also present in significant numbers. The present edition of the Kumbh is being held after 12 years, though seers claim the celestial permutations and combinations for the event are taking place after 144 years. making the occasion even more auspicious. The fair would continue till February 26.

FOOD SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE FOR DEVOTEES

The Uttar Pradesh govern-ment, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has made sure that millions of devotees attending the Mahakumbh receive clean and safe food. The fair is divided into five

zones and 25 sectors, with food safety officers in each sector regularly checking hygiene and safety standards.

All food safety operations are managed from a central office on Sankat Mochan Marg in

Maha Kumbh Prayagraj, on This office oversees food mon-Wednesday. itoring and supervises teams Brahmacharis of Chaturnaam across the fair. Assistant Food

live in this Akhara in line with the tradition of Adi Guru Shankaracharva.

Prakash, Swaroop, Chaitanya and Anand represent one Shankaracharya each in this akhara. All the four Vedas are studied in the khara, so that they can go to the society and propagate religion.

Mahamandaleshwar Sampurnanand Maharaj of Shri Shambhu Panch Agni Akhara informed that there were lakhs of brahmacharis in this akhara. "Whoever comes here to be initiated into the 'Brahmacharya' practice, has to first understand the traditions of the akhara and Sanatan Dharma. When the panchs of the akhara feel that he is mature enough to become a brahmachari, he is given Deeksha as a brahmachari," he stated. According to Sampurnanand Maharaj, a brahmachari is one who follows the religion and is capable of explaining and propagating the Sanatan Dharma to people. "Those who abandon family lives come here. Many brahmacharis were given

CM orders improved arrangements for Mauni Amavasya snan

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on directed Wednesday, improved arrangements for the expected 8-10 crore devotees at Sangam on Mauni Amavasya on January 29. Reviewing the turnout of over six crore devotees at the Maha Kumbh during Paush Purnima and Makar Sankranti festivals with senior officials at a highlevel meeting, the chief minister stressed the need for enhanced preparations for the upcoming event.
He instructed officials to coordinate with the

electric buses. toilet cleaning, barricading of ghats, and 24x7 electric-

and special trains, with

increased frequency to

accommodate the large

The chief minister high-

lighted the need to enhance

the mobile network in the

fair area and ensure the

number of devotees.

Railways to ensure timely operation of special Maha Kumbh trains, emphasising the need for continuous operation of both regular continuous operation of buses, shuttle buses and He also emphasised regular

ity and drinking water supply in all sectors. Many officials including chief secre-tary, additional chief secretary, director general of police, principal secretary (home and information), principal secretary (urban development), chairman (power corporation) and director (information) were present in the meeting.

deeksha here and they received social titles. Brahmacharis are appointed to the posts of sabhapati, general secretary, secretary, shrimahant, mahant, thanapati, kotwal, pujari as per their qualifications," he remarked further.

SANSKRITI KA AHAKUMBH **COMMENCES TODAY**

The ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela is set to witness a grand cultural extravaganza from January 16 to February 24. The event, aptly titled 'Sanskriti ka Mahakumbh' (Cultural Mahakumbh), will showcase the rich tapestry of Indian culture through a series of captivating performances by renowned artistes. The main stage, Ganga

Pandal, will host performances by renowned artistes from across the country, including a special presentation by Shankar Mahadevan

on the opening day.
Cultural programmes will also begin at the Yamuna and Saraswati pandals on Thursday, while the Triveni pandal will host a blend of cultural melodies starting January 21.

On Thursday, Bollywood singer Shankar Mahadevan will regale the audience at the Ganga Pandal, while students from Kashi's Sanskrit schools will offer their devotion through Mangalacharan at the Yamuna Pandal. The Saraswati Pandal will showcase the traditional art of

Nautanki, with Padma Shri Ramdayal Sharma and his 30member team presenting the story of Lord Krishna's friendship with Sudama.

The Ganga Pandal, with a capacity of 10,000 spectators, will be the main venue for this celebration of devotion and heritage. Located at Sector-1 in Parade Ground, it will be the hub for grand performances by India's eminent artistes. In addition, Triveni, Yamuna and Saraswati pandals, each with a capacity of 2,000, will host a variety of performances by renowned artistes from Uttar Pradesh and across the nation.

Main events on January 16 at Ganga Pandal: Classical/light and classical singing by Prof Ritwik Sanyal (Varanasi); Odissi dance by Bichtrananda Swain (Bhubaneswar); Sitar vadan by Kushal Das (Kolkata); bhajans/ by Shankar Mahadevan (Mumbai) and Ravi Shankar (Uttar Pradesh).

At Yamuna Pandal, children from Sanskrit Schools, Varanasi, will present mangalacharan (devotional offering); Sanya Patankar (Rajasthan) will render classical songs; Sahiram Pandev (Gonda) will present Alha singing (Traditional ballads); Sarita Mishra (Lucknow) will present folk songa; Ramprasad (Prayagraj) will present Birha singing (traditional folk songs); Piyusha Kailash Anuj (Delhi) will present bhajans; Arushi Mudgal (Delhi) will perform Odissi dance and Amarjeet (Sonbhadra) will present tribal folk dance.

At Saraswati Pandal, Saurabh Banodha (Sonbhadra will perform on bamboo musical instruments; Shweta Dubey (Varanasi) will render bhajan singing; Shruti Malviva (Lucknow) will render bhajans/folk singing; Padma Shri Ramdayal Sharma (Delhi) will present Krishna-Sudama nau-

SCAN HERE

CM: Ensure justice to all with prompt redressal of grievances



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the Janata Darshan in Gorakhpur on Wednesday

groundbreaking initiatives for Mission Vatsalya, fostering a

PNS GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday, directed officials at Janata Darshan to resolve public grievances promptly and ensure no one Gorakhpur tour, the chief Subsequently, he forwarded

children's protection, rehabili-

Through Mission Vatsalya,

efforts are being made to

ensure a secure and promising

future for children across Uttar

Pradesh, supported by 132

state institutions and spe-

cialised services. Psychosocial

counseling has also been intro-

tation and empowerment.

faces injustice.

Interacting with people who came to the Janata Darshan held in the auditorium of Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan at Gorakhnath temple on the second day of his

culture of adoption and pro-

minister assured them of swift and satisfactory resolution of their problems. He met approximately 150 individuals at the Janata Darshan, listening attentively to their concerns.

through proactive efforts by

against those found forcibly occupying the land of others. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath followed his customary routine at the Gorakhnath temple. He began the day with prayers, offering worship to Guru Gorakhnath and paying respects at the samadhi of

his guru, Brahmalin Mahant Avedvanath. Later, he visited the temple's cowshed and took care of the cows, feeding them jaggery, and affectionately patting several of Mission Vatsalya transforming lives

Bank of Baroda of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ीदा

Regional Office, Kanpur Dehat Region: 118/330, 2nd Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpuri, Kanpur-208 012 • Ph. : 8317087726 e-mail: recovery.kanpurdehat@bankofbaroda.co.in

Sale Notice For Immovable Property "APPENDIX-IV-A[See Proviso to rule 6(2) & 8 (6)] E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 6(2) & Rule 8 (6)

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of Bank of Baroda as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Secured assets/dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date and time. EMD and Bid increase are mentioned below. Branch: Aantiya Talab, Jhansi

Date of e-Auction: 06-02-2025 Last Date of EMD Submission: 05-02-2025 upto 4.00 PM							
SI. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower / Guarantor	Description of Immovable Property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of e-Auction	Reserve Price/EMD/ Bid increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive/ Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
1.	S/o Shri Girdhari, R/o: 1500, Nai Basti, In Front of Shankar Ji ka Temple, Aantiya Talab, Loha Mandi, Jhansi, Guarantor: Smt.	of Shri Kamta S/o Shri Girdhari. Bounded as per Sale Deed - North:	as on Dated 16-07-2024 +Intt. and other charges	06-02-2025 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm	₹8,41,000/- (RP) ₹84,100/- (EMD) ₹10,000/- (Bid increase Amount)		03-02-2025 to 04-02-2025 between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Gauri Shankar Kushwaha. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer / visit to the website link https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm and Online Auction Portal https://ebkray.in Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 9151027189

Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda Date: 09-01-2025

> Indiabulls Enterprises Limited (CIN: U71290HR2019PLC077579)

(5111.57125511125707							
Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2024							
(Rs. in Crores							
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Dec-24	Quarter ended 30-Sep-24	Quarter ended 31-Dec-23	9 months ended 31-Dec-24	9 months ended 31-Dec-23	Year ended 31-Mar-24	
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	
Total Income from operations	13.72	13.87	15.72	43.14	45.84	58.76	
Net (Loss)/Profit for the period (before Tax, minority interest and Share of							
Profit / (Loss) of associates, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(2.34)	(13.36)	(1.70)	(18.67)	(4.64)	(25.20)	
Net (Loss)/Profit for the period (before Tax, minority interest and Share of							
Profit / (Loss) of associates (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items))	(2.34)	(13.36)	(1.70)	(18.67)	(4.64)	(25.20)	
Net (Loss)/Profit for the period (after Tax, minority interest and Share of							
Profit / (Loss) of associates (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items))	(2.13)	(11.97)	(1.84)	(17.49)	(6.88)	(25.24)	
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the							
period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(2.14)	(311.94)	(1.84)	(317.47)	(6.41)	(25.33)	
Equity share capital	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet						206.07	
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each from continuing operations							
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.10)	(0.64)	(0.11)	(0.92)	(0.33)	(1.37)	
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.10)	(0.64)	(0.11)	(0.92)	(0.33)	(1.37)	
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each from discontinued operations							
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.00)	0.04	0.02	0.03	(0.02)	0.10	
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.00)	0.04	0.02	0.03	(0.02)	0.10	

1. The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 15 January 2025

2. Key standaione Financial Information: (Rs. in Crores)								
Particulars		Quarter ended 30-Sep-24	Quarter ended 31-Dec-23	9 months ended 31-Dec-24	9 months ended 31-Dec-23	Year ended 31-Mar-24		
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited		
Total Income	12.13	18.56	13.39	44.19	36.00	48.43	ı	
(Loss)/Profit before Tax	(0.21)	0.30	(4.39)	(5.08)	(15.12)	(33.00)		
Net Loss/Profit after Tax	(0.26)	1.03	(4.03)	(4.41)	(15.44)	(33.39)		

The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/nine months financial results filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/nine months Financial Results are available on the Company's website (https://www.indiabullsenterprises.com) and on the website of BSE (https://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (https://www.nseindia.com)

Registered Office: 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016

By order of the Board of Director



of children with counselling							
PNS LUCKNOW		equipping children to					
I Inder the leadership of	support. In the financial year 2024-25,	become self-reliant and confident contributors to soci-					
Adityanath, the Women and	128 children found new	a firm stance against child	homes. These profe				
	homes and brighter futures through adoption under						

the state level monitoring committee and district task viding children with the stability of a loving family. force. The sponsorship and foster New rules are being drafted care programmes have furto strengthen Child Marriage ther enhanced children's Act enforcement, secure daughters' futures, and lives, benefiting 10,659 children under the sponsorship spread societal awareness. scheme and 11 under foster Psychosocial counselors have care. These measures are been appointed in collabora-

Health lress chilemotionvernment fessionals en over-, set life goals and develop selfreliance. Under Mission Vatsalya, modern technology, skill development and employment-focused initiatives provide children with the tools they need to build successful futures, underscoring the government's unwavering commitment to their welfare.

Place : Gurugram

Sargam Kataria

the QR code



Security arrangements for devotees at Kashi Vishwanath Corridor reviewed

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) Dr S Channappa inspected various ghats on Wednesday and gave necessary instruc-tions to the police officers to ensure smooth traffic and crowd control devotees/visitors who come to bathe in Ganga river and visit Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham.

They gave instructions to the officers posted on duty while walking from Godowlia intersection

Dashaswamedh Ghat and also appealed to the people to cooperate and walk in queue. Later, they inspected Dashaswamedh, Maan Mandir, Tripur, Lalita and Manikarnika ghats. They also inspected Kashi Vishwanath



District Magistrate S Rajalingam and ACP Dr S Channappa inspecting the

tight security arrangements for the devotees there. The district magistrate instructed the officers posted at the ghats to ensure that no boat operator allows people to board the boat without life jackets. He said that all those who have been assigned duty there should discharge their duties sincerely and ensure smooth darshan to the devotees in Kashi Vishwanath Temple and facilitate Ganga

bath for people.
During the inspection, ADCP (Kashi Zone) T Saravanan and other officers and employees of the police department were also present. A large number of police force has been deployed by the administration at the Ganga ghats and surrounding areas. Besides, CCTV and drone cameras are being used to monitor the major intersections.

Power employees protest proposed privatisation

On the call of Vidyut Karamchari Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti, UP, the employees at the electricity sub-stations in the district tied black armbands on Wednesday and held a protest meeting at Hanuman Temple in Bhikaripur. In it the power employees and engineers expressed their anger against proposed privatisation. They will continue their protest throughout the week.

The office-bearers of the Sangharsh Samiti said in the meeting that privatisation of electricity will not be tolerated at all because the management repeatedly goes back on its promises after making agreements and are cheating the electricity workers as well as the general public. They



Power employees holding a protest meeting at Bhikharipur in Varanasi on Wednesday evening

informed that more than Nigam Limited (PuVVNL) ₹2,000 crore of consumers of the entire state are deposited crore deposited as security as security whereas and has assets of land, machin-

alone has more than ₹500 Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran ery, offices, lines etc of electric-

ity sub-stations worth lakhs of crores. Also, about ₹40,000 crore are due from the consumers which these private companies will collect like and fill their pockets.
They further said that the

Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited Corporation (UPPCL) management has been saying for the last two months that no privatisation is being done. "There is only a decision of private sector participation for improvement, but it is clearly written in the RFP document that Dakshinchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam and Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam are to be privatised on the PPP model in which the private company will have majority equity and management control. This is clearly the complete privatisation of the power system of 42 districts", they added.

Cleanliness drive launched in Maha Kumbh area

Following Paush Purnima Snan and Makar Sankranti Amrit Snan, a cleanliness drive was started on Wednesday to clean the Maha Kumbh area. A cleanliness campaign is also being run for the makeshift toilets built in the Mela area. This time the Yogi government has resolved to establish Maha Kumbh as a clean Maha Kumbh. Special emphasis has been laid on cleanliness this time. In the last two days, more than five crore devotees have bathed in the Maha Kumbh, after which the Mela administration has decided to run a cleanliness campaign. ADM (Mela) Dayanand



Additional teams of sanitation workers have been deployed for this work. Special attention is being paid to the cleanliness of the toilets set up from the parking to the ghats. A large number of these toilets have been used in two days, after which, seeing the need to bring cleaned on a large scale. them into use again, the mela

instructions for appropriate action. The administration has appealed to the devotees not to spread dirt in the Mela area. and throw garbage at appropriate places and cooperate in maintaining cleanliness. This appeal is being made to the devotees continuously through the public address system installed at the ghats. YOUTH DIES: A 20-year-old youth died under mysterious circumstances in Nandaut village under Phulpur police station area. SHO Deendaval Upadhyay said a complaint has been received from the deceased's father and action will be initiated only after the autopsy report comes.

NER providing 24x7 medical facilities in observation rooms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The North Eastern Railway (NER) has made arrangements to provide special medical facilities 24x7 in observa-tion rooms at Prayagraj Rambagh and Jhusi railway stations for pilgrims during Maha Kumbh-2025. Railway personnel are continuously engaged in dedicated service to provide quick medical assistance to the pilgrims coming to Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj Rambagh and Jhusi railway stations of Varanasi division of NER. So far during the Maha Kumbh-2025 fair, about 300 devotees were given first aid

and medical assistance under the leadership of Additional Chief Medical Superintendent (ACMS), Varanasi Division (NER) Dr Niraj Kumar till Tuesday, while serious patients have been sent to local hospi-

According to Dr Kumar, observation rooms have been set up at major stations, including Prayagraj Rambagh and Jhusi, where doctors are providing first aid to sick pilgrims and railway employees on duty. "Serious patients are being facilitated to be transported to the nearest hospitals by the ambulances present there", he said, adding that the pharma-

cists deployed in observation rooms are distributing medicines to the patients and maintaining the medicine distribution rooms. They are also maintaining the equipment present there as well as providing medicines, dressing materials and medical consumables to the passengers as per the need. "The 24x7 medical services are available at railway stations during Maha Kumbh. Whenever a passenger is in need of medical assistance, they are being provided immediate first aid. Along with this, by coordinating with railway hospitals and health centres, serious patients are being

referred immediately if needed. ACMS said. Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Varanasi Division (NER) Ashok Kumar said that the aim of Indian Railways is to make the Maha Kumbh 2025 event safe, healthy and memorable. "The health facilities and arrangements made by the railways are providing the highest level of medical services to the devotees, making their journey safe, healthy and comfortable",he said, adding that the railway administration has paid attention to all aspects and all necessary arrangements have been made keeping in mind the needs of the passengers.

KDA to verify land for housing schemes again PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR ed from unauthorised posses- out. During earlier verification, thorised possession on it, action

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) will again carry out the verification of its land acquired for different housing schemes. There was unauthorised possession on 70 bighas of land in Sanigwa. During inspection by KDA secretary Abhay Pandey, the issue came to the fore and he ordered to get the land vacat-

sion. Similar incidents had also been reported in Barasirohi, Panki Gangagani, Maswanpur and Daheli Sujanpur during verification of land worth around ₹800 crore acquired there. On reverification of this land the role of officers and employees is likely to be exposed. Besides, land verification of developed housing schemes was also being carried over 1,200 plots with unauthorised possession had been identified so far. Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal, apart from launching the housing schemes, had also started the verification of KDA land. The work had been assigned to Secretary Abhay Pandey who said that the reverification will confirm the present status of the land. In the event of any unau-

will be initiated against the officers and employees. He said during recent verification of land in housing schemes, 26 plots were identified with unauthorised possession. He said in several plots under Panki housing scheme, people had secured unauthorised possession on the basis of fake documents. They will soon be identified and removed from there, he added.

AS team inspects health centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Offcer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) certification run by the Government of India, the NQAS team inspected the 10th health centre (Ayushman Arogya Mandir Maniyaripur) under the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Sewapuri here on Wednesday. Earlier, nine health centres of the district have received the NQAS certificate. The team praised the cleanliness of Maniyaripur health centre, vaccination, work of employees and facilities being provided to the patients.
Health Centre Superintendent

Dr Amit Singh said a two-member team from the Government of India, which included Dr Atindra Upadhyay and Dr Vikas Kumar, was taken on a tour of the entire centre. The team was informed about the services being provided at the centre such as pregnancy and childbirth care, newborn and infant health care, child health and adolescent health care, family planning, contraceptive services and other reproductive health care, management of communicable diseases, national health pro-



NQAS team at Ayushman Arogya Mandir Maniyaripur in Varanasi on Wednesday.

gramme, treatment of common diseases of outpatients and screening, referral and followup of non-communicable diseases and thereafter also informed about the work being done department-wise and the satisfaction forms filled by the patients. He said the NQAS team was also informed about the activities like Mata Baithak, Saas Beta Bahu Sammelan, women empowerment awareness etc. being conducted from time to time at the centre. The nodal officer of the programme Dr YB Pathak informed that medical and

health facilities are being continuously expanded and strengthened at the community level in the prime minister's parliamentary constituency Varanasi. Keeping in mind Arogya Param Dhanam, the reach of better health services is being increased in the community through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs being operated near home, he added.

Divisional Quality Assurance Consultant Dr Tanveer Siddiqui said nomination of medical units and health centres is done in three phases under internal, peer and exter-

nal evaluation. Through these phases, the health centre is evaluated on all points such as — health facilities, cleanliness, — nealth facilities, cleaniness, waste management, infection control, support and promotion of cleanliness, positive behaviour of staff with patients etc. During the visit Community Health Officer (CHO) Sandhya Maurya, BPM Anup Mishra, ANM Aradhana, ASHA Sanginis Sharmila and Asha Rajkumari, Manju Devi, Uma Patel, Meera, Sunita Mishra, Premlata Patel, Manraji Devi and Shubhavati Devi and other staff were present.

Yoga teacher chased by stray dogs; falls from scooty, dies

yoga teacher died after she A lost control over her scooty on being chased by stray dogs in Kakadeo police station area v night. She suffered serious head injuries after her helmet fell on the road and died. The incident took place around 8.30 pm. Hostellers present on the spot took her to a hospital where she was declared dead by the doctors.
On getting information about the incident her husband, Suresh Yadav, reached the hospital and burst into tears. According to a report received here, Annapurna Devi (56), wife of Suresh Yadav of Z-1 Block, Barra-1, was a yoga teacher. On Tuesday she had gone to teach yoga in Navin Nagar, Kakadeo. While returning home from there on the scooty, she was chased by stray dogs due to which she lost con-trol over her scooty and fell apart on the road. As the hook of the helmet was open, it also fell on the road causing her serious head injury. Some hostellers took her to a nearby hospital where she was declared dead by the doctors. Station

House Officer (SHO) Manoi Bhadauria reached the hospital and on the basis of documents found from her purse identified the deceased and informed her kin. Her husband. Suresh Yaday, said he is a native of Gauri Bazar, Deoria, and had a love marriage with Annapurna. Earlier, he lived in Gumti No.5 on rent and had recently shifted to Barra Z-1 block in the house of Chandrapal Singh Sachan from there. He is employed in a pil-low manufacturing unit of his brother-in-law Rakesh Chaturvedi. At the time of incident, he was in the unit. Around 9 pm a colleague Deepak of Khadepur took him to the hospital where his daughter Divya and son-in-law Supas were present. Divya informed him about the death of her mother in the road mishap. Outpost in charge Deepak

Tewari said as Annapurna had not locked her helmet it fell on the road causing serious head injuries and she died.

Meanwhile two people were killed in separate incidents of road mishap due to dense fog in Ghatampur police station

area. In the first incident which Wednesday on Bhognipur-Chaudagra road near Navedi village, a speeding unidentified brick kiln worker and escaped. The deceased was identified as Jhandu (38) of Sisolar, Hamirpur. His nephew Brijesh informed the police. SHO Ghatampur Dhananjay Pandey said some parts of the vehicle were recovered from the spot. Police and forensic team carried out a probe on the spot and sent the body for an autopsy. He said at the time of incident, there was dense fog and visibility being very low. On the basis of complaint, further action would be initiated in the matter. Meanwhile, in order to ascertain identity of the vehiexamined in nearby areas.

cle, CCTV footages were being In another incident, a bikeborne youth, hit by a speeding DCM near Benda village on Mughal Road under Ghatampur police area, also succumbed to his injury during treatment. According to reports, medical represents reports, medical representative Anil Yadav, son of Man Singh Yadav of Barra, Kanpur,

coming took place in the wee hours of Ghatampur on bike on Tuesday night. After he reached near Benda village, he was hit by the speeding DCM. Police sent vehicle fatally knocked down a him to Ghatampur community health centre (CHC) from where after the first aid, doctors referred him to Kanpur where he succumbed to his injury during treatment. Police sent

the body for autopsy. In yet another incident a youth was killed on being knocked down by a train near Sarsaul railway station under Maharajpur police station area on Wednesday morning. The incident took place when he was crossing the level crossing. He was identified as Karan Yadav (21), elder son of Mahendra Yadav. On seeing the body of Karan near the level crossing, villagers informed the kin and railway officers. Karan was preparing for competitive exams to get a government job. His father runs an electronic shop at the Sarsaul railway station. RPF officers rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. They said Karan was killed under mysterious circumstances. The body was sent for autopsy.

Prof Singh invited to attend reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan

Prof Siddharth Singh, Senior Professor in the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and presently, Vice-Chancellor, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara



University, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, has been invited by the President Draupadi Murmu to the 'At- Home' reception to be held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of the Republic Day on 26 January. Prof Singh expressed his

heartfelt gratitude to the President for extending this invitation to him. Vice-Chancellors, scholars and educationists of some selected universities of the country have been invited to this programme. All the teachers and staff of Banaras Hindu University and Nava Nalanda Mahavihara are feeling very proud. He also expressed his gratitude to the Indian Postal Service for sending the invitation letter personally through the special rep-

Five-day student-centric programme commences

The five-day student-centric programme in connection of National Youth Day began at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Wednesday by the Wellbeing Services Cell (WBSC), under the guidance of Dean of Students and Associate Dean of Students (Student Development). The aim of this event is to celebrate Swami Vivekananda's teaching and philosophy by engaging youth in activities that inspire creativity, foster unity and empower them through inspiring stories, learning and teamwork among students.

Earlier, a training session on 'Trauma Intervention through Psycho social- Physical Techniques' was organised for Psychology students by the Psychological Counsellors and SRK Fellows of WBSC BHU. The session aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of trau-

ma recovery through psychological, social and physical techniques fostering overall healing and resilience in individuals affected by trauma.

Dr Wael MF Abuhasan, Clinical Health Psychologist, Department of Health, Social and Educational Sciences, Arab American University of Palestine, talked about how trauma affects psychologically, biologically, neurologically and psychologically. Teaching and learning of the participants on Trauma Release Exercises (TRE) for a sustainable mental health, Wellness and Wellbeing. This session equipped participants to gain an understanding of how trauma affects all aspects of a person's life and learn practical tools to support recovery. As many as 44 psychology students actively participated in this training session. The students responded positively, giving excellent feedback on their experiences.

BLW conducts mock drill to test security system



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) tested its emergency security system through mock drill here on Wednesday. In this direction, a live fire was conducted in the workshop area. DMS of TOT Ward-37,41 and Ward-E-1-62 and SSE of New LFS immediately informed the RPF control room. Meanwhile, the

other workshop employees started extinguishing the fire with the help of fire extinguishers and fire hydrants. The BLW fire brigade and ambulance also reached the spot and the fire was soon brought under control. The said mock drill was conducted under the guidance of Chief Safety Officer (CSO) SB Patel and Deputy Chief Safety Officer KK Patel. On the occasion, the Safety

Department and workshop employees demonstrated skill and patience through mock drills to prevent losses due to fire by comprehensive quick response to emergencies. The employees of various shops, representatives of Railway Protection Force, volunteers of Civil Defence, St John's Ambulance Brigade etc participated in this mock drill.

A moment of pride for **SHUATS**

It was a moment of pride for SHUATS when Prof C John Wesley, Additional Registrar and Chairman, Athletics Committee SHUATS, representing the Prayagraj district lifted the Mens Doubles Masters Badminton Championship in 40+ category in the recently concluded Yonex Sunrise Uttar Pradesh State Masters Championship 2025 held at Agra from January 10 to January 12. Prof Wesley participated with the Arjun awardee and Olympian Abhinn Shyam Gupta in the tournament. SHUATS Vice-Chancellor while congratulating Dr C John Wesley for this achievement, said he is an inspiration for the stu-dents and the faculty. With this State Championship Wesley will be representing the Uttar Pradesh in the upcoming 46th Yonex Sunrise Indian Masters Badminton Championship 2025 scheduled to be held in Goa in March.



President Murmu, PM Modi extend wishes on 77th Army Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $P_{\text{and Prime Minister}}^{\text{resident Droupadi Murmu}}$ Narendra Modi on Wednesday greeted the Indian Army personnel, veterans and their families on the Army Day.

"The nation remembers with gratitude, the countless sacrifices you have made in service of the motherland," President Murmu said in a social media

The Army Day is observed on January 15 to commemorate the occasion when General K M Cariappa, who later became Field Marshal, took charge as the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, replacing his British predecessor in 1949.

greetings to the Indian Army personnel, veterans and their families. Your unwavering commitment to safeguarding sovereignty of the nation and ensuring national security is an inspiration for all," President Murmu said. She said the humanitarian

work done by the Army during crises and disasters is a testament to their kindness and compassion. "May your extraordinary val-

our and courage continue to inspire generations to come!," she added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his message lauded the Indian Army for its determination, professionalism and dedication, and underlined his government's commitment to "On Army Day, I extend my the welfare of armed forces and focused on modernisation.

In social media posts, he said, Today, on Army Day, we salute the unwavering courage of the Indian Army, which stands as the sentinel of our nation's security. We also remember the sacrifices made by the bravehearts who ensure the safety of crores of Indians every day." The Indian Army, he said, epitomises determination, professionalism and dedication. In addition to safeguarding our borders, it has made a mark in providing humanitarian help during natural disasters, he

He said, "Our government is committed to the welfare of the armed forces and their families. Over the years, we have introduced several reforms and



This will continue in the times to come.'

of Defence Chief Staff(CDS)General Anil Chauhan extended his greetings and best wishes to all ranks of the Indian Army on the occasion of the 77th Army Day. In his message, the CDS said, the day is a celebration of the unwavering dedication, courage, indomitable spirit and professionalism that define the Indian Army, an institution that continues to stand as the bedrock of India's security and

Genral Chauhan stated that the

its credible ability to adapt to challenges, uphold sovereignty and serve the nation selflessly. "The relentless efforts of the personnel of Indian Army in maintaining a high state of readiness, excelling in operational domains and ensuring safety and well-being of our citizens, under all circumstances are commendable," he underscored.

Highlighting the changing dynamics of warfare and the growing use of technology, CDS said modern warfare is evolving rapidly, driven by advancements in technology, and shifting geo-political dynamics.

Conflicts are increasingly expanding into new domains, including Cyber, Space and Cognitive arenas. He further said, "New age technologies and concepts such as Automation powered by Artificial Intelligence and Data Centric Architecture, Celerity Centric Warfare bolstered by Stealth and Hypersonic technologies, and Robotics driven by Autonomous Vehicles are transforming how future wars will be fought."

Stressing that no wars in the future would be fought like the last one, and the very raisond'état for any Army is to win wars, General hauhan said Indian Army will need to adapt and equip technologically and continually upgrade its Tactics, Techniques and Procedures to remain ahead of the advertechnical acumen with infusion Communications Technology is the need of the hour, he added.

The CDS concluded his message by paying homage and expressing his gratitude to the brave hearts, who made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives in the Line of

"As we mark this special day, every soldier must resolve to uphold the glorious traditions of the Army, while embracing the challenges of the future with determination and pride. May the Army continue to bring greater success and glory to our motherland and contribute indefatigably towards Nation Building," he said.

DG level border talks between India and Bangladesh expected to be held February 16 onwards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW

The twice postponed Director General (DG) level border talks between India and Bangladesh are now expected to be held here from February 16 with the issue of fencing and rise in infiltration attempts post the regime change in that country being a major subject

of discussion, official sources said Wednesday.

A delegation of the Border Guard Bangladesh is scheduled to hold discussions with their counterparts Border Security Force (BSF) between February 16 and 19 as part of the 55th edition of these bi-annual talks. This will be the first top-level discussion between the two forces post the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, 2024. The engagements of the two sides are being worked upon, sources said. The dates for these talks were twice post-

poned last year, they said. The issues related to objections raised by Bangladesh over the construction of "agreed upon" single-row fence at about 92 concern" over the "activities" of

identified patches covering about 95.8 km of the overall 4,096 km international border between the two neighbours is expected to be taken up during this meeting with "prominence", the sources said.

Obstruction to the work of fence construction on this border was underlined last week after India followed by Bangladesh summoned the High Commissioners of the either country in their nation-

Bangladesh expressed "deep

the BSF vis-a-vis fence erection and border killings when they Indian

Commissioner Pranay Verma

in Dhaka over the weekend. The next day, India made it clear to the acting Bangladeshi High Commissioner Nural Islam in Delhi that all laid down protocols were being followed while constructing the fence as it conveyed its expectation that "all earlier understandings will be implemented by Bangladesh and that there will be a cooperative approach to combating cross-border

The Indian side, during the border talks, is expected to put across the instances of spiked up infiltration attempts by Bangladeshi nationals across this front post August last year as these instances are linked to human trafficking and cross-

border smuggling.
According to the data, as many as 1,956 Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended by BSF troops between August and December last year. This five-month period accounted for more than 50 per cent of the interdictions of Bangladeshi nationals on this front as the entire year saw 3,474 such apprehensions.

During 2023, 4,342 Bangladeshi nationals were caught by the BSF along this front. The DGlevel border talks were held annually between 1975 and 1992 but made bi-annual in 1993 with either side alternatively travelling to the national capitals of New Delhi and Dhaka. The last edition was held in Dhaka in March when the Indian delegation travelled

BJP slams Sharad Pawar for his remarks on Shah

The BJP on Wednesday ■ slammed NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar for his "tadipaar" remark on Amit Shah and asked the veteran leader to stop spreading "wrong information" about the Union home minister.

This came a day after Pawar attacked Shah for his comments that the BJP's victory in the Maharashtra assembly polls ended "the politics of betrayal and treachery started by him (Pawar) in 1978".

Bemoaning the lack of communication among current political leaders, Pawar also asked the Union home minister to maintain the decorum of the post he holds.

In an apparent reference to Shah being externed in 2010 from Gujarat for two years in connection with the Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case, the NCP (SP) chief had told a press conference in Marathi in Mumbai, "This country has seen many excellent home ministers, but none of them was a 'tadipaar' from his own state (externed).' Shah was acquitted of all the



Hitting back at Pawar, BJP national general secretary Vinod Tawde said in a state ment, "NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar has called Amit Shah a 'tadipaar' home minister. Do you know why he was externed from the state?"

Shah was externed from Gujarat by a court in the state not because he committed "any robbery or theft", but in con-

fake encounter of Sohrabuddin Sheikh, who was a "Lashkar-e-

the state home minister (Amit Shah) should not live in the state if an impartial inquiry has to happen in the case. Later, he (Shah) was proved innocent in the case in the Supreme Court,"

He said Shah has called Pawar a "betrayer because he betrayed

Pradhan announces

third edition of KTS to be

held from February 15

"So, if someone makes a political comment, it should be accepted with sportsman's spirit instead of spreading wrong information," the BJP leader

Both Tawde and Shah described Pawar as a "betrayer" in an apparent reference to his walking out of the Vasantdada Patil-led govern-ment in 1978 with 40 MLAs and becoming the chief minister of Maharashtra.

"During your (Sharad Pawar) term, there were talks that people associated with (gang-ster) Dawood (Ibrahim) travelled in your helicopter. Dawood was running Mumbai when you were the chief minister," Tawde charged.

The BJP leader asked Pawar if he would have made "such remarks" against V D Savarkar if he had been appointed a minister in the Union govern-

"Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani were in jail (during the Emergency) and later they became prime minister and the home minister of the country, respectively. Will you say such things about them also?" he

Sonia Gandhi inaugurates Cong's new Kotla Road headquarters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ongress Parliamentary inaugurated the party's new the ribbon at the entry of the headquarters located at 9A, building. Wednesday, marking a key moment in the history of the grand old party which has operated from the 24, Akbar Road premises for the last 47 years. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and K C Venugopal, among other senior party leaders, were present on the occasion.

The event saw party leaders hoist the party flag at the new headquarters and the singing of Vande Matram and the national anthem.

Sonia Gandhi then inaugurated the building, asking Party chief Sonia Gandhi Kharge to join her in cutting

> AICC headquarters -- Indira Gandhi Bhawan - symbolises the Congress party's continuing mission to uphold the vision of its stalwarts, the party had earlier said. "It is time for us to move

> ahead with the times and embrace the new," AICC general secretary, organisation, Venugopal had said, The construction of Indira

Gandhi Bhawan was started during Sonia Gandhi's tenure as Congress chief.

"Situated at 9A, Kotla Road, New Delhi, the Indira Gandhi



Bhawan is designed to meet the evolving needs of the party and its leaders, featuring modern facilities to support administrative, organisational, and strategic activi-

"This iconic building reflects the Congress party's forwardlooking vision while paying homage to its extraordinary romantics agree that modern past, which has shaped the political and social fabric of Ìndia," he had said.

been its headquarters since 1978 after the Congress (I) was formed, and it will continue to house some of its cells. The construction of the new AICC headquarters was delayed by several years owing to "paucity of funds" ever since the Congress lost its government at the Centre.

The BJP has also not vacated its old party headquarters at 11, Ashoka Road, even after shifting to its new headquarters at Deendayal Upadhyay Marg.

Congress old-timers and

amenities and a larger area are the need of the hour but the emotional connect and Sources have said the party unfolding of history associatwill not vacate its present 24, ed with the 24, Akbar Road Akbar Road office, which has address will always stay strong. The Akbar Road bungalow once housed Sir Reginald Maxwell, who was a member of Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's executive council. It was also home to a teen Aung San Suu Kyi in 1961 when her mother was appointed ambassador to

> The Congress has been its mainstay though. More than just an office for the party, the premises set in expansive lawns was witness to the tenure of seven Congress presidents.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday announced the third edition of culturalexchange programme Kashi Tamil Sangamam will be held from February 15 to February 24. "The programme aims to celebrate, reaffirm and rediscover the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi -- two of the country's most important and ancient seats of learning. The 10-day initiative will begin from February 15," Pradhan said at a Press conference in the

national Capital.
The first month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam was held in 2022 to revive the living bonds between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu. The second edition was organised from December 17 to December 30 in 2023.

A total of 1,000 participants from Tamil Nadu, split in five groups of equal numbers, will be taking part in the event. They will be from different walks of life, including students, teachers, farmers, artisans, professionals and small entrepreneurs, besides women and researchers. Further, a batch of 200 Tamil students from all the central universities will also be part of this event and get to undertake local visits to Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya," said IIT-Madras Director V Kamakoti.

A highlight of the third edition is that the event will coincide with the Maha Kumbh Mela, which is being held from January 13 to February 26. The delegates will have the opportunity for "Shahi Snan" or a holy dip during the Maha Kumbh Mela and a visit to the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The main theme of this edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam will

highlight the significant contributions of Sage Agasthyar to the Siddha System of Medicine (Bharatiya Chikitsa), classical Tamil literature and the cultural unity of the country.

WEBSITE LAUNC

Pradhan encouraged people of Tamil Nadu to participate in Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 wholeheartedly. An exhibition on the different facets of Sage Agasthyar and his contributions to world of Health, Philosophy, Science, Linguistics, Literature, Polity, Culture, Art, particularly to Tamil and Tamil Nadu, etc. and Seminars, workshops, book release, etc. will be organised at Kashi during KTS

Kashi Tamil Sangamam is being organized by the Union Ministry of Education in collaboration with other ministries including Culture, Textiles, Railways, Tourism, Food Processing, I&B etc. and the Uttar Pradesh Government. The programme aims to provide

an opportunity for scholars, students, philosophers, traders, artisans, artists and people from other walks of life from the two regions to come together, share their knowledge, culture and best practices and learn from each other's experience. It also aims to make the youth aware and experience cultural oneness. The endeavour is in sync with NEP 2020's emphasis on integrating the wealth of Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge. IIT Madras and BHU are the two implementing agencies for the programme.

KTŠ 2.0 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Varanasi in December 2023, with the first-ever real-time, app-based translation of a part of the Prime Minister's speech in Tamil for the benefit of visiting Tamil delegates.

Election rules row: SC seeks Centre, EC reply on Ramesh's plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought responses from the Centre and the Election Commission on Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh's plea against the recent amendments, including no public access to CCTV, to the 1961 election rules. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar took note of the submissions of senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Ramesh, and issued notices on the plea. The bench said it would hear the plea in the week com-

mencing March 17. Singhvi said amendments to the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules were made "very cleverly" and barred any access to CCTV footage claiming it would reveal the identity of the voter. He said voting choices were never revealed and the CCTV footage couldn't reveal votes. Senior lawyers urged the bench to ask the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Centre to file their responses before the next date of hearing else they would



will file the responses," the CJI

The Congress leader filed the writ petition in December challenging the recent amendments to the 1961 rules and expressed "hope" that the apex court would help "restore the fast eroding" integrity of the electoral process. The Government has tweaked an election rule to prevent public inspection of certain electronic documents such as CCTV camera and webcasting footage besides video recordings of candidates to prevent their

come and say "reply is needed Ramesh said the ECI, a con-

stitutional body charged with the conduct of free and fair elections, couldn't be allowed to unilaterally, and without public consultation, amend such a vital law in such a brazen manner. "This is especially true when that amendment does away with public access to essential information that makes the electoral process more transparent and accountable," he said.

Based on ECI's recommendation, the Union Law Ministry in December amended Rule 93(2)(a) of the 1961 rules, to restrict the type of "papers" or documents open to public

NSUI holds protest march against Bhagwat's 'true independence' remark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress's student wing on Wednesday staged a protest march, demanding a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and action against its chief, Mohan Bhagwat.

Protesters of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), who plan to march to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's residence, said Bhagwat's recent remarks that India got true independence after the consecration of Ram mandir in 2024 was "antinational".

The march, led by NSUI national president Varun Choudhary, began from the organisation's headquarters in New Delhi. On Wednesday, Bhagwat said

the date Ram temple was inaugurated in Ayodhya should be celebrated as "Pratishtha Dwadashi" -- the "true independence" day of the country that faced "enemy attacks for several centuries". He was speaking at an event in Indore where he presented the 'National Devi Ahilya Award' to Champat Rai, general secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust -- which was tasked



management of the temple in

The Congress reacted sharply to Bhagwat's remarks, with party leader Rahul Gandhi saying it amounts to treason and is an insult to every Indian. Speaking at the inauguration of the new Congress headquarters in Delhi, Gandhi also said that the fight against the RSS and the

BJP was a "civilisational war". "Do not think that we are fighting a fair fight. There is no fairness in this. If you believe that we are fighting like BJP or RSS, you have not understood what is going on. The BJP and RSS have captured every single institution

in this country and we are now fighting the BJP, the RSS and the Indian state itself," he said. Gandhi's remarks triggered another row, with the BJP hitting out at the Congress leader for saying that he is "fighting the BJP, RSS and the Indian state".

BJP president JP Nadda alleged on X that it is not a secret that Gandhi and his ecosystem have close links with "urban naxals" and the "deep state" who want to "defame, demean and discredit" India.

"I 'compliment' Mr. Rahul Gandhi for saying clearly what the nation knows - that he is fighting the Indian www.dailypioneer.com

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Wildfires: A call for action

Los Angeles fires ravage city as President-elect Trump prepares for second term amid climate change controversy

s President-elect Donald Trump prepares to assume office for his second term, the United States faces devastation from the Los Angeles fires, which have claimed several lives and caused billions of dollars in damages. Trump has maintained that there is no such thing like climate change and has even withdrawn from Paris climate agreement. He has been fighting developing countries and even its own allies over climate change. The Los Angeles fires a direct consequence of climate change must come as an eye-opener to the president-elect. The city has become a focal point for devastating wildfires, which have grown in intensity and frequency over the past few decades. The wildfires of recent years, including the catastrophic ones in 2023, serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to address the underlying factors fueling these disasters and to build a more resilient future. Wildfires in Los Angeles and the broader Southern California region are driven by a confluence of factors: prolonged



droughts, climate change, urban sprawl into fire-prone areas, and an accumulation of dry vegetation. The Los Angels fires have destroyed several homes, displaced thousands of residents and led to several fatalities. The economic toll have reached billions of dollars, while the ecological damage will take decades

The increasing frequency and severity of wildfires are directly linked to climate change. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and shifting weather patterns create ideal conditions for fires to ignite and spread rapidly. These fires underscore the necessity of global and local actions to mitigate climate change, including

reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to renewable energy sources. One of the significant contributors to wildfire vulnerability is urban sprawl into wildland-urban interface areas. Accumulated dry vegetation acts as fuel for wildfires. The Los Angeles fires are a wake-up call for governments across the world. Addressing the wildfire crisis requires a multi-faceted approach that includes tackling climate change, revising urban development policies, investing in emergency preparedness and fostering community engagement. Los Angeles, like many other regions around the world, must learn to adapt to a man-made reality where wildfires are a persistent threat. By applying the lessons learned from past disasters, the city can build a safer, more resilient future for its residents and ecosystems. But for that to happen the decisions must be taken at the highest level and the world leaders must bury the hatchet and come to an agreement that something concrete needs to be done to mitigate the climate disaster. It is a universal problem affecting all of us so a unified action alone can curb this menace. The Los Angeles fires might prompt Donald Trump to consider the importance of taking action for the greater good, rather than focusing solely on appeasing his supporters.



A woman makes 'rangoli' during 'Pongal' festival celebrations, in Chikkamagaluru

Women breaking the glass ceiling



Women are all set to break the barriers at the highest level as the Vatican and Canada brace up for the top post for a lady

wo dramatic announcements were made last week that could significantly advance women's empowerment worldwide. The first was a historic decision from the Vatican, which saw Pope Francis appoint Sister Simona Brambilla as the prefect for the first time.

This 59-year-old Consolata Missionary, previously the second-in-command of the order department, has created history. Her position corrects the gender imbalance to a certain extent. Sister Brambilta's appointment is seen as a progressive step forward. This position, long considered a male domain, is now open to women for the first time. She will oversee all religious orders within the Catholic Church, a significant step forward since no woman has held this prestigious position before. Thus, the contribution by women to the Church is at last acknowledged and an essential precedent for further empowerment of women. Incidentally, a significant Vatican summit brought Catholic leaders worldwide not long ago.

It addressed the importance of enhancing women's leadership roles, among other issuesimportant representatives from over 100 countries, including Cardinals and Bishops. It also considered a proposal concerning women deacons. Again, Pope Francis granted the women in the Church the right to vote for the first time two years ago, in line with his commitment to advancing women within the Church in decision-making roles. It also promoted gender equality within the Church and women's participation at the highest levels. The Pope had also set up two Vatican Commissions on the potential ordination of women as deacons. The second dramatic announcement was the resignation of Canadian Prime Minister Justin erment in Canadian politics. Trudeau and, subsequently, the However, she withdrew from race to become Prime Minister. It the race on Sunday to return has all the potential to elect a woman Prime Minister. After a decade in power marked by both successes and challenges, Trudeau's resignation had been dramatic. Ten years ago Trudeau began with great promise but ended amid mounting difficulties



challenges such as inflation, housing issues, and immigration, which weakened the Liberal Party. After Trudeau's resignation, senior leaders in the Liberal Party, including Anita Anand, the current transport minister, were preparing to replace him. Anand, a senior party member, was born in rural Nova Scotia and moved to Ontario in 1985. She was first elected as the MP for Oakville in 2019 and has held various significant roles, including Minister of Public Services and Procurement, President of the Treasury Board, and Minister of National Defence. Anand missed the chance of making history as Canada's first female Prime Minister of colour and Indian descent. It would have potentially marked a significant shift in women's empowto her academic career, disappointing her supporters. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and Innovation Minister François-



IF CANADA ELECTS A WOMAN, IT WOULD CORRECT THE GENDER **IMBALANCE** DESPITE WOMEN HOLDING **ESSENTIAL PORTFOLIOS** LIKE DEFENCE

record 103 female MPs, including 22 elected in the 2021 federal election. Other frontrunners include

former central banker Mark Carney, whose recent resignation prompted Trudeau's exit. Candidates must declare their intent and pay a \$350,000 entry fee by January 23. So far, Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc and Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly have withdrawn from the race to focus on their duties, with Anita also recently bowing out. The challenges Trudeau 's successor will face, including repairing strained international relations and managing domestic policy issues, underscore the urgent need for a leader with a clear vision and strong leadership skills. Indians are interested in Canada because of the large

Indian diaspora. Recently, tensions between India and Canada have escalated after Prime Minister Trudeau accused India of involvement in the shooting of a Khalistani terrorist in Surrey in June 2023. In retaliation, India stopped issuing new visas to Canadians and asked Canada to reduce its diplomatic presence. In contrast to Trudeau, India hopes for a pro-

India Prime Minister. If Canada elects a woman, it would correct the gender imbalance despite women holding essential portfolios like Defence and Finance. The election of a woman as the next Prime Minister could mark a significant milestone in Canadian politics, furthering the cause of women's empowerment and challenging traditional gender roles in leadership.Trudeau's successor will inherit a lot of problems. There are tensions between the US and India. One of the critical tasks will be to repair strains in foreign policy issues. There is also a lot of backlog in the immigration. On the domestic side, Canada's Liberal Party faced internal problems, which led to Trudeau's exit. The election results will be available on March 8. In the meantime, the election landscape is becoming more transparent, as leaders like Anita Anand have already withdrawn from the race. It is also interesting to note that Vice President Kamala Harris won in the 2020 polls. The US has yet to elect a woman pres-

> (The writer is a popular columnist; views are

The timeless value of soft skills in the fast-paced world



In a world that often uses wealth and appearances as markers of success, the true essence of human interaction—soft skills—frequently takes a backseat

Te are often judged by factors that may not be relevant in the long run. Wealth, physical features, the name of the school or college we attended, flashy clothes, and many more, are the parameters used to measure our success. We forget that soft skills are equally, if not more, important. I waited patiently for my turn in the check-in queue at the airport during a recent visit to Mumbai. The young lady behind the counter handed the boarding pass to the passenger and guided her to walk some distance to get a wheelchair. The older lady cryptically

remarked that the wheelchair was expected to come to her instead of the other way around. The counter girl looked clueless. Later in the evening, I walked over to the express check-in counter at the hotel. I waited patiently as the gentleman bent down to retrieve something before completing my formalities. Another counter lady walked by looking at me. Since the man did not resurface even after a lapse of time, I looked at the gentleman behind the adjoining table, who offered

to assist me, explaining that the computer system at the other counter was not working. None from the crowd at the reception had bothered to assist me.

The private company I worked for won laurels year after year as the best employer. I wondered about the criteria for the evaluation, more so since I saw many of the executives quitting the company and dissatisfied with the working conditions.

The HR employees responsible for implementing all the right words in the rulebook failed to decipher the basic principles of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. All three companies are reputed names in the private sector.

the best business schools or the best in the hospitality

One would expect them to my innocence. understand soft skills, unlike those working in the government sector. I was witness to and on the receiving end of agency while working in a private company.

The officials barged into the office accompanied by uniformed policemen. Orders were rudely barked at me not to touch the telephone. My mobile phone was snatched from my hands. The officials remained in the

office for more than 24 hours during which I, and the other team members, were not allowed to contact our families. We were made to feel like criminals for no reason.I was recently stopped by a traffic policeman after I had crossed a legitimate green traffic signal.

was perplexed. Another policeman sauntered over to ask me the reasons for my arguing with the other official. He rudely reprimanded me when I showed my ignorance of the matter. The

They recruit people with the best credentials from apparently for crossing the apparently for crossing the red signal. Fortunately for me, there were cameras at the crossing, which proved

We face a similar lack of soft skills in our personal lives. Decades earlier, my wife and I were not given a table for a raid by an enforcement lunch at a famous restaurant in Delhi.

We were a newly wedded young couple and were probably not dressed the same way as their regular clientele. An attractive personality, a good education and a good job are enough for parents to settle marriages of daughters to strangers, not knowing if the young man will treat the girl well.

There are countless examples. I was taught to be a good human being. The children of today are more intelligent and smart. All that we need to do is to teach them to be a better person each succeeding day. Soft skills will follow.

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

BORDER FENCING DISPUTE

Philippe Champagne are

potential contenders to suc-

ceed Trudeau. Canada has a

Madam — Apropos to the article "India summons Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner." The escalation of tensions along the India-Bangladesh border is yet another reflection of the low point in bilateral ties between two neighbouring countries. Bangladesh's concern over India's efforts to fence the international boundary to stem smuggling and other transnational crimes is misplaced, especially since there have been several attempts by smugglers and traffickers from the Bangladeshi side to transgress the border.

But India is well within its rights to construct fencing in porous sections of the border to prevent transnational crimes in the wake of stray incidents of violence, including firing reported from along the border, especially in West Bengal. The key aim of fencing the India-Bangladesh border is cracking down on smuggling and streamlining the legitimate movement of goods and people. However, there are mechanisms in place to address these issues, and if necessary, these can be revisited to make them work more effectively. Meanwhile, it would be foolish to undo all the achievements of the past and create another point of dispute in a relationship that is already weighed down because of the new political dynamics in Dhaka. More than addressing the immediate irritants on the border, the two sides need to take further steps to arrest the slide in the overall relationship and prevent new areas of

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

CEASEFIRE IN SIGHT

Madam— An encouraging piece of news has emerged once again from Gaza. Hamas has recently agreed to release some of the Israeli citizens it has been holding hostage. Discussions between Hamas and Israeli officials had been ongoing for several days regarding this matter. On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a sudden attack

BCCI disallows spouse travel with team

he step taken by the BCCI to improve the performance of the Indian cricket team is both positive and visionary. After facing consecutive defeats, the BCCI has decided to prohibit players from taking their families along on foreign tours to ensure discipline and main-

on Israel, killing nearly 1,200 Israeli citizens and taking around 254 individuals hostage. The unexpected scale of the attack and the killing of innocent civilians shocked Israel deeply. In retaliation, Israel launched counterattacks. More than a year has passed, yet the conflict continues. Hamas is set to release 34 hostages, which include women, children, the elderly, and some ailing sol-

Efforts for a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages have been underway for a long time. Recently, Hamas released a video of an Israeli female soldier who is among those held hostage. The soldier, Liri Albag, was one of the Israeli citizens captured by Hamas on October 7, 2023. In the video, Liri blamed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the delay in the release of hostages. Hamas's decision to release some of the Israeli citizens held hostage offers a glimmer of hope in this war-torn situation. Indeed, it can be con-

sidered a new ray of hope. **Dattaprasad Shirodkar** | *Mumbai*

tain focus. This decision is a significant step toward enhancing the team's mental and phys-



THE ED

Spending time with family is important, but during tournaments, undivided attention on the game is essential. This decision will not only strengthen players' mindsets but also fortify team spirit. It will create a healthy competitive environment, motivating players to deliver their best. Additionally, spending more time with team management and coaching staff wil refine their strategies and skills. This decision, taken with players' long-term careers and national pride in mind, will instill professional discipline and inspire them to stay goal-ori-

R K Jain | Barwani

ented. In the long run, this will prove benefi-

cial for Indian cricket

INDIA ENGAGES WITH AFGHANISTAN Madam — India's ties with Afghanistan have been strong for a long time. However, over the last four years, the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan has slightly strained these relations. The recent meeting between India's foreign secretary and Afghanistan's acting foreign minister in Dubai might help strengthen the bond once again. It is essential for India to maintain close relations with Afghanistan, regardless of who is in power. Currently, both Afghanistan and the Taliban are at odds with Pakistan, especially after Pakistan's recent attack on the Afghanistan border, which has further strained their relations. Geopolitically, this situation benefits India, as Pakistan's focus on its border with Afghanistan reduces its capacity to infiltrate India with terrorists. Strengthening ties with the Taliban-led Afghanistan and extending support could help India reduce its security concerns.

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FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF **POSITIVE SELF-TALK**

It comes in handy when the pursuit of happiness is interrupted by challenges



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

Il of us have a deep desire to be in a state of happiness forever. But it's quite difficult to line someone who is use, someone who is use, someone happy always happy. Isn't it? The fact is that for most of us, the happy as disappointment. It has been But it's quite difficult to find someone who is truly blessed, to remain times are often broken by periodic sorrow or disappointment. It has been observed that a prerequisite for happiness is success in all our endeavours. Therefore, all of us go to great lengths to ensure that we succeed in everything we do. But unfortunately here too, things don't go the way

Throughout our lives, we put in the maximum possible efforts to succeed to prevent failure, but ironically, despite all our desire for success, we undermine our efforts by thinking negatively. It might be hard to believe, but the reality is that we pave the way for our success or failure through our thoughts. Yes! After all, every human action begins with a thought, which is followed by reflection, a decision and then action. So, if our thoughts and actions are completely in harmony, we attain success. However, if our minds are full of doubts or fear about the task we are performing, it undermines our chances of success. So how does one



train a thought to work in our favour? Is it possible? Yeah! It is. The only thing that we need to do is to make our thoughts as pure and positive as those of the Almighty Supreme who transforms this world from one of sorrow and misery to one of peace and happiness with just a seed of powerful thought. A simple way to begin this process of transformation is to use asseveration. An asseveration is a resolute statement that we make to ourselves.

All of us use it intentionally or unintentionally throughout our day. When we wake up with a positive thought like "I feel great", that is a positive asseveration. On the other day if we drag ourselves out of bed in the morning and whimper: "Ohh I feel drowsy ", that is a negative asseveration. We must understand that both these statements help us to maintain the emotional state that we are in. Majority of the people across the world do not give much importance to self-talk, i.e. the things that we say to ourselves. It is indeed a very important part of our lives because it deeply affects our conscious and subconscious minds. Remember! We listen to everything we say to ourselves consciously or subconsciously. Because our asseveration works so well to create and maintain our state of mind, we can use it cleverly to change our state of mind to our

best advantage. There is no doubt that it takes a lot of effort and time, but with persistence, asseverations can become a strong tool to make our outlook and life healthier and happier. We can either create or maintain a powerful state of mind with positive asseverations or use them to counter our negative self-talk. Let's say you are running for a half marathon. Despite all the preparations, you tend to lose rhythm and get into some snag.

All of a sudden your confidence sags and you catch yourself thinking "I can't do this. I shouldn't have registered for a half marathon, My capacity is too low, I am too weak as compared to others.." All this negative thinking, if allowed to persist, will guarantee that you fail. You can make up some positive asseverations to counter this thinking. Like, you might think, "I feel confident, I can do this, Slow and Steady wins the Race." If you repeat this several times, you will soon start feeling better & achieve your desired goal. While using this self-motivation technique of asseveration, we become more conscious of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and start feeling better about ourselves. The only thing that we need to remember is "Never to give up", because however slow the results may seem to be coming, these techniques give us greater control of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour, putting us in charge of our lives. (The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist;

The communication crossroads of 2025



With disinformation on the rise and the human connection often overshadowed by algorithms, the question looms: Are we fostering understanding, or fueling division?



n 2025, the world is navigating a labyrinth of communication complexities. From geopolitical tensions to the pervasive influence of technology, communication strategies are at the centre of global stability—or instability.

As the tools of interaction evolve, so too do the challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities they present. Are we prepared for what lies ahead, or are we hurtling toward a crisis of our own making? The challenges of communication in 2025 are markedly different from those a decade ago. Geopolitical dynamics have shifted, with nations leveraging digital platforms as both tools of diplomacy and instruments of disinformation. The lines between statecraft and cyber influence are blurred, creating a volatile ecosystem where words carry as much weight as weapons.
The rise of artificial intelligence and

algorithm-driven content has exacerbated these challenges. While these tools offer unprecedented efficiency, they also prioritize engagement metrics over truth. The result is an overabundance of sensationalist, clickbait content that often prioritises superficiality over substance. In this cacophony, nuanced perspectives and deeply researched narratives are drowned out, leaving the global audience vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation. The role of media as the "fourth estate" has never been more critical—or more scrutinized. In an era of hyper-connectivity, the media's ability to shape public perception and influence geopolitical outcomes is unparalleled. But with great power comes great responsibility. Shouldn't media foster positive and con-

Shouldn't it hold itself accountable for the narratives it propagates? Unfortunately, the race for clicks and views often overshadows these ideals. The prevalence of sensationalist headlines, shallow analysis, and polarised reporting erodes trust in media institutions. This calls for a renewed focus on media literacy—not just for consumers but for creators as well.



OVERHYPED NARRATIVES INFLATE MINOR **ISSUES INTO** CRISES, **OVERSTRETCHED** RESOURCES DILUTE THE CONTENT, AND **OVERIMAGINED**

SOLUTIONS PROMISE MORE THAN THEY CAN DELIVER. TOGETHER. **THESE TENDENCIES** CREATE A COMMUNICATION **ENVIRONMENT** RIFE WITH

MISTRUST AND

UNDERSTANDING

MIS-

Journalists, editors, and content creators must be sensitised to the communication technologies of communication technologies of communication technologies. creators must be sensitised to the implications of their work, while audiences must be equipped to critically evaluate the information they consume. In dissecting modern communication challenges, one troubling trend emerges: superficial solutions to complex problems. Whether it's a rushed headline, an oversimplified tweet, or a reductive policy announcement, brevity often comes at the cost of depth.

While the demand for digestible content is understandable, it risks trivialising critical issues and fos-tering a culture of intellectual complacency. To counter this, there is an urgent need for robust communication evaluation strategies. Independent evaluators should assess the quality, accuracy, and impact of information dis-QUALITY OF seminated by platforms, news outlets, and governments. This would not only enhance accountability but also restore faith in the integrity of communication. The phenomenon of the "3Os"—overhyped, overstretched, and overimagined—poses a significant threat to effective communication

Overhyped narratives inflate minor issues into crises, overstretched resources dilute the quality of content, and overimagined solutions promise more than they can deliver. Together, these tendencies create a communication environment rife with mistrust and misunderstanding. In geopolitics, this can have disastrous consequences. Overhyped tensions can escalate conflicts, overstretched diplomacy can falter under scrutiny, and overimagined strategies can fail to address the realities on the ground. To mitigate these risks, communication must be grounded in authenticity, clarity, and purpose.Despite these challenges,

offers opportunities for better synergy and collaboration. Tools like multilingual AI models, realtime translation software, and immersive virtual platforms can bridge cultural and linguistic divides, fostering a greater understanding of geopolitics. However, these tools must be wielded with care. Over-reliance on algorithms and automation can lead to a loss of human connection and empathy. The human element in communication—context, emotion, and nuance-remains irreplaceable. To ensure these tools are used effectively, their deployment must be guided by ethical frameworks and human oversight. When it comes to India, the nation stands as a dynamic force itage of diverse narratives and its growing role as a voice for the Global South, India's communication outreach is uniquely positioned to bridge cultural and ide-

ological divides. The country's influence has expanded far beyond its borders, particularly through its active participation in multilateral forums like the G20, BRICS, and the United Nations. India's emphasis on South-South cooperation and its role as a leader in digital innovation makes it a fertile ground for reshaping global

communication paradigms. By championing inclusive narratives and fostering dialogue on issues critical to the Global South—such as climate justice, sustainable development, equitable access to technology, and strengthening the education system-India leverages its communication landscape to promote solidarity and shared growth among developing nations. As a

for balancing tradition and innovation, providing hope for a more connected and empathetic world.Looking ahead, the most profound paradigm shift in communication lies in its potential to resolve, rather than exacerbate, conflicts. In a world marked by division, the ability to convey messages of reconciliation, empathy, and cooperation is invaluable. Governments, media, and technology companies must prioritise communication strategies that unite rather than divide. For instance, collaborative storytelling initiatives could bring together voices from conflicting regions to share common experiences. Platforms could amplify narratives of peacebuilding and in efficient geopolitics and com-resilience, while governments munication, blending tradition with innovation. With its rich herecy to foster mutual understanding. The communication landscape of 2025 is a double-edged sword. While challenges like misinformation, and superficiality loom large, the potential for positive transformation is equally significant.

To navigate this precarious moment, we must prioritize media literacy, accountability, and ethical use of technology. We must move away from shallow, divisive narratives and embrace depth, authenticity, and empathy. The question is not whether we have the tools to create meaningful change, it is whether we have the will to use them wisely. In an age of unprecedented connectivity, the power of communication lies not in the tools themselves but in how we choose to wield them. The future depends on our ability to communicate with clarity, conscience, and care.

(The writer is a former civil servant; Views are personal. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad)

California's wildfire tragedy: A wake-up call for India's forest fire management

The Los Angeles disaster underscores the growing wildfire risks in India due to climate change and human activity

or the past week, fire-fighters in Los Angeles have been locked in a desperate battle against devastating wildfires, which have claimed numerous lives and forced the evacuation of over 200,000 residents. Driven by powerful Santa Ana winds and prolonged drought conditions, these fires have scorched hundreds of square kilometers, wreaking havoc in densely populated areas like Pacific Palisades and Altadena.

This disaster has left homes, places of worship, and critical infrastructure in ruins, forcing many into shelters and leaving thousands without electricity. The financial toll of these fires is staggering, estimated between \$135 billion and \$150 billion, making this one of the most economically destructive intensify global climate change,



views are personal)

wildfires in US history. Beyond the immediate destruction, the long-term effects are profound: soil degradation, harm to water systems, loss of wildlife, and deteriorating air quality.

Moreover, the vast carbon emissions from these fires will further exacerbating the environmental crisis. This catastrophe serves as a stark warning for India. According to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, climate change will likely worsen drought conditions and elevate temperatures in forested areas of South Asia, including India, thereby increasing the risk of wildfires. To address these emerging challenges, India must overhaul its forest fire management strategies, drawing on lessons from global experiences like California's recent tragedy. India's forest cover is already under significant pressure from human activities and changing climatic conditions. The Forest Survey of India

(FSI) reveals that 36 per cent of Indian forests are classified

as highly, very highly, or

extremely vulnerable to fires. Regions such as the Northeast, Garhwal Himalayas, and Central India are particularly at risk. Alarmingly, over 90 per cent of forest fires in the country are attributed to human actions, ranging from negligence to deliberate acts. California's wildfire crisis underscores the urgent need to rethink existing forest fire management strategies to address the evolving challenges posed by changing geoclimatic and socio-economic conditions.

With its rich biodiversity and diverse forest ecosystems, India stands to gain valuable insights such disasters. Developing a comprehensive strategy that prioritises effective early warning systems, robust governance, institu-



tional collaboration, and increased investment in research and development is crucial to safeguarding India's

A national action plan aligned with international frameworks like the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction would significantly enhance India's

ability to manage forest fire risks. Understanding the dynamics of disasters is essential to mitigating these risks. Conducting vulnerability assessments at both mesoand micro-levels can help identify high-risk zones. Investment in research and development, in collaboration with national and international organisations, can advance technologies for fire detection, prediction, and suppression.

Enhancing governance in forest fire management is equally critical. Updated policy frameworks should integrate forest fire management into disaster management plans at both national and state levels. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and field

manuals must be revised and

streamlined to support effective detection, reporting, and management of forest fires. Establishing a dedicated National Institute of Forest Fire Management could strengthen training programmes for forest officials, community members, and other stakeholders, while fostering better coordination among forest departments, disaster management agencies, and local communities.

Building resilience is paramount. Leveraging advanced technologies like drones, artificial intelligence, and satellite monitoring systems can significantly improve early detection and suppression efforts. Creating a national Air Operation Wing to handle aerial firefighting operations would enable rapid responses

tiatives, such as training sessions and mock drills, would equip forest personnel and local communities with essential firefighting skills and SOPs. Collaboration with international research institutions to develop innovative solutions such as replacing non-native tree species with indigenous, fire-resistant varieties and creating eco-friendly fire suppression methods—can further strengthen forest resilience and sustainability. Establishing a national forest fire knowledge network would facilitate the sharing of best practices, research findings, and innovative approaches. (The writer is former executive director of the National Institute of Disaster Management; views are personal)

Former TMC minister Mullick gets bail in Bengal ration scam

A fter more than 13 months of incarceration, powerful Trinamool Congress leader and former Bengal Food and Civil Supplies Minister Mullick was arrested for his Jyotipriya Mullick was on alleged role as the State Food Wednesday granted bail in Minister in an alleged Rs the multi-crore ration scam. The former Food Minister, distribution system scam. He who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in February 2024, was granted bail by a special ED Court on two bail bonds of Rs 25,000 each and a personal bond of Rs 50 lakh, lawyers said, adding that he has also been directed to cooperate in the investigation process and appear before the

to do so. He has also been asked to surrender his passport and refrain from influencing the witnesses. alleged role as the State Food 10,000 public crore was arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act after more than 17-18 hours of questioning. He was serving as the Forest Minister at the time of his arrest.

Incidentally, Mullick's arrest was linked to the infamous Sandeshkhali incident that hit

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA investigating officer and the culminating in the arrest of Court whenever called upon another TMC leader and strongman, Sheikh Shahjahan, whose name also appeared in the ration scam. In January 2024, when the ED officials went to interrogate Shahjahan at his residence in Sandeshkhali, they were attacked and injured by a mob allegedly at the instance of the TMC leader. In a subsequent development, the women of Sandeshkhali hit the streets demanding his arrest. They accused him and his men of grabbing, mass molestation, and rape. Subsequently, he was arrested by the CBI.

Shahjahan was allegedly a close confidant of Mullick.

The other accused arrested in the case were Bakibur Rehman — a key accused and relatively less known businessman with massive fortunes, a former TMC municipal chairman Shankar Adhya of Bongaon town in North 24 Parganas bordering Bangladesh, and Biswajit Das. They were earlier granted

The TMC leadership maintained a studied silence on whether Mullick would be re-inducted into the Mamata Banerjee Cabinet or would be cast aside, similar to Madan Mitra, a former Transport Minister who too was jailed for his alleged involvement in the Sharada chit fund scam.

Modi meets MahaYuti MLAs in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI:

Prime Minister Narendra
Modi on Wednesday
exhorted the ruling BJP-led MahaYuti to emulate the example of Gujarat where the BJP controls the state from Gram Panchayat level to the State Assembly and Lok Sabha single-handedly, and gain full control of Maharashtra.

Addressing the newly elected MLAs of the ruling MahaYuti – comprising BJP, Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde) and NCP (Ajit Pawar) at a luncheon meeting organised at the INS Angre Auditorium here, Modi said: "In Gujarat, we the BJP have control from the local bodies to the State Assembly and Lok Sabha. You should take a cue from the Gujarat pattern and gain full control over Maharashtra".

Alluding to the manner which the Congress held onto power for years on end, Modi took a dig at the grand-old party by saying: "In the first five year, the Congress would announce that it would build roads. In the second five year plan, the Congress would show maps of the roads it was

building. And in the third five year plan, it would announce that work on road building has started. That's how the Congress managed to hold onto power in the country and states for years". Modi asked the newly elected MahaYuti MLAs to take active part in building the party organisation at the grass-root level. "Take time out to visit the party offices and meet the party office bearers at their constituency level," he told the legislators. Modi also advised the MLAs to also take care of their health while taking care of their constituencies. "I also advise you that while speaking to the media, be careful that you will land in controversies," he told the

meeting.
The Prime Minister also asked the MLAs of BJP, Shiv Sena (Shinde) and NCP (Ajit Pawar) to ensure that the schemes of the Centre and State government reached the people. Maĥarashtra chief minister

MLAs present at the joint

luncheon

three-party

Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP, deputy chief ministers

Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena (Shinde), Ajit Pawar of the NCP (AP) and state BIP office bearers were among those present at the joint luncheon meeting.

Wednesday's joint address by the Prime Minister came six weeks after the BJP-led MahaYuti returned to power in Maharashtra through a spectacular victory in the State Assembly polls -- in which the ruling front won 230 seats out of the total 288 seats, as against 46 seats secured by the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). It may be recalled that in the Assembly polls, the BJP walked away with 132 seats out of the total 288 seats, followed by its allies Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena with 57 seats and Aiit Pawar-led NCP with 41 seats. On the other hand, the MVA constituents --Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and NCP -- secured 20, 16, and 10 seats, respectively

The joint meeting comes days after BJP's state-level grand convention in Shirdi, which was addressed by Union Home Minister and BJP's strategist

Puja Khedkar granted interim relief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday protected from arrest till February 14 former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar, accused of cheating and wrongly availing OBC and disability quota benefits in the civil services examination. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma issued notice to the Delhi government and the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Khedkar's plea seeking

anticipatory bail. "Issue notice returnable on February 14, 2025. Till next date of hearing, no coercive steps to be taken against petitioner," directed the bench. During the hearing, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing Khedkar, argued the High strong Court made observations against her while dismissing her anticipatory bail plea.

Khedkar is accused of misrepresenting information in her application for the UPSC civil services examination, 2022, for availing reservation benefits.

SIT formed to investigate Rajouri deaths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Union Territory Minister Sakina Masood clarified that these deaths and Kashmir on Wednesday constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the mysterious deaths of 14 members belonging to three families in the Badhaal results.

area of Rajouri. The SIT was formed immediately after Health Minister Śakina Masood were not caused by any mysterious disease, as tests conducted both within and

outside the Union Territory

According to an official order, the SIT will be led by Superintendent of Police Budhal, (Operations), Wajahat Hussain.

The team includes the Deputy Superintendent of Police Kandi, Station House Officers of Police Station Kandi and Women's Police Station Rajouri, along with

officials and experts from forensic medicine, toxicology, microbiology, pediatrics, and pathology departments. Additionally, the SIT will (FSL) in Jammu.

seek expertise from professionals in food safety, agriculture, the Jal Shakti Department, and the Forensic Science Laboratory

DDA seeks help for water supply delays

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI not be completed yet. At some of Narela sub-city which have

written a letter to the chief secretary of Delhi requesting his intervention in resolving the long-pending water woes caused by the inaction of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) in the residential colonies of the department.

"I would like to draw your kind attention to the non-completion of various are certain water supply and sewerage schemes of DDA for schemes of DJB for which infrastructure charges have already been paid by DDA.

locations, the necessary water The Delhi Development connections have not been provided; as a result, water is provided; as a result, water is not being supplied by DJB to the various colonies developed by DDA. Consequently, the DDA has to supply water in those colonies through water tankers, causing an extra financial burden," the letter said.

It added, "In addition, there which infrastructure charges have already been paid, but the schemes are not approved till However, the schemes could date, including some schemes

been pending with DJB since 2013. As a result, DDA is unable to develop such areas." Even as the department has paid a hefty infrastructure charge of Rs 1,059 crore for 23 water supply and sewerage schemes, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has neither approved these schemes nor supplied water in areas like Dwarka, Rohini, Kalkaji, Vasant Kunj, Jasola, and Narela, among others, the DDA vice chairman Vijay Kumar Singh

said in his communication.

"It is kindly informed that the

total infrastructure charges

paid by DDA to DJB are to the tune of Rs 1,058.77 crores for 23 schemes of water supply and 11 schemes of sewerage. Details of the same are enclosed herewith for your ready reference as Annexure-

'A'," the letter said. Singh added, "In view of the above, may I request your kind intervention to give suitable directions to the concerned officers in resolving the above long-pending issues, including providing water connections for the supply of water to DDA colonies and also approving the pending schemes of DDA."

Noida parking dispute ends in gun violence

Ashutosh Srivastav, another resident of Radha Sky Gardens, shared his account of the trying to defuse the situation, intervened. A case has been incident, explaining that the disagreement between Sisodia and the guards had been ongoing for days. Srivastav, in a video message, described the altercation, "Late at night, a Sisodia, visibly agitated, retorts, "I am harassing poor people? You are misbehaving," resident opened fire, claiming and continues to provoke the self-defense. He fired six shots, but thankfully, no security guard was hurt."

Several videos of the incident, which have since gone viral on threatening them. At one social media, capture the moments leading up to the collar, while others attempt to investigation," Avasthy stated.

gunfire. In one video, Sisodia separate the two. He also said, can be seen arguing with a

responds calmly, saving, "Why should I slap you? You are harassing poor guards." guard. Another video shows a more intense exchange, with Sisodia accusing the guards of molesting women and

"I will shoot you." registered against Sisodia, and authorities are investigating the matter. Shakti Mohan Avasthy, Deputy Commissioner of Police Deputy (Central Noida), confirmed that Sisodia had fired shots during the altercation. "We have filed a case based on the security officer's complaint. The CCTV footage is being reviewed to determine the

India to take legal...

In the case related to the attempt to kill Pannun, Indian national Nikhil Gupta was arrested in Prague in 2023 and later extradited to the US from the Czech Republic. Gupta was arrested at the request of the US government on charges of being involved in a plot to kill Pannun. Canada had also claimed the presence of "credible" accusations connecting Indian operatives to the June killing of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar

Kejriwal files nomination, has ₹4.2 Crore in assets degree from the Fore School where he filed his nomination. Hundreds of Kejriwal's wife owns a house

in Gurugram and a small five-seater car, the affidavit said. The election affidavit also revealed that Sunita Kejriwal, wife of the AAP leader, has twice the annual income of Arvind Kejriwal. While Kejriwal declared his annual income at Rs 7.21 Lakh, Sunita has an annual income of Rs 14.10 Lakh. While Kejriwal has listed his profession

MLA/politician, his wife Sunita has declared her profession as a retired government servant and housewife.

Sunita has about Rs 20 Lakh in four different bank accounts and Rs 26,47,944 in her public provident fund (PPF) account. While Kejriwal's income comes from his MLA salary, his wife receives a pension for being a retired government official. Sunita also has 320 grams of gold worth Rs 25 Lakh and one kilogram of silver worth Rs 92,000. He is facing 14 cases, including the excise policy scam case, non-compliance of summons, and alleged defamation cases. Before filing his nomination

Kejriwal, papers, accompanied by his wife Sunita, offered prayers at the Hanuman and Valmiki temples. He then led a 'padyatra' from the AAP office to the New Delhi

AAP workers, carrying party flags, walked with the former chief minister for his nomination.

After filing his nomination, Kejriwal exuded confidence that the AAP would return to power in Delhi and urged people to vote based on work and not "abuses". "AAP will form the government with full majority," he said. "I want to request the people of Delhi to vote based on work and not abuses," he added.

Attacking the Bharativa Ianata Party (BJP), Kejriwal said the party has no vision, no chief ministerial face, and no narrative. "They are not telling what work they will do in the next five years. The people of Delhi cannot be bought with a pair of shoes; people are seeing what the BJP is doing," he said.

On reports about a threat to his life from a pro-Khalistani outfit, the AAP leader said defamation case pending God was with him. "Jako rakhe saiyan maar sake na koye (Those protected by God cannot be killed by anyone). God is with me. One lives as long as their lifeline. The day one's lifeline ends, God calls them," he told reporters after offering prayers at the Prachin Hanuman temple.

Verma, a former BJP MP and

of Management. He has declared movable assets worth Rs 77.89 Crore and immovable assets valued at Rs 12.19 Crore. His wife owns movable assets worth Rs 17.53 Crore and immovable assets worth Rs 6.91 Crore. Verma has listed business and social work as his primary sources of income, while his wife is involved in private service and social work.

Verma has shown a cash balance of Rs 2.2 Lakh. He owns three cars -- a Toyota Fortuner (Rs 9 Lakh), a Toyota Innova (Rs 36 Lakh), and an XUV (Rs 11.77 Lakh). In terms of precious metals, Verma owns 200 grams of gold worth Rs 8.25 Lakh, while his wife possesses 1.11 kg of gold valued at Rs 45.75 Lakh. Additionally, his two daughters own 300 grams of gold worth Rs 12.35 Lakh each, and his son holds 150 grams of gold valued at Rs 6.17 Lakh. Verma has a against him, filed by former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia concerning allegations of corruption in Delhi's schools, among other legal matters. According to his affidavit, loans/dues on Verma total Rs 62.60 Crore, which includes a personal loan from his brother Siddharth Sahib Singh amounting to Rs 22.59 Crore. His wife has loans and dues a prominent face in this election, holds an MBA amounting to almost Rs 11.45

agricultural land worth Rs 80,50,000, and his wife has one worth about Rs 4 Crore. He also has non-agricultural land, a commercial building, and residential buildings. Before filing his nomination, Verma first offered prayers at the historic Gauri Shankar Temple in Chandni Chowk and Valmiki Temple.

Meanwhile, Ramesh Bidhuri (61) has disclosed movable assets worth Rs 2.57 Crore and immovable assets worth Rs 12.3 Crore. His wife owns movable assets worth Rs 33.19 Lakh and immovable assets valued at Rs 4.73 Crore. Bidhuri, who holds an LLB degree from Uttar Pradesh, has listed business and rental income as his sources of earnings. He has declared a bank balance of Rs 30,000. The BJP candidate from the Kalkaji constituency owns four cars -- two Mahindra Scorpio cars valued at Rs 23.4 Lakh and Rs 16.9 Lakh, a Hvundai Creta worth Rs 18.11 Lakh, and a Toyota Innova worth Rs 23.5 Lakh. Additionally, he has declared 250 grams of gold worth Rs 20 Lakh, while his wife owns 200 grams of gold valued at Rs 16.3 Lakh and two kilograms of silver worth Rs 1.86 Lakh.

Voting for the 70-member Delhi Assembly is scheduled to be held on February 5. The counting of votes will take place on February 8.

GRAP IV implemented

From page 1

The maximum temperature was recorded at 18.1 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature stood at 6.1 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal on Wednesday. Calm winds, low temperatures, and foggy conditions allowed the accumulation of pollutants in the region, with the air quality index soaring from 275 on Tuesday to 396 at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Air Quality Management (CAQM) subcommittee decided to invoke all actions under Stage-III ('Severe Air Quality of Delhi') and also Stage-IV ('Severe+' Air Quality of Delhi) of Stage-I and II actions already in trains bound for Delhi are also force, the statement read.

Unfavourable meteorological conditions, combined with vehicle emissions, paddy-straw burning, and other local pollution sources, have led to hazardous air quality levels in Delhi-NCR during winters. Forecasts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) suggest the AQI could soon cross the 400 mark. A dense fog lowered visibility to zero Following this, the Commission for in the national capital and surrounding areas early Wednesday morning, delaying dozens of flights and trains.

At least 13 flights have been cancelled, and 400 others delayed so the extant Schedule of GRAP, with far due to dense fog at Indira Gandhi immediate effect, in addition to the International Airport. As many as 26

running late, and the timings have been changed for six trains. Early morning travellers faced difficulties in navigating through the dense fog. Due to zero visibility reported in parts of Delhi-NCR, road traffic also slowed down in Delhi and nearby cities due to the reduced

"All actions of the GRAP schedule shall be implemented, monitored, and reviewed by all the agencies concerned in the entire NCR to ensure that the AQI levels do not slip further. All implementing agencies shall keep strict vigil and intensify measures of the GRAP schedule. Citizens are requested to strictly adhere to the citizen charter under GRAP," the statement added. On January 12, the CAQM revoked Stage-III restrictions after the AQI in Delhi improved due to rainfall. The Sub-Committee highlighted a significant rise in pollution levels, with the AQI jumping from 275 on January 14 to 393 by 5:00 PM and 396 by 6:00 PM on Wednesday. This surge is attributed to dense fog, low temperatures, and poor atmospheric conditions that hinder the dispersion of pollutants.

To tackle the worsening air quality, CAQM has enforced the 9-point action plan under Stage-III and the 7-point action plan under Stage-IV across the NCR. The concerned agencies, including state Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), have been directed to implement these measures promptly

India Women Break ODI Record... From page 1 placement and deft touches in subsequent

Mandhana's 10th ODI century came off just 70 deliveries as the left-hander surpassed Harmanpreet Kaur's 87-ball hundred mark against South Africa last year. It also set the tone for India breaching the 400-run mark for the first time, joining Australia and New Zealand in that elite list. Mandhana was in her usual destructive self, and was not afraid to take the aerial route over the 'V' and clear the 30circle. Pratika complemented her captain brilliantly with a measured knock, making the occasion even more special by notching her maiden international century in her sixth innings. Pratika relied on precise

showed her aggression only after reaching the ton, hitting Freya Sargent for her first six. Demonstrating hunger for a bigger knock, she powered her way to an impressive 150 - a perfect blend of composure and aggression. Their 233-run partnership made them only the fourth Indian pair to record a 200-run stand in Women's ODIs.

It was also the third instance of both Indian openers scoring hundreds in ODIs, following Reshma Gandhi and Mithali Raj's feat at Milton Keynes in 1999 and Deepti and Raut's partnership at Potchefstroom in 2017 — all against Ireland. The duo added 90 runs during the Power Play and 67 in the

the point region and she maintaining a brisk scoring rate. Mandhana reached her first century of the calendar year with an exquisite drive off Arlene Kelly. Kelly bore the brunt of her onslaught, conceding successive sixes in

one over. Even Kelly's including back-of-the-hand deliveries, were dispatched with ease, with the Indian batter following a six with another boundary in the 24th over. Mandhana also took on Ireland's leading bowler, Prendergast, smashing her for a boundary down the ground and a towering six over longon. Promoted to number three, Richa Ghosh also returned to form, making a 37-ball fifty, her fifth in ODIs.

Modi commissions three naval warships

Commissioning of warships simultaneously marked a big event for India's maritime Modi said. He added that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj taken a major step towards empowering the 21st-century and Navy of India in the land of the commissioning of a destroyer, waters, ensuring freedom of

of pride that all the three economic progress and of warships frontline platforms were made submarine in India. I would like to congratulate the Indian Navy, all the stakeholders involved heritage, the glorious history of the Navy, and the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, in the construction work, and the citizens of India for the achievement," the Prime Minister said.

Dwelling upon the significant gave new strength and vision role being played by maritime to the Navy in India. "We have nations like India in shaping global security, economics, and geopolitical dynamics, Prime Minister Shivaji Maharaj. It is for the underscored the importance first time that the tri- of protecting territorial

been done. It is also a matter supply lines and sea routes for energy security.
While emphasising the need

to safeguard the region from terrorism, arms, and drug trafficking, Modi spoke about the importance of becoming global partners in making the seas safe and prosperous, enhancing logistics efficiency, and supporting the shipping industry. He also highlighted the need to prevent the misuse of ocean resources like rare minerals and fish stocks and to develop the capacity to

manage them. commissioning of a destroyer, waters, ensuring freedom of frigate, and submarine has navigation, and securing trade investing in new shipping

communication expressing satisfaction that India is continuously taking steps in this direction, the Prime Minister said: "India has emerged as the first responder in the Indian Ocean Region. In recent months, the Indian Navy has saved hundreds of lives and secured national and international cargo worth thousands of crores, increasing global trust in India, the Indian Navy, and the Coast Guard." Modi said that India's strengthened economic

cooperation with ASEAN,

routes and sea lanes of

Australia, Gulf countries, and African nations reflected the country's presence and capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region. "Today's event should be seen from both military and economic perspectives," he said.

Today's program links our glorious heritage with our future aspirations. India has a rich history related to long sea voyages, commerce, naval defence, and the ship industry. Today's India is emerging as a major maritime power in the world. The platforms launched today displayed a glimpse of the same. While INS Nilgiri is

dedicated to the maritime prowess of the Chola dynasty, INS Surat warship is reminiscent of the era when Gujarat's ports connected India to West Asia. The commissioning of the Vagsheer submarine, the sixth in the P75 class, along with our warships Nilgiri and Surat will enhance both India's security and progress," the Prime Minister said.

Expressing satisfaction over the Navy's significant contribution to the expansion of the Make in India initiative, the Prime Minister said that the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited had

played a crucial role in the Navy's expansion programme. "We have added seven submarines to the Navy over the past decade. Of the total 40 vessels naval commissioned into the Navy during the past one decade, 39 were built in Indian shipyards," he said.

Congratulating the armed forces for their contribution to the "Make in India" campaign, the Prime Minister said: "India's defence production has surpassed Rs 1.25 lakh crore and that the country is exporting defence equipment to over 100 nations. This reflects a rapid transformation

of India's defence sector." Maintaining that the nation would continue to achieve moments of pride and contribute to making a developed country, Modi said: "While our responsibilities may differ, the goal remains the same-Viksit Bharat." Maharashtra Governor C P

Radhakrishnan, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar were among those present at the

Authorities take impeached Prez Yoon to detention centre

South Korea's impeached president, Yoon Suk Yeol, was sent to a detention centre near Seoul on Wednesday night, after being questioned by anti-corruption officials who took him into custody over his imposition of martial law last month.

Yoon was detained in a major law enforcement operation at the presidential compound earlier in the day. Yoon defiantly insisted that the country's anticorruption agency, which led the raid with police, didn't have the authority to investigate his actions, but said he complied to prevent violence.

Yoon, the country's first sitting president to be apprehended, now faces the prospect of a lengthy prison term over potential rebellion charges. In a video message recorded

shortly before he was escorted to the headquarters of the anticorruption agency, Yoon lamented the "rule of law has completely collapsed in this country"

Yoon had been holed up in the Hannam-dong residence in the capital, Seoul, for weeks while vowing to "fight to the end" the efforts to oust him. He has jus-

tified his declaration of martial law December 3 as a legitimate act of governance against an "anti-state" opposition employing its legislative majority to thwart his agenda.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials said Yoon was brought into custody about five hours after investigators arrived at the presidential compound and about three hours after they successfully entered the residence, in their second attempt to detain him over his imposition of martial law.

A series of black SUVs, some equipped with sirens, were seen leaving the presidential compound with police escorts. Yoon was later seen stepping out of a vehicle after arriving at the agency's office in the nearby city of Gwacheon. Hundreds of Yoon's conserva-

tive supporters rallied near the anti-corruption agency's office as he underwent questioning, shouting slogans and holding signs that read: "We will fight alongside President Yoon Suk

Also on Wednesday, an unidentified man was in lifethreatening condition after an apparent self-immolation near the site, according to the



Investigators from the state anti-corruption agency and police officers make their way to the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol to execute a warrant to detain Yoon in Seoul, South Korea on Wednesday

Gyeonggi provincial fire department.

After he was questioned for more than 10 hours, a vehicle carrying Yoon arrived at a detention center in Uiwang, near Seoul, escorted by police and presidential security vehi-

WHAT'S NEXT? Yoon could be held in custody for weeks, possibly even months or longer.

The anti-corruption agency, which is leading a joint investigation with the police and the military over whether Yoon's martial law declaration amounted to an attempted rebellion, has 48 hours to request a court order for his formal arrest.

If it fails to do so, Yoon will be

released. If Yoon is formally arrested, investigators can extend his detention to 20 days before transferring the case to public prosecutors for indict-

If prosecutors indict Yoon on rebellion and abuse of power charges, which are the allegations examined by investigators, he could possibly remain under arrest until the initial court ruling, which is typically made within six months, said Park Sung-bae, an attorney specialising in criminal law. Under South Korean law, the leader of a rebellion can face the death penalty or life imprisonment, if convicted.

"If the first court hands down a prison sentence, the detention simply continues," Park said. "If they sentence him to life imprisonment, for example, he continues serving that sentence straight through." Yoon's defence minister, police chief and several top military

commanders already had been arrested over their roles in the enforcement of martial law. The detention warrant for Yoon, issued by the Seoul Western District Court, said there were substantial reasons to suspect that he committed crimes as a "ringleader of a

rebellion". The anti-corruption agency told reporters that Yoon, during several hours of question-ing through Wednesday evening, exercised his right to remain silent.

Yoon's presidential powers were suspended when parliament impeached him on December 14. The impeachment case rests

Constitutional Court, which could formally remove Yoon from office or reject the case and reinstate him.

In a separate message posted on his Facebook account after he was detained, Yoon said that "martial law is not a crime", saving his declaration was necessary to raise awareness about an opposition that was exercising legislative dictatorship by blocking laws and budgets" and "paralysing" state affairs. He denied the rebellion accusations, describing his impeachment as "fraud".

As they began the detention operation in the early morning, the anti-corruption investigators and police officers engaged in an hourslong standoff at the compound's gate with presidential security forces, but otherwise encountered no meaningful resistance. Police officers were seen using

wire cutters to remove the barbed wire placed by the presidential security service on the perimeter of the compound to block their entry. Some police officers used ladders to climb over rows of buses blocking the compound's entrance, and then the investigators began moving up the hilly compound.
The investigators and police

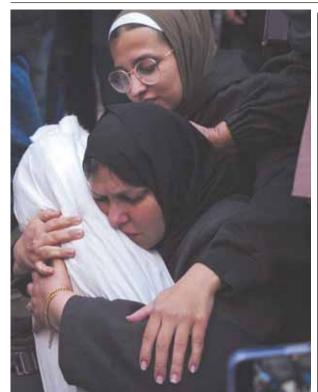
later arrived in front of a meta gate with a gold presidential mark that's near Yoon's residential building. Some officers were seen entering a security door on the side of the metal gate, joined by one of Yoon's lawyers and his chief of staff, before Yoon was driven out.

South Korea's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, issued a statement early Wednesday urging law enforcement and the presidential security service to ensure there were no "physical clashes".

Following Yoon's detention, Choi met with diplomats from the Group of Seven nations, including the United States, Japan, the UK and Germany, as well as the representative of the European Union, to reassure them that the government was functioning with stability. Park Chan-dae, floor leader of

the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which drove the legislative campaign to impeach Yoon, said that Yoon's detention was the "first step toward restoring constitutional order, democracy, and realising the rule of law".

Lawmakers from Yoon's People Power Party condemned the detention as unlawful.



Hanan Shaqoura embraces the body of her son, Mohammad, 7, who was killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, during his funeral in Deir al-Balah,

Japan, Philippines to urge Trump on need for US engagement in Asia

AP MANILA

apan and the Philippines will convey to President-elect Donald Trump the urgent need for the US to remain committed to help uphold the rule of law in an Asian region where security concerns have become "increasingly severe," Japan's top diplomat said Wednesday. The US, Japan and the Philippines have been building an alliance under outgoing President Joe Biden since last year to deal with China's increasingly aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea and East China Sea.

Trump's "America First" foreign policy thrust has triggered concerns about the scale and depth of US commitment to the region under his new term.

'We will approach the next US administration to convey that constructive commitment of the United States in this region

is important also for the United States itself," Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya said in a news conference with his Philippine counterpart, Enrique Manalo, in Manila.

Iwaya said he was scheduled to attend Trump's January 20 inauguration as one of Washington's closest treaty allies in Asia along with the Philippines.
"Amid the increasingly severe

strategic environment in the region, Japan places importance on our bilateral cooperation as well as on maintaining and strengthening trilateral cooperation between Japan, the Philippines and the United States," Iwaya said.

An alarming spike in confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and other forces in the busy sea passage has set off fears of a major escalation that could draw in the United States, which has repeatedly warned that it's obligated to help defend Philippine forces if they come under an armed attack in the South China Sea.

The issue over the South China Sea is a legitimate concern for the international community because it directly links to the regional peace and stability," Iwaya said. "Japan strongly opposes any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force or build up tension in the region. We strongly ask for easing of tensions."

Jonathan Malaya, assistant director-general of the National Security Council in the Philippines, a top government body, said Tuesday that China was "pushing us to the wall" and warned that "all options are on the table" for Manila's response, including new international lawsuits.

A large Chinese coast guard ship patrolled hotly disputed Scarborough Shoal in recent days and then sailed toward the northwestern coast of the Philippines on Tuesday, coming as close as 77 nautical miles (143 kilometres), the Philippine

coast guard said. A Chinese official said in Beijing that his country's sovereignty in the South China Sea is well established and its coast guard patrols are lawful and justified. The Chinese government has repeatedly accused the Philippines and other rival claimant states including Vietnam and Malaysia of encroaching on what it says are "undisputed" Chinese territorial waters.

Manalo told reporters that the Philippines would raise China's latest actions in a meeting on Thursday between Chinese and Philippine diplomats in the Chinese city of Xiamen.The rival claimants have been holding talks, called the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism.

WHO: Suspected outbreak of Marburg disease kills 8 in remote part of Tanzania **Arusha** (AP): The World fever, muscle pains, diarrhea,

Health Organisation said Wednesday an outbreak of suspected Marburg disease has killed eight people in a remote part of northern Tanzania.

We are aware of 9 cases so far, including 8 people who have died," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. "We would expect further cases in coming days as disease surveillance improves." Like Ebola, the Marburg virus originates in fruit bats and spreads between people through close contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals or with surfaces, such as contaminated bed sheets.

Without treatment, Marburg can be fatal in up to 88 per cent of people who fall ill with the disease. Symptoms include vomiting and in some cases death from extreme blood loss. There is no authorised vaccine or treatment for Marburg.

WHO said its risk assessment for the suspected outbreak in Tanzania is high at national and regional levels but low globally. There was no immediate comment from Tanzanian health authorities. An outbreak of Marburg in Rwanda, first reported on September 27, was declared over on December 20. Rwandan officials reported a total of 15 deaths and 66 cases, with the majority of those affected healthcare workers who handled the first patients. An outbreak in 2023 of Marburg in Kagera, which shares a border with Rwanda. killed at least five people.

Border crossings in Dec trend low as Biden admn wraps up

AP WASHINGTON

U^S officials on Tuesday announced the latest border data, and it suggests the Biden administration is poised to end its term without an expected bump in illegal border crossings.

In December, Customs and Border Protection reported 47,300 illegal border crossings — a slight elevation from November, when it reported 46,612, approaching the lowest level since July 2020. The first two weeks of January also indicate activity has dropped, with about 45 per cent fewer crossings than in December, according to senior CBP officials who spoke with reporters during a virtual press conference. Border crossing activity peaked in South Texas, dou-

November to slightly above 10,000 arrests in December across the Rio Grande Valley region, despite Republicanled efforts to heighten border security through Operation Lonestar.

The number of border arrests

in December exceeded the number of people processed for asylum at ports of entry through the CBP One app, which allows migrants to seek an appointment out of the daily 1,450 slots available the daily 1,450 slots available at designated ports of entry. Nearly 9,36,500 people have used the CBP One app to schedule appointments since its introduction in January 2023. Although President-elect Donald Trump said in September that he planned to end CBP One appointments end CBP One appointments, a senior CBP official told

bling from about 5,000 in reporters that they are still being scheduled.

Overall, the number of crossings demonstrate a downward trend from the high mark set under the Biden administration in December 2023, when arrests reached nearly 2,50,000. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas credited the Biden administration's June 2024 proclamation that temporarily suspends asylum processing at the border when US officials deem they are overwhelmed.

This is a consistent trend we have seen since the president's proclamation went into effect last summer," Mayorkas said. "Since then, encounters between ports of entry along the southwest border have dropped 60 per

Dire fire warning for LA area pushed back as winds ease

AP LOS ANGELES

 $E_{\text{but much-needed reprieve}}^{\text{asing winds delivered a brief}}$ to firefighters Tuesday as they battled two massive blazes burning in the Los Angeles area, and the National Weather Service pushed back its unusually dire warning of critical fire weather until early the follow-

ing day. Forecasters said the winds were below danger levels in the evening, but they were expected to strengthen overnight with potentially fire-fuelling gusts. Red flag warnings remained in effect from Central California to the Mexican border until late afternoon Wednesday. Winds increased Tuesday but

not to the near-hurricane-force levels that were predicted to happen earlier in the day. Still the danger was not over, officials said.

"Key message: We are not out of the woods yet," the National Weather Service in Los Angeles



Trucks drive through a neighborhood destroyed by the Eaton Fire. Tuesday, in

said in a post on social media. "The winds underperformed today, but one more enhancement could happen tonighttomorrow.

This round of Santa Ana winds

was not expected to be as mighty as last week, but they could carry fire-sparking embers for miles and stoke new outbreaks in a region where at least 25 people have

already been killed. Firefighters made more progress on the Palisades Fire, the largest and most stubborn

blaze. CalFire Operations Section Chief Christian Litz said he took a helicopter ride around the perimeter and saw no active flames, though it was far from over. Nearly 90,000 households lost

electricity as utilities shut off power to prevent their lines from sparking new blazes. Weary and anxious residents

were told to be ready to flee at a moment's notice. They remained vigilant, keeping an eye on the skies and on each other: Police announced roughly 50 arrests, for looting, flying drones in fire zones, violating curfew and other crimes.

Of those, three people were arrested on suspicion of arson after being seen setting small fires that were immediately extinguished, LA Police Chief Jim McDonnell said. One was using a barbecue lighter, anoth-

er ignited brush and a third tried to light up a trash can, he said. All were far outside the disaster zones. Authorities have not determined a cause for any of the major fires.

Among nine people charged with looting was a group that stole an Emmy from an evacu-ated house, Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said.

The biggest worry remained the threat from intense winds. Now backed by firefighters from other states, Canada and Mexico, crews were deployed to attack flareups or new blazes. The firefighting force was much bigger than a week ago, when the first wave of fires began destroying thousands of homes in what could become the nation's costliest fire disaster. Kaylin Johnson and her family planned to spend the night at their home, one of the few left standing in her neighbour-hood in Altadena, near

SEC sues Elon Musk for failing to disclose Twitter ownership

New York (AP): The US Securities and Exchange Commission has sued billionaire Elon Musk, saying he failed to disclose his ownership but he failed to disclose his ownership but he failed to do so until April 4, 11 days after the report was due. ship of Twitter stock in a timely manner in early 2022, before buying the social media

As a result, the SEC alleges, Musk was able to underpay "by at least USD 150 million" for shares he bought after he should have disclosed his ownership of more than 5 per

cent of Twitter's shares. Musk bought Twitter in October 2022 and later renamed it X.

Musk started amassing Twitter shares in early 2022, and by March of that year, he owned more than 5 per cent. At this related to the company.

Representatives for X and Musk did not immediately return a message for comment.

After Musk signed a deal to acquire Twitter in April 2022 he tried to back out of it, leading the company to sue him to force him to go through with the acquisition.

The has SEC said that starting in April 2022, it authorised an investigation into whether any securities laws were broken in connection with Musk's purchases of Twitter stock and his statements and SEC filings

Two private lunar landers head toward moon in roundabout journey

In a two-for-one moonshot, SpaceX launched a pair of lunar landers Wednesday for US and Japanese companies looking to jumpstart business

on Earth's dusty sidekick.
The two landers rocketed away in the middle of the night from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre, the latest in a stream of private spacecraft aiming for the moon. They shared the ride to save money but parted company an hour into the flight exactly as planned, taking separate roundabout routes for the

monthslong journey. It's take 2 for the Tokyo-based ispace, whose first lander crashed into the moon two years ago. This time, it has a rover on board with a scoop to gather up lunar dirt for study and plans to test potential food



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from pad 39A with a payload of a pair of lunar landers at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Wednesday. AP/PTI

and water sources for future explorers. Lunar newcomer Texas-based Firefly Aerospace is flying 10

experiments for NASA, including a vacuum to gather dirt, a drill to measure the temperature below the surface and a device that could be used by future moonwalkers to keep the sharp, abrasive particles off their spacesuits and equip-

Firefly's Blue Ghost — named after a species of US Southeastern fireflies — should reach the moon first. The 6foot-6-inches-tall (2-metertall) lander will attempt a touchdown in early March at Mare Crisium, a volcanic plain in the northern latitudes.

The slightly bigger ispace lander named Resilience will take four to five months to get there, targeting a touchdown in late May or early June at Mare Frigoris, even farther north on the moon's near side. "We don't think this is a race. Some people say race to the moon, but it's not about the speed," ispace's founder CEO Takeshi Hakamada said this week from Cape Canaveral.

and more secure: Joe Biden Washington (PTI): Coming ic in a century, the worst eco-

4 years on, America stronger

out of the worst pandemic in a century and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the United States in four years under Joe Biden's leadership has emerged stronger, more pros-perous, and more secure, the outgoing US President said in a letter Wednesday.

"History is in your hands. The power is in your hands. The idea of America lies in your hands. We just have to keep the faith and remember who we are. We are the United States of America, and there is simply nothing beyond our capacity when we do it together," Biden said in a letter addressed to his countrvmen.

"Four years ago, we stood in a winter of peril and a winter of possibilities. We were in the grip of the worst pandem-

nomic crisis since the Great Depression, and the worst attack on our democracy since the Civil War. But we came together as Americans, and we braved through it. We emerged stronger, more pros-perous, and more secure," he Biden, 82, leaves the White

House on January 20, after four years of his presidency. His successor Donald Trump, 78, would be sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on Monday. Biden withdrew from the

race, mid-way through the presidential election campaign in the summer of 2024. His running mate and Vice President Kamala Harris succeeded him as the Democratic nominee. She lost to Trump in the November elections.

India's fiscal conditions to constrain credit strength in 2025: Moody's ratings

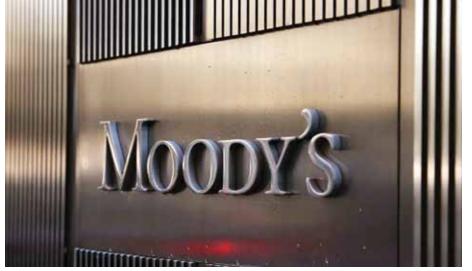
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $I^{\text{ndia's fiscal conditions will}}_{\text{continue to constrain its}}$ credit strength in 2025, although tension in US-China relations could benefit the Indian economy, Moody's Ratings said on Wednesday.

In its report on Asia Pacific Sovereigns, Moody's Ratings said growth and inflation are levelling out, with strong domestic demand bolstered by modest easing in global and regional financial conditions.

But proposed trade restrictions by the US would weaken economic output across the region.

"India's fiscal conditions will continue to constrain its credit strength in 2025. We expect only gradual fiscal consolidation, and debt to remain significantly higher



than the Baa-rated peer debt affordability to remain median of around 57 per much weaker than rated cent," Moody's said.

"Despite gains in revenue in recent years, we also expect unrest

peers," it added. It said politics and social

pose

economic and fiscal risks. In APAC, geopolitical risks will persist in 2025, flowing from tensions in the US-China relationship and around

Moody's assesses a low likelihood of military conflict in the Taiwan Strait or Korean Peninsula, and tensions will remain elevated, particularly driven by US-China relations.
"These tensions are shaping trade and investment flows,

regional hotspots.

which may be further diverted away from China as the US tightens investment in strategic sectors, further weakening China's economy and dampening regional growth. However, this shift could benefit India and Southeast Asian economies," Moody's said.

A range of geopolitical and domestic political risks persist, it said, adding after elections in key economies, governments may need to make choices whether to fulfill pledges or to focus on fiscal consolidation.

India to achieve 20 per cent ethanol blending target in two months, says Nitin Gadkari

Tndia will achieve its target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in the next two months, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday.

The practice of blending ethanol with petrol began in 2001 as a pilot project. 'We will achieve this target

of 20 per cent ethanol blending in the next two months.

Use of E20 (petrol with 20 per cent ethanol) will help in reducing pollution,"
Gadkari said while speaking at an event.
The road transport and highways minister said Tata

Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki, and Hyundai Motors have manufacturing started vehicles that run on 100 per cent bio-ethanol.

Gadkari said pollution is a serious problem in the country as 42 Indian cities among 50 most-

polluted cities in the world. the world's third largest oil We import fossil fuels consumer - bring down its worth Rs 22 lakh crore, reliance which is also causing pollution," he said.

higher 20 per cent ethanolblended petrol in 2023. In the first phase, 15 cities was covered.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi had launched the

Use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help India -

shipments.

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. Use of E20 leads to an

estimated reduction of carbon monoxide emissions by about 50 per cent in twowheelers and about 30 per cent in four-wheelers compared to E0 (neat

Vedanta Resources through dual tranche bond issuance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mining mogul Anil Agarwal's Vedanta Resources has raised USD 1.1 billion through a new bond offering to prepay existing liabilities, the company said in a Singapore exchange

Vedanta Resources Finance II plc, a wholly owned subsidiary of Vedanta Resources, raised USD 1.1 billion through a new dual issuance tranche international debt capital markets.

Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL) has raised USD 3.1 billion in USD bonds since September

As per the exchange filing, the latest bond issuance consists of two tranches - a USD 550 million tranche of 5.5 years tenor at a 9.475 per cent interest rate and a USD 550 million tranche of 8.25 vears tenor at a 9.850 per cent

interest rate. Both tranches garnered strong investor d the bonds receiving final orders of USD 3.4 billion from over 135 accounts,

representing an oversubscription of 3.1x, the company said.

"The net proceeds from the offering of the Bonds will be used to prepay Vedanta's outstanding bonds (including any accrued interest thereto), pay any related transaction costs in connection thereto and to service other debts," it said. Marquee investors from the United States, EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) and Asia were amongst the major investors. Bonds are expected to be rated 'B' by S&P Global and 'B2' by Moody's Ratings. Moody's recently upgraded VRL corporate family rating (CFR) to B1 from B2 on the

back of recent moves. The final bonds allocation included 61 per cent from Asia, 30 per cent from EMEA, and 9 per cent from the US for the 5.5-Year Tranche and 54 per cent from Asia, 30 per cent from EMEA, and 16 per cent from the US for the 8.25-Year

Markets log gain for raises USD 1.1 Billion second day, sensex climbs over 200 points



 $B_{\text{and ticked higher for the}}^{\text{enchmark indices Sensex}}$ second straight session on Wednesday, buoyed by buying in bellwether stock Reliance Industries, Zomato and Kotak Bank amid a largely firm trend in global markets.

However, elevated crude oil prices in the international markets and buying by foreign investors weighed on market sentiment, traders

The 30-share BSE index climbed 224.45 points or 0.29 per cent to close at 76,724,08. During the day, it jumped 491.42 points or 0.64 per cent to 76,991.05.

As many as 2,150 stocks advanced while 1,806 declined and 108 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The NSE Nifty advanced 37.15 points or 0.16 per cent to 23,213.20.

The domestic market continues to be volatile on account of elevated US bond yields, strengthening dollar, and increasing FIIs outflows. Global markets are cautious

ahead of the US December CPI inflation data, which is anticipated to be in the elevated range in the short term, limiting the US Fed's ability to cut rates.

"Also, a rise in oil prices and dollar appreciation is likely to affect domestic inflation in the near future," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geoilt Financial Services, said.

From the Sensex blue-chip pack, Zomato jumped over 4 per cent. NTPĆ, Power Grid, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries and Adani Ports were the other big gainers Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank and Tata Motors were

among the laggards.
The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.34 per cent, and the midcap index went up by 0.11 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices,

utilities jumped 2.45 per cent, power (1.75 per cent), realty (1.58 per cent), services (0.98 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.74 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.62 per cent).

Exports contract one per cent in December, trade deficit narrows to USD 22 Billion

India's exports in December 2024 contracted for the second month in a row by about one per cent year-on-year to USD 38.01 billion due to global uncertainties, while the trade deficit narrowed to USD 21.94

According to the commerce ministry data, imports rose by about 5 per cent year-on-year to USD 59.95 billion in December. Cumulatively, during April-December this fiscal, exports recorded a growth of 1.6 per cent to USD 321.71 billion and imports by 5.15 per cent to USD 532.48 billion. Trade deficit, the difference between imports and exports, during April-December widened to USD 210.77 billion from USD 189.74



billion during the same period previous fiscal. Briefing the media on the latest data. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that India's

exports are doing better than other countries both in goods and services. "This shows resiliency of our exports. In all the three quarters of this this

fiscal also, we have done better. We are doing much better in non-petroleum exports," he told reporters here. The ministry has recently held a meeting with deliberate on issues impacting exports and ways to resolve them. These 20 countries account for about 60 per cent of India's exports. In December last year, Barthwa said sectors which have registered healthy growth in exports included electronics, engineering pharmaceuticals. When asked about the revision

commercial wings of Indian Missions in 20 countries to

of gold and silver import data for November 2024, the secretary said a committee has been set up to create a robust mechanism for publishing consistent data.

The government revised gold import data for November 2024, bringing down numbers by USD 5 billion to USD 9.84

Bank of Maharashtra Q3 profit rises 36 per cent to ₹1,406 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Wednesday posted a 36 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 1,406 crore in the third quarter ended 2024 with rising interest income.

The Pune-based lender had posted a net profit of Rs 1,036 crore in the October-December period a year ago. Total income increased to Rs 7,112 crore during the quarter under review against Rs 5,851 crore in the same period previous year, BoM said in a regulatory filing.
The bank earned an interest

income of Rs 6,325 crore during the quarter compared to Rs 5,171 crore a year ago.



The bank was able to reduce gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) to 1.80 per cent of the gross loans by the end of December 2024 from 2.04 per cent in the year-ago period. Similarly, net NPAs or bad loans came down to 0.2 per cent from 0.22 per cent at the end of the third quarter of the previous fiscal.
The Provision Coverage Ratio

(PCR) as of December 31, 2024, is 98.28 per cent.

The bank has raised Rs 3,500 crore through Qualified Institutional Placements on October 5, 2024.

The bank has issued and allotted 61,01,81,311 equity shares of Rs 10 each at a premium of 47 36 per share Accordingly, the shareholding of the Government of India in the bank has been reduced to 79.60 per cent as of December 31, 2024.

During three quarters, the bank reported a net profit of Rs 4,027 crore compared to Rs 2,837 crore in the ninemonth period of the previous

Total income also increased to Rs 7,112 crore from Rs 5,851 crore in the nine-month period of the last financial

settles 13 paise higher at 86.40 against US Dollar

Rupee extends gains,



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee extended its recovery for the second straight session and settled with a gain of 13 paise at 86.40 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking favourable cues from domestic equity markets and softening crude oil prices.

The American currency index also descended from a record peak, adding to the gaining momentum in the local unit, though it remained under pressure from continuous exit of foreign institutional investors, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.50 and slipped to the intraday low of 86.55 against the greenback.

It also touched A high of 86.28 before ending the session at 86.40 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 13 paise from its

previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee rebounded from its lowestever level and settled with a gain of 17 paise at 86.53 against the dollar.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee gained for the second consecutive session on weak US dollar and soft US 10-year treasury yields. A pullback in the domestic equities and overnight decline in crude oil prices also favoured the rupee. However, FII outflows capped sharp gains.
Analysts attributed the

weakening dollar to lowerthan-expected producer price index, as per the latest data released in the US.

Going ahead, Choudhary said the US inflation is expected to remain elevated and it may lead to a recovery in the US dollar, which is likely to put pressure on the rupee.

ITA submits white paper on Darjeeling tea industry to West Bengal government

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Leading producers body Indian Tea Association (ITA) on Tuesday said it has submitted a white paper on the Darjeeling tea industry to the West Bengal government highlighting the challenges challenges opportunities. A team of ITA officials met

Labour Minister Moloy Ghatak on Tuesday evening and submitted the white



paper, the association said ITA said that the Darjeeling in a statement. The paper attempts to provide an in-depth analysis of the current state of the

Darjeeling tea industry. It also highlighted key issues like production challenges and market dynamics. According to ITA, the paper

suggested recommendations aimed at reviving the industry and ensuring long-term

tea industry is not just an economic asset, but a cultural heritage which needs immediate attention and strategic intervention by the central and state governments by way of financial assistance. The Darjeeling tea industry

faces problems of climate change, low productivity due to very old bushes and less profitability making operations enviable.

Government should target ₹11 lakh crore in FY26, give relief to taxpayers in lower bracket in Budget: ICRA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he government should}}_{\text{target a capital spending}}$ of Rs 11 lakh crore in the Budget for the next fiscal while giving inflation-adjusted relief on personal income tax to boost consumer spending, rating agency ICRA said on

Wednesday. ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said last year's record budgeted capital expenditure of Rs 11.11 lakh crore is likely to fall short by about Rs 1.4 lakh crore and the next year's target should be fixed at the last year's level with a focus on keeping borrowing within reasonable limits.

Further, Nayar said capex



Budget target in the current

Between April and November 2024, capex spending stood at numbers are trailing the run rate required to get to the of the Budget estimates of Rs prioritise capex... For FY26,

11.11 lakh crore. We are looking at a large shortfall in the current fiscal. For next year, we are hoping

based on the revenue numbers...A fiscal deficit of 4.5 per cent of GDP will be quite reasonably achieved. That would allow us Rs 11 trillion of capex, a growth of

PTI in an interview. She said putting in a larger capex number may not be

"prudent" as a larger borrowing and fiscal deficit would push up yields.

She said the Budget for 2025-26 should put a "realistic capex number" upfront and if, during the course of the year, it looks like it will be over-achieved, then the government could take the supplementary demands for grants route to up the target.
To shield the economy from the impact of Covid, the government has been spending heavily on infrastructure and building capital assets. It earmarked Rs 4.39 lakh crore capex in 2020-

11-12 per cent over the number that we think is feasible for FY25," Nayar told 2022-23, capex spending was 2022-23, capex spending was hiked to Rs 7.5 lakh crore and in 2023-24, it reached Rs 10 lakh crore.

On being asked if the government would continue with the investment push in FY26 as well, Nayar said the capex push creates positivity in the economy and a virtuous cycle that trickles down to other parts of the economy as well.
"I would think that capex

would be low in FY25 and the fiscal space available should be prioritised for capex. Our forecast suggests that every 10 basis points of additional fiscal deficit would get us another Rs 35,000 crore of capital expenditure. Probably better to start with a realistic

capex number, a fiscal deficit that would come down in line with medium-term forecast that will give a reasonable borrowing figure for markets to absorb," Nayar said.

ICRA forecasts a fiscal deficit, which is the difference between government expenditure and revenues, at 4.8 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal and 4.5 per cent

in FY26. Nayar also said that GDP growth has bottomed out in the September quarter and going forward, it is expected to recover. The ratings agency projects GDP growth of 6.5 per cent for both the current and next fiscal years.

She said rural consumption is expected to be steady, while urban consumption would be uneven. Once food inflation

consumption may begin to see a bit of an uptick, she said. On her expectations from the Budget, Nayar said some tinkering with income tax slabs and rates would give a "mood upliftment" for urban taxpayers. That is what the budget can bring in without too much revenue loss. "Inflation does eat away disposable income. It is not an unfair ask (tax relief). While some modest concessions could be given in terms of tax relief, we need to make sure that we are not losing out too many people from the I-T net," she said, adding that two things will be important - one, not to have too much revenue loss, and second, not to lose too many taxpayers from the tax net.

Juventus the draw specialists, AC Milan the comeback kings

PTI MILAN

reputation as draw specialists, AC Milan as the comeback kings.

Juventus was held 1-1 at Atalanta on Tuesday for its seventh draw in its past eight league matches and its 13th out of 20 Serie A games this season. It remains unbeaten in Serie A, however.

Milan fought back to win 2-1 at nearby Como.

Atalanta moved level on points with second-placed Inter Milan, which has played two matches less, and four points behind Serie A leader Napoli.

Milan was three points

Milan was three points below fifth-placed Juventus. They face each other in Turin on Saturday and Milan is likely to be without key player Christian Pulisic after the United States

international limped off on the stroke of halftime at

Juventus took the lead in Bergamo in the 54th minute following great play by Weston McKennie. The United States midfielder ran onto a long ball and then played a perfectly-weighted pass for Pierre Kalulu to fire past Marco Carnesecchi at the near post.

Kalulu had come incredibly close to scoring moments earlier when his header bounced off the inside of the far post and rolled across the line before Carnesecchi managed to claw it away. Television replays showed Bergamo in the 54th minute

Television replays showed that only a few millimeters were still on the line, with about 98% of the ball having gone over.

Mateo Retegui made his comeback in the 65th minute after several weeks out with



injury and the league's top scorer headed Atalanta level 13 minutes later with is 13th league goal of the season.

league goal of the season.
Historic Hernández goal
A historic Theo Hernández
goal saw Milan earn a
comeback victory for the
third time in four matches
under Sérgio Conceição,
who got his first Serie A win
as coach as coach.

as coach.
Conceição, who replaced the fired Paulo Fonseca at the end of last year, had got his reign off to the perfect start as he steered Milan to the Italian Super Cup trophy with two comeback wins after just over a week at the helm

That was followed by a disappointing 1-1 draw against relegation-threatened Cagliari on Saturday, however.

Milan again went behind on Tuesday, when Como's new

signing Assane Diao — on the teenager's first start — ran down the right flank and cut inside before firing into the near bottom corner. Hernández had perhaps been at fault for backing off

Diao too much but he atoned for that error with a fine equalizer in the 71st minute. It was his 30th goal in Serie A, overtaking Paolo Maldini as the Milan defender with the most goals in the Italian

league.

Milan turned the match around completely five minutes later when Rafael Leão ran onto Tammy Abraham's through ball and dinked it over Como goalkeeper Jean Butez. Leão and Hernández are two

of Milan's key players but they have both had a difficult first half of the season as they often clashed with

Djokovic breaks a tie with Roger Federer for the most Grand Slam matches in tennis history

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic added yet another record to his lengthy list, breaking a tie with Roger Federer for the most Grand Slam matches played in tennis history by reaching 430 on Wednesday at the Australian Open in what was a tougher-than-expected second-round victory.

victory.
Djokovic improved to 379-51
for his career at major
tournaments, a .881 winning tournaments, a .881 winning percentage, by defeating 21-year-old Portuguese qualifier Jaime Faria 6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-2 in a match briefly interrupted by light rain before Rod Laver Arena's

retractable roof was shut.

"Grand Slams, of course, they are the pillars of our sport.

They mean everything for the history of the sport. ...

Definitely the most important tournaments" Diologic said tournaments," Djokovic said.
"I'm just blessed to be making another record, I guess,

Oh, yes, Djokovic already holds so many marks, many

of which used to belong to Federer — who went 369-60 during his 429 Slam matches, a .860 winning percentage — and there are more on the

As it is, Djokovic has won the most Grand Slam singles titles of any man, 24, ahead of Rafael Nadal's 22 and Federer's 20 (those other two members of the Big Three are now retired). The 37-year-old Serb has spent more weeks at No. 1 in the rankings than any other player. He's played in 37 Slam finals, six more than Federer's old record. And so

on and so on.

Consider, too, what could consider, too, what could possibly await for Djokovic. A title at the end of the 15 days at Melbourne Park would be his 25th at a major, a number never reached by any man or woman. It would also be his 11th at the Australian Open, equaling Margaret Court for the most. It would make him the oldest man in the Open era — which began in 1968 — to collect a Grand Slam singles trophy (Ken Rosewall was about six months younger when he won the 1972 Australian

Open). And it would be Djokovic's 100th tour-level tournament title, a nice round number behind only Jimmy Connors' 109 and Federer's 103 in the Open era among

Not everything has gone perfectly this week in Australia for Djokovic in his first tournament working with former on-court rival Andy Murray as his coach.
Both of Djokovic's matches so far came against a young player making his Grand Slam debut. And both times, he was pushed to four sets.
In the first round, it was against Nicketh Bassyareddy. against Nishesh Basavareddy, a 19-year-old American who turned pro only last month and is ranked 107th. In the second, it was Faria, who is ranked 125th, giving him a bit of a hard time, especially during a four-game run in the

"He was playing lights-out tennis.... I had to weather the storm," Djokovic said. "I think I responded very well in the third and, particularly

Sindhu can reach an even higher level with more speed and power: New coach Irwansyah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indonesian coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama aims to not just tweak PV Sindhu's technique and fine-tune her skills but also reignite the fire within her, believing that, with added speed and power, she can regain her lost glory and surpass her previous achievements.

achievements.

Irwansyah, who has been recently roped in by Badminton Association of India (BAI) to train women's singles players, was courtside when Sindhy singles players, was courtside when Sindhu overcame rustiness to reach the second round of the India Open Super 750 tournament, defeating world No. 24 Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei 21-14, 22-20 on

"Every player has been through something like this. What I've learned, I want to pass on to her. I'll try my best. I believe she can still do it. She can come back and reach an even higher level than before. I do believe in it. That's the reason I'm here," Irwansyah, a former long-term head coach



of the Indonesian men's singles team, told PTI.

"My plan is to make her more of an attacking player. She has all the right qualities, so I just want to build on that and push her further. I want to change her game to be more aggressive

her game to be more aggressive
— more speed and power."

It has been a challenging two
years for Sindhu, who broke a
title drought by winning the
Syed Modi Super 300 crown
last December. After clinching the 2022 Singapore Open and Commonwealth Games titles, she faced a setback with a stress

Although she recovered and reached the final at the 2023 Spain Masters, a knee injury in October hampered her progress. She returned to progress. She returned to action in February, reaching the final of the Malaysia Masters Super 500, but was unable to secure a title. "I want to help her enjoy herself more on the court. It's important that she enjoys it because when she enjoys it, she'll become more confident."

she'll become more confident. That's the main focus right now — working hard to get her to believe in herself again," Irwansyah said.

"After everything, the last two vears have been tough injuries, maybe... It's really about confidence. I'm doing my best to help her believe in what she has. She has a lot of potential?

Sindhu might be in the final phase of her career but Irwansyah emphasised it is about discipline and success has nothing to do with age.
"It's not about age. What's important is how she manages

discipline, what she eats, how she rests, and doing the right training. And with the whole team in place — strength and conditioning coach, nutrition, physio, and me — it will happen." happen." Sindhu,

Sindhu, who achieved remarkable success, including a silver medal at the Rio Olympics under Pullela Gopichand, later partnered with Korea's Kim Ji Hyun to win the 2019 World Championships and claimed another silver at the Tokyo Olympics with coach Park Tae-

Koneru Humpy to compete in Christian Pulisic limps Norway Chess Women 2025

PTI ■ STAVANGER

Reigning World Rapid chess champion and Indian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy will return to compete in the Norway Chess Women in May.

Currently ranked world number six in women's classical chess, Humpy aims to make her mark in the prestigious chess tournament. Humpy's return to Norway Chess Women highlights her remarkable career, filled with significant milestones.

In 2002, she became the first Indian woman to achieve the GM title, securing her place in chess history. Today, she remains India's top ranked women's player in the

country.
Her achievements include winning the World Rapid Championship title twice -- in

She was also named BBC media release. Indian Sportswoman of the



Year in 2020, recognising her contributions to Indian

Her victories in the Olympiad, Asian Games, and Asian Championships have further chess.

"It's an honour to play in the prestigious Norway Chess Women tournament," Humpy

confirmed her status as one of the top female players in

was quoted as saying in a Asked to describe herself, she

chose the word "self-disciplined," a quality that

defines her approach to chess and her rise to the top. This discipline has helped her remain focused, consistent, and resilient, even against tough opponents.

"Humpy's achievements speak volumes, and we are delighted to welcome her back to Norway Chess Women 2025," said Kiell Madland, Founder and Tournament Director of

out of AC Milan match sparking new injury fears

There are renewed injury concerns for Christian Pulisic after the United States international limped out of AC Milan's match at Como on Tuesday.

Pulisic was forced off the pitch on the stroke of halftime, leaving Milan with 10 men for the final moments of the first period. He was replaced by Alejandro Jiménez for the second half. The 26-year-old Pulisic went down after being caught on the ankle by Como defender Marc-Oliver Kempf. He immediately waved the medical staff over and appeared to be pointing to his left thigh.

His availability is unknown for Milan's match at Juventus on Saturday. Pulisic had only just returned



from injury — making his comeback in the Italian Super Cup, which Milan won. He had been out for nearly a month after tearing a muscle in his right calf and then sustaining a minor ankle

Pulisic scored in both the semifinal and the final of the Italian Super Cup.

He has been one of Milan's top players this season with five goals and four assists in Serie A. He has also scored three goals in the Champions

Italian football club Lazio fires falconer for posting photos of his own prosthetic penis

azio has fired the man who Lhandled the Italian soccer club's eagle mascot after he posted photos and videos online of his own prosthetic penis.

Falconer Juan Bernabé shared

the images on his private social media accounts after undergoing surgery for a penile implant, which he said was for non-medical reasons. Bernabé also gave an interview to controversial Italian radio show La Zanzara on Monday and elaborated on his reasons for undergoing the procedure.

Bernabé added that he felt "very proud" and "more masculine" being part of Lazio. The Serie A club clearly did not feel the same as it fired Spaniard shortly

"Shocked to see the photographic images and video of Mr. Juan Bernabè and



to read the statements that accompanied them, Lazio announces that it has stopped, with immediate effect, all relationship with this person, given the seriousness of his behavior," the capital club said in a statement.

"The club realizes — and shares — the pain that the fans will feel at the loss of the eagle in the next home games, but believes that it is not possible to be associated ... with a person who, by his own initiative, has made the

continuation relationship unacceptable.' The eagle — a bird that symbolizes ancient Rome traditionally flies over Stadio Olimpico before home games. Bernabè said he had no regrets about sharing the images. Lazio suspended Bernabè in

2021 when he was filmed performing a fascist salute at the end of a match and chanting "Duce, Duce," which was the name used to praise former fascist Italian leader

Zheng loses to No. 97 Laura Siegemund, Osaka rallies to advance at the Australian Open

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Distracted by a time penalty and unable to counteract No. 97-ranked Laura Siegemund's aggressive approach, Zheng Qinwen's loss in the second round Wednesday fell a long way short of last year's run to the Australian Open final. Zheng lost the 2024 decider at Melbourne Park to Aryna

Sabalenka and went on to win the Olympic gold medal in Paris and finish runner-up at the WTA Finals in a breakout season. But her first tournament of

the year ended in a 7-6 (3), 6-3 loss on John Cain Arena against 36-year-old Siegemund, who attacked from the first point and put Zheng off her game.

Zheng needed a change of got a time warning on her at Melbourne Park by

serve from the chair umpire
— she said she couldn't clearly see the clock - and was worried about some minor issues which sidelined her before the Australian Open.

"I feel maybe today is not my day. There's a lot of details in the important points. I didn't do the right choice," Zheng said.

Of a weak serve that bounced before the net, Zheng said the time warning from the umpire "obviously that one really distracted me from the

match." "This is my fourth year in the tour, and never happen that to me."

Both of last year's women's finalists were playing at the same time on nearby courts. Sabalenka, the two-time Zheng needed a change of defending champion, shoes early in the second set, extended her run to 16 wins champion,



winning the last five games to beat No. 54-ranked Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-3, 7-5. Naomi Osaka, another two-

Australian champion, reached the third round of a major for the first

weathered an early barrage Open from U.S. Open semifinalist Karolina Muchova before time since 2022 when she rallying to win 1-6, 6-1, 6-3.

Osaka lost in the first round here last year to Caroline Garcia in her comeback from maternity leave but avenged that with a first-round victory over Garcia this week. Osaka said she used a loss to Muchova at the U.S. Open as motivation.

"She crushed me in the U.S. Open when I had my best outfit ever," Osaka joked in a post-match interview. "I was so disappointed. I was so mad. This was my little revenge."

Osaka will next meet Belinda Bencic, the Tokyo Olympic gold medalist who is playing in her first major since the birth of her daughter, Bella,

last year. Also advancing were No. 7 Jessica Pegula, had a 6-4, 6-2 win over Elise Mertens, and 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva, the No. 14 seed who beat Moyuka Uchijima 6-4, 3-6,

Bouzas Maneiro taking huge swipes at the ball in her Australian Open debut and dictating some of the points against the world No. 1ranked player. Her serve let her down, with Sabalenka able to relieve some pressure on her own serve with five breaks.

No. 7 Jessica Pegula had a 6-4, 6-2 win over Elise Mertens to reach the third round, along with Belinda Bencic and 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva, the No. 14 seed who beat Moyuka Uchijima 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (8).

Siegemund has never been past the third round in Australia, but is taking confidence from her big upset. Her only lapse was when she was broken serving for the first set. She

7-6 (8). The scoreline in recovered to dominate the Sabalenka's match didn't tiebreaker, while Zheng reflect the difficulty, with remained too conservative in her tactics until right near the end.

"I knew I just had to play more than my best tennis. I had nothing to lose. I just told myself to swing free," Siegemund said. Zheng is "an amazing player. One of the best players right now, but I know I can play well and I wanted to show that to myself."

Third-seeded Alcaraz, aiming to add the Australian Open title to complete a set of all four major crowns, advanced 6-0, 6-1, 6-4 victory over

Yoshihito Nishioka. "The less time you spend on the court in the Grand Slams, especially at the beginning of the tournament, it's gonna be better, especially physically,"

Naomi Osaka is back in third round of Grand Slam for the fist time in three years

aomi Osaka's secondround match at the Australian Open could not possibly have started in a worse way. All of 21 minutes in, she sailed a forehand service return well long and, just like that, trailed 5-0.

Osaka strode to the sideline for the changeover, plopped herself down and draped a white towel over her head, blocking out all sights and leaving her with just her thoughts. She stayed like that throughout the break between games, even maneuvering a water bottle under that towel to take a drink.

This was not a match against unknown opponent, someone Osaka knew for sure she could beat. It was against 20thseeded Karolina Muchova, the runner-up at the 2023 French Open and a three-time semifinalist at other majors, including at Melbourne Park in 2021. Muchova also had defeated Osaka in their two most recent matchups. None of that mattered on this afternoon, though: Osaka

forgot about that disappointing start and came all the way back to win 1-6, 6-1, 6-3 on Wednesday. What was her mindset? "Just be aware and try not to get so negative on yourself. I think, for me, the score in the first set was very dramatic, but there was key points that I could have maybe won a game here or there," Osaka explained afterward. "So I kept trying to tell myself that."
This was, in some ways, a

significant moment for Osaka, who once reigned atop when's tennis, winning four Grand Slam titles — two at the Australian Open, two at the U.S. Open and ascending to No. 1 in the WTA rankings. The victory allowed her to reach the third round at a major tournament for the first time since the 2022 season.

Getting to that stage was not considered a big deal at one point for her. But time off because of mental health breaks and then a pregnancy — Osaka's daughter, Shai, was born in July 2023 changed things.

Since returning to action a year ago, Osaka has shown signs of



getting her game back together, including a memorable and narrow loss to then-No. 1 Iga Swiatek at the French Open. This,

though, followed a win against 2022 U.S. Open semifinalist Caroline Garcia in Melbourne and meant the progress is real.

"It definitely was something that is a goal of mine, especially after last year; I wasn't able to beat a seed in a Grand Slam," Osaka

said. "I'm obviously very thankful reaching the net. that that happened so early this

She also joked about gaining a measure of "revenge" by defeating Garcia — who eliminated Osaka in Melbourne a year ago — and Muchova in consecutive matches. Next for Osaka is a matchup against Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic, who is also a mother; her daughter, Bella, was born last year. Both Osaka and Bencic are big hitters.

"It's going to be a fun match," Bencic said.

Muchova wasn't the highest-seeded player to exit Wednesday. That was No. 5 Zheng Qinwen, the runner-up to Aryna Sabalenka at the 2024 Australian Open and the gold medalist at the Paris Games last August. Zheng lost a bit of focus after being called for a time violation and never managed to counter 97th-ranked Laura Siegemund's strokes, bowing out 7-6 (3), 6-3 at John Cain Arena.

After the chair umpire cited her for taking too long to serve, Zheng hit her next offering so dismissing poorly it bounced way before 0, 6-1, 6-4.

"I knew," Siegemund said, "I just had to play more than my best tennis." The player who beat Zheng in the final 12 months ago, No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka, stretched her Melbourne Park winning streak

to 16 matches as she eyes a third consecutive title, beating No. 54 Iessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-3, 7-5 at Rod Laver Arena. Other women's winners included No. 7 Jessica Pegula, No. 14 Mirra Andreeva and No. 30 Leylah Fernandez, with 2023 U.S. Open

champion Coco Gauff in action during the night session. Novak Djokovic added to his record collection by playing in his

430th career Grand Slam match — one more than Roger Federer and, though he dropped a set for the second outing in a row, moved into the third round with a 6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-2 win over Jaime Faria.

Other men who advanced included No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz, who joked that he is now a "serve bot" after hitting 14 aces while dismissing Yoshihito Nishioka 6-



SA20: Joburg Super Kings, Pretoria Capitals register convincing wins

Joburg Super Kings and Pretoria Capitals claimed victories Durban's Super Giants and Sunrisers Eastern Cape respectively in the Betway

The JSK spin trio of Tabraiz Shamsi, Donovan Ferreira and Imran Tahir combined in perfect tandem to propel the visitors to a 28-run victory at Kingsmead, while the smashed the final two balls of the influential in their six-wicket sites to seize the bonus point win over the momentum. ng champions

Super Giants' middle-order batter Ouinton de Kock played a lone hand of 55 (45 balls, 5x4, 2x6) to keep his team afloat in pursuit of JSK's

169/4.But Shamsi, Ferreira and that had been under the Tahir snared five wickets between them to bowl out the Super Giants for 141. Tahir also produced a moment of brilliance in the field which proved to be hugely inspirational for the visitors. The 45-year-old displayed the athleticism of a teenager to snare a brilliant two-handed diving catch at point off a Wiaan Mulder reverse-sweep. JSK were certainly galvanised by the veteran to squeeze the Super Giants middle-order after the home team seemed well set at 99/4 with the dangerous pair of De Kock and Heinrich Klaasen at the

Klaasen (29 of 17 balls) was

building up momentum by striking Matheesha Pathirana for a couple of boundaries and a six, but the Sri Lankan exacted revenge by having him caught down the leg side with the final ball of the 12th over to set in the collapse. Earlier, the Super Kings

rallied to a competitive total through contributions from Leus du Plooy (38), Jonny Bairstow (26) and Ferreira (26) before Gerald Coetzee smashed the final two balls of

benefited from winning the toss with captain Rilee Rossouw having no hesitation in electing to bowl. It immediately proved to be the correct decision on a surface covers for a lengthy period of time with the home team's fast bowlers gaining significant seam movement early on.

Eathan Bosch (2/18) landed the first blow when he removed opener Zak Crawley. Bosch was well supported by Darvn Dupavillion (3/32), who struck with successive deliveries to send both David Bedingham and Sunrisers captain Aiden Markram back to the pavilion to leave the defending champions in tatters at 3 for 4.

The visitors slipped deeper into trouble when Tom Abell and Tristan Stubbs also departed within two runs of

England batter James Vince quits First-Class cricket to play in PSL

England batter James Vince
Class cricket to play for
Karachi Kings in the
upcoming Pakistan Super
League, defying ECB's
decision not to grant NOC's
for its cricketers to appear in
the T20 competition.

the T20 competition.

The England board had decided in November, 2024, to refrain from issuing NOCs to all-format players to play in the PSL, scheduled for April-May this season, because the league clashes with the early rounds of the with the early rounds of the County Championship. Vince, who has played 13

Tests, was expected to lead Hampshire this season as well, but he was retained by the Kings ahead of the PSL



my club and home for 16 years, so I want to be able to maintain my best to keep delivering for Hampshire in T20 cricket, and hopefully even further our success in the competition [the Blast],"

Vince said in a statement. "I also need to understand

"I love Hampshire. It's been what is best for my family,

and combine that with the stage of my career I am at," he added. The 33-year-old, who has been leading Hampshire since 2015, is currently playing for Gulf Giants in the ILT20 tournament in the UAE.

Giles White, Hampshire's director of cricket, said they

respected Vince's decision.

"James has been at the heart of the club for the best part of 20 years, showing absolute commitment on and off the field as the team's leading batter and captain," said White.

"We recognise that this announcement will be tinged with disappointment for many fans but hope everyone will join us in celebrating what he has given to our club over many years." From 216 First-Class

matches, Vince has scored 13340 runs at an average of 40 with 30 hundreds. The ESPNCricinfo

meanwhile, reported that England batter Tom Kohler-Cadmore too quit County cricket to play in the PSL for Peshawar Zalmi, and he is in talks with Somerset in this

Yashasvi Jaiswal joins Mumbai Ranji camp

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal on Wednesday joined the Mumbai camp after confirming his availability for the next round of Ranji Trophy but skipper Rohit Sharma was not to be seen after turning up for a couple of practice on the

opening day of training.
Rohit, who batted alongside
Mumbai captain Ajinkya
Rahane on Tuesday here at the Wankhede Stadium, expected to resume training in a day or two.

However, it remains to be seen However, it remains to be seen if the incumbent Indian skipper would play in the domestic giant's next Ranji Trophy fixture. Rohit is yet to confirm his availability for the Elite Group A contest against Jammu and Kashmir starting on January 23 but so far, no formal discussions have been



"The selectors are expected to announce the squad on January 20, during which they will follow the due process of checking for the availability of every player. Rohit will also be approached around the time for selection," a Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) official told PTI.

The 37-year-old is looking to put an end to his poor run with the bat after he managed a mere 31 runs in three Tests that he played against Australia in the Border-

Champions Trophy opening in Febuary third week; PCB hopeful Rohit Sharma will be there

conference.

The opening ceremony of I the Champions Trophy will be held either on February 16 or 17 and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is confident that India captain Rohit Sharma will be in attendance at the event. The PCB source also said that it is awaiting communication from the ICC on the schedule of the customary captains' photo-

shoot and the pre-event press

The eight-team tournament will get underway on February 19 in Karachi. However, India will play all their matches in Dubai, starting with the clash against Bangladesh on February 20, after refusing to travel to Pakistan owing to security concerns.

The source said PCB has procured all relevant from clearances government to promptly



issue visas to all captains, players and team officials who will come here for pretournament events. "This obviously includes

Rohit or any other Indian team player or official or board official," he added. Another source confirmed to PTI that the PCB has made it clear to the ICC that the opening ceremony, featuring all teams and their captains, will take place in Pakistan.

"This is in line with the usual

protocols and since the

opening match is on 19th the opening ceremony can be expected either on the 16th or 17th," the source added. He said the schedule of the opening ceremony would depend on the warm-up matches list.

The source said that recently three Indian nationals, who were a part of the ICC delegation which came to Pakistan, were promptly issued visas once the world body sent their names to the

East Bengal seek government intervention over ISL 'step-motherly treatment'

Alleging "step-motherly treatment" by the Indian Super League organizers, century-old East Bengal club has sought Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's intervention. claiming that systemic bias, the outdated "refugees club" refereeing and tag, controversies have stalled their progress in the top-tier

football competition. The incident occurred during the 'Kolkata Derby' in Guwahati on Saturday where East Bengal lost to arch-rivals

Mohun Bagan by a solitary The club claimed the match was marred by biased officiating, including the denial of a clear penalty and a controversial yellow card issued to midfielder Souvik

Chakrabarti, which led to his

red card and team being



In an emotional plea to the sports minister, East Bengal highlighted how the "refugees club" tag has led to their ongoing marginalisation in Indian football.

"Fight, Fight and Fight -- this has been the perennial motto of East Bengal club for the last 150 years. This club and its supporters have endured the tumultuous period pre and post-partition only through its fighting spirit. "While the displaced people

fought tooth and nail for their substance, the club had to

a 'Refugees Club' to establish itself as the leading football club of the country," East Bengal general secretary Rupak Saha wrote in a statement. We are surprised that even

75 years after independence. we are in a situation where East Bengal Club has been victimised in almost every match of the ISL. We are forced to think why

all this is happening to us is it because we are still considered the 'Refugees Club'. Throughout the last 10 -12 years, we had to bear the brunt of biased referring, be it in the I-League and more so in the ISL.

"During this period, we must have sent close to 50 complaint letters to all the concerned authorities but to no avail and the standard of referring has only gone from bad to worse to the worst.

Can't wait to meet Ricky Ponting and ask him about the pull shot: Priyansh Arya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

When Priyansh Arya hit six sixes in an over last year, he mainly targeted the straight boundary. But when he joins the Punjab Kings IPL camp, it's the pull shot that he wants to perfect with some help from head coach Ricky Ponting, who patented the stroke in his playing days.

Those half a dozen sixes off bound to become a better left-arm spinner Manan Bhardwaj's one over in the inaugural Delhi Premier League put Arya under the spotlight and eventually led to the left-hander drawing a potentially life-changing Rs 3.8 crore winning bid from Puniab Kings, more than 12 times his base price of Rs 30

the 23-year-old at the mega auction as he made a belligerent hundred against UP in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy days before the highprofile event in Saudi Arabia. Having been part of Punjab Kings' first pre-season camp in Mumbai last week, Arya has already got the taste of the higher level and says he is player after his maiden season in the IPL, which begins on

It was as if the stars aligned for

Has life changed for the Delhi lad since the auction day? "Life has not changed much since the auction. Yes, there is more interest from people and my expectations from myself have increased. The pre-

March 21.

idea where I need to be come the IPL as I got to do things I have never done in training before."

Arya got to chat with his IPL skipper Shreyas Iyer briefly during the Mumbai camp and apart from him, he is equally excited about spending time

with Ponting.
"I have not had the chance to speak to Ricky sir. But when I get to meet him, the first thing I want to ask him is about the pull shot," he said referring to one of the best exponents of the pull shot.

"I am also really excited about spending time with Iyer. I love the attitude of Iyer and Ricky sir, both on and off the field. I would also like to ask them about their mindset in highs season camp gave me a fair and lows.



best you can learn a lot, I have already experienced it (in the camp)," said Arya, whose parents teach in a government school in the national capital. The IPL is still some time away



alongside Prabhsimran Singh, there will be immense pressure and scrutiny. Will his price tag also play on his mind? "I am not thinking on those lines. For me it is just about learning from the best minds in the game." And what does he plan to do

with the money? "That (is something) my parents will decide," pat came the response from Arya.

Growing up, he closely tracked the career of now India head coach Gautam Gambhi as they both came to the same academy in Delhi.

Arya loves Gambhir's play against spin and he too has gone on to become a decent batter against the turning ball. No wonder those six sixes came off a spinner.

Besides Gambhir, Arya also draws inspiration from Sri Lankan great Sangakkara.

Kumar

like to play down the ground. That is what I was thinking at that time (when he hit six sixes). I have followed Gautam bhaiya a lot. I loved how he used to play spin and that is what I tried to pick from him. "Among overseas players, I like Kumar Sangakkara. I love his cover drive a lot though personally I like pull shot the most."

The moment when his name came under the hammer will remain fresh in Arya's memory forever.

We were playing the domestic T20 (SMAT) and I was sitting in the hotel with my teammates. I could not express myself after Punjab made that winning bid.

"I did not know what do. My "Right from the beginning, I phone stopped working. I

would have been happy at just being picked but to get this bid made me feel really good," Arya recollected.

Arya made his T20 debut for Delhi in 2023 and List A in 2021, long before he achieved the memorable feat in the DPL last year. The southpaw looked back at his journey thus far. "There were challenges. The

year I made my debut I got to play only two games and was on the bench the rest of time. The year after I was dropped from the senior team. When I got the DPL stage, I told myself I have to be the best batter in the competition and that happened?

He is yet to play first-class cricket and that his next target. However, the ultimate aim is to play Test cricket.

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