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**WORLD 9**  
TARIFF THREAT SWAYS  
COLOMBIA, BUT RISKS RISE  
WITH CANADA, MEXICO

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## TRUMP THREATENS INDIA WITH TARIFF



PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States will impose tariffs on the countries that "harm" America, President Donald Trump has said, as he named China, India and Brazil as high-tariff countries. "We're going to put tariffs on outside countries and outside people that really mean harm to us. Well, they mean us harm, but they basically want to make their country good," Trump told House Republicans at a Florida retreat on Monday, the first after he became the president for the second term last week. "Look at what others do. China is a tremendous tariff maker, and India and Brazil and so many other countries. So we're not going to let that happen any longer because we're going to put America first," he said.

He said that the US will establish a "very fair system where money is going to come into our coffers and America is going to be very rich again," adding that it will happen "very quickly". Trump underscored that it was time for the US to return to the system that made it "richer and more powerful than ever before." Referring to his inaugural speech last week, Trump said: "Instead of taxing our citizens to enrich foreign nations, we should be tariffing and taxing foreign nations to enrich our citizens." "Under the American first economic model, as tariffs on other countries go up, taxes on American workers and businesses will come down and massive numbers of jobs and factories will come home," he said. Earlier, Trump has already

talked about slapping "100 per cent tariffs" on the BRICS grouping, a bloc that includes India as well. During his address, Trump asked companies to come and set up manufacturing units in the US if they wished to avoid tariffs. "If you want to stop paying the taxes or the tariffs, you have to build your plant right here in America. That's what's going to happen at record levels. We're going to have more plants built in the next short period of time than anybody ever envisioned before because the incentive is going to be there because they have no tariff whatsoever," he said. The president said that the US will support companies building plants in America, particularly in industries like pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and steel. Trump added that his administration would also be placing tariffs on steel, aluminium, copper and other materials required by the US military. "We have to bring production back to our country. There was a time when we made one ship a day, and now we can't build a ship. We don't know what the hell we're doing. It's all gone to other locations and other lands," he said. "To further return production to the United States, we're going to environmentally free up our rare earth minerals. We have some of the best rare earth anywhere in the world, but we're not allowed to use it because the environmentalists got there first," said the president in his address.

## Politics in Delhi goes digital

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In the intense race to wrest power from Aam Admi Party (AAP), the Congress which ruled 15 years and BJP which has not been in Delhi politics for about three decades now and incumbent AAP looking forward to retain itself have gone for an aggressive campaign by making optimum use of the available social media platforms. Digital platform has become the primary battleground for political messaging, overshadowing traditional forms of campaigning for the February 5 Delhi assembly poll. An analysis conducted by The Pioneer highlights the increasing reliance on digital reach by these political parties, with the BJP leading the charge in terms of spending on platforms like Facebook,



In the last 30 days: BJP spent ₹2.5Cr, followed by the AAP (₹77 Lakhs) and the Congress (₹23 Lakh)

Google, and YouTube. Sources aid BJP has allocated substantial funds to advertise their messages, using a combination of videos and images to creatively reach the targeted electorates. On Facebook, the BJP has spent a

whopping Rs 2,58,34,976 over 30 days, from December 26 to January 24, according to Google Transparency Report. This expenditure covers around 863 advertisements, which includes a diverse mix of content ranging from short, impactful videos to visually compelling image posts.

Trailing behind in Facebook advertising, AAP spent Rs 77,80,887 on 625 advertisements, while Congress followed suit with a more modest expenditure of Rs 23,22,372 across 49 ads. The competition doesn't stop at Facebook. On YouTube, a platform widely used in India, political ads have become ubiquitous ahead of the state elections, which are scheduled to take place on February 5. The BJP once again took the lead in terms of spending, shelling out Rs 4,34,15,250 between December 1 and January 27 for 505 YouTube ads. On January 25 alone, the BJP spent Rs 27,40,000, followed by Rs 24,60,000 on January 12, and Rs 23,30,000 on January 11. Through these ads, the BJP is deploying a variety of creative approaches to capture the attention of voters.

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## Amit Shah paves the road for BJP in Capital

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a jibe at his political rivals ahead of the high-octane Delhi assembly elections, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday slammed Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge for his remark on BJP leaders taking a holy dip at the Sangam and said the Congress under Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi had always insulted Sanatan Dharma. He accused AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal of falsely alleging that the Haryana government mixed poison in the Yamuna, daring him to make public the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) report that he cited to level the charge. Addressing a public meeting in the Kalkaji assembly constituency, he took a swipe at Kharge and said, "I took a



Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah with party MP Bansuri Swaraj during a roadshow in support of party candidate Neeraj Basoya ahead of Delhi Assembly elections, in New Delhi. Photo: The Pioneer

dip (at Triveni Sangam) and Kharge ji caught a cold." At the Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan rally in the Mhow town of Madhya Pradesh on

Monday, Kharge had alleged that BJP leaders were competing with each other to take a dip at the Sangam for the cameras, and asked if their

act would help eradicate poverty in the country. "If anyone was hurt, I seek an apology," the Congress chief had also said. Reacting to the remark, Shah urged Kharge not to poke fun at the reverence of crores of people visiting the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj to take a holy dip at the Sangam. "Kharge ji, if you do not have any reverence (for Maha Kumbh), there is no compulsion. But don't make fun of the reverence of more than 48 crore people visiting the Kumbh to take a holy dip," he said. "The Congress under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi has always insulted Sanatan Dharma," he charged.

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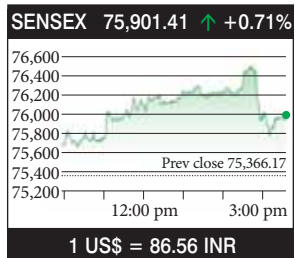


## Jan 31-Apr 4: Budget Session

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will take up discussion on President Droupadi Murmu's address to Parliament on Monday as the Budget Session begins on January 31. The President will address both the Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Lok Sabha chamber on Friday and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the General Budget on Saturday. The Finance Minister will table the Economic Survey on Friday when both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will convene briefly after the President's address. Lok Sabha has provisionally allotted two days (February 3-4) for discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, while Rajya Sabha has earmarked three days for the debate. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to reply to the debate in Rajya Sabha on February 6. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has convened a meeting of floor leaders of political parties in Parliament on January 30 to ensure smooth functioning of the Budget Session. The first part of the Budget Session will have nine sittings from January 31 to February 13. Parliament will then break for recess to examine the budget proposals on February 13 and meet again from March 10 to discuss the demands for grants of various ministries and complete the budgetary process. The session will conclude on April 4. The entire Budget Session will have 27 sittings.

## MARKETS



## WEATHER



## NEWS BRIEFS

### Five dead in Delhi building collapse

NEW DELHI: A building collapse in north Delhi's Burari on Monday killed five, including two girls, and left several trapped under debris. Authorities are investigating the cause, and legal action is being taken against the building owner. Compensation has been announced for the victims' families.

### Trisha Gongadi's 110\* takes India to semis

KUALA LUMPUR: Trisha Gongadi made history by scoring the first-ever century in the Women's U-19 T20 World Cup, leading India to a 150-run victory over Scotland and a semifinal spot. Her 110\* off 59 balls, supported by Kamalini G's 51, powered India to 208/1.

### SC allows Tahir to campaign from jail

NEW DELHI: SC has granted custody parole to former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, allowing him to campaign for the Delhi Assembly elections. He must remain in police custody during the day and return to jail nightly. The court imposed security costs of Rs 2.47 lakh per day and set conditions on his parole.

## Politics boil over 'water terrorism'



Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Bhupender Yadav, Haryana CM Nayab Saini and other BJP leaders after meeting the Election Commission of India. PTI

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday asked AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal to substantiate with facts his allegations of poisoning of Yamuna River and mass genocide. The poll body has sought a response, a proof from the AAP national convener by 8 pm on 29 January. The Commission has asked the AAP led Delhi government to provide evidence of Haryana government 'poisoning' Delhi water supply. This comes after both the BJP and Congress had complained to the poll panel against Kejriwal for levelling allegations of poisoning of

Yamuna river. A BJP delegation, comprising Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Bhupender Yadav and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh met all three members of the EC, and requested them to ask the AAP leader to retract his charge and apologise for creating "panic" among people. BJP leaders also urged the Commission to bar him from campaigning for his allegation that Haryana was poisoning the water of Yamuna. Meanwhile, Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit raised the issue with Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, demanding action against Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi over the issue.

In a letter to Kejriwal, the EC said the matter is being examined by the Commission in the light of provisions of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and relevant provisions of law. "Therefore, you are called upon to furnish your response on the complaints especially on the factual and legal matrix along with evidentiary support thereof by 8 pm hours on 29 th January, 2025 so as to enable the Commission to examine the matter and take action as appropriate." "However, as regards the allegations of poisoning, it is expected that there must be a factual foundation to the allegations especially when the veracity of the statements made by you is contested, then you must be able to back your statements on a factual basis," the EC said. The Commission noted that such allegations have serious ramifications of creating enmity between the regional groups, and residents of the neighbouring states, threat of a law-and-order situation due to actual or perceived shortage or non-availability of water, during this time of the year.

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## Rahul Gandhi attacks INDIA bloc ally

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Heating up the election fervour ahead of the Delhi assembly elections, Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday launched a scathing attack at his political rivals including AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi while hitting out at the ruling party for 'sheeshmahal' and alleged money laundering linked excise policy scam. He also took a dig at the media for not highlighting the real issues, instead focusing on 'Ambani wedding' and cricket matches. Addressing a public gathering in Patparganj, Gandhi claimed that while former Chief Minister came with the promise of bringing 'clean politics', he is now known for the biggest liquor scam and sheeshmahal. "On one side there is BJP and on the other there is Kejriwal who says whatever he wishes. He said we will do a new kind of politics. He said we will change Delhi. And when poor needed him, he was nowhere to be seen. When there was violence in Delhi, he was nowhere to be seen," he said, while campaigning for



LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party candidate Anil Choudhary during a rally for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, at Patparganj in New Delhi. PTI

Congress' candidate Anil Choudhary. Hitting out the ruling party, Gandhi asserted, "He said that the AAP will bring clean politics. Despite this, he is now known for the biggest liquor scam and resides in sheeshmahal." He added that when PM Modi threw him out of his home, he gave him the keys, stating that he doesn't need their house. Calling the sitting MLA and former Chief Minister Manish Sisodia the 'architect' of liquor scam, he said, "Manish Sisodia was a candidate before, who is the architect of liquor scam along with Kejriwal. Now he has run away from the seat out of fear."

second public meeting in the national Capital for the upcoming state polls, scores of party supporters gathered to hear him with the atmosphere palpable with enthusiasm. Resident of the area claimed that roads are filled with potholes and the schools, that the AAP claims to have built, were built in former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's rule and are merely renovated by the incumbent government. Taking a jibe at the media, he said, "I am saying that they are our friends but they are not. While the nation is grappling with poor infrastructure, unemployment and hunger, they show Ambani wedding and Modi attending it."

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## Banks of Sangam ready for 10 crore devotees

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Prayagraj is abuzz with spiritual fervor as preparations for Mauni Amavasya Amrit Snan, the most auspicious bathing festival of the Maha Kumbh 2025, reach their final stages. With an anticipated turnout of over 10 crore devotees at the sacred Triveni Sangam, the city is witnessing a historic confluence of faith, tradition, and meticulous planning. Though Mauni Amavasya falls on January 29, thousands of pilgrims have already begun arriving at the sprawling Mela grounds, eager to partake in the divine experience. The administration has left no stone unturned in ensuring that the event is both grand and safe, offering seamless facilities to the millions expected. A massive 12-kilometre-long stretch of bathing ghats has been constructed along the riverbanks to

accommodate the influx of devotees. To prevent overcrowding, the administration has encouraged pilgrims to bathe at the ghat nearest to their entry points. Devotees entering from different zones will be directed to designated ghats based on their location, ensuring a smooth flow of pilgrims. Special arrangements have been made for different groups of devotees. The Airavat Sangam Ghat will host pilgrims from eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, and northeastern states. Devotees from Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and southern states will bathe at specially developed ghats in Arail while pilgrims from Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, and Uttarakhand will be accommodated at ghats extending from Sangam to Nagvasuki. Separate ghats have been reserved for saints, seers, and their disciples from various Akharas, ensuring



Devotees gather at the Sangam on the eve of 'Mauni Amavasya' during the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. PTI

that traditional rituals are conducted without interruption. Common devotees will have access to exclusive ghats near the Sangam coast. Deputy Commissioner Ashok Tiwari described the management efforts as "unprecedented." "We have deployed over 5,000 personnel across the Mela area, including SDMs, tehsildars, and IAS officers, to ensure smooth operations. Evacuation teams, watchtowers, and flying squads are on high alert to handle any emergency," he said. District Magistrate Ravindra

Kumar Mandhad appealed to Prayagraj residents to avoid using four-wheelers during the festival to prevent traffic snarls. "Your cooperation will allow lakhs of pilgrims to experience the Sangam without hurdles," he urged. Mela Grounds: A Glimpse into Spiritual Magnificence The Mela grounds have transformed into a vibrant hub of spirituality. Rows of temporary tents housing Kalpavasis (pilgrims who spend the entire month by the river) and saints are adorned with flags and banners. The aroma of freshly prepared khichdi wafts through the air as thousands gather for communal meals. Volunteers serve simple yet hearty meals, a testament to the hospitality associated with the Kumbh. Kavita Devi, a pilgrim from Odisha, shared her excitement: "The arrangements are remarkable. From clean ghats to free food, everything is well-organized. Taking a dip at

the Sangam is a blessing I've waited my whole life for." Local vendors have set up stalls selling religious items, including rudraksha beads, holy books, and brass pots for carrying sacred water. The chants of "Har Har Gange" reverberate through the air, adding to the divine atmosphere. Mauni Amavasya, a day of silence and introspection, is regarded as one of the most sacred days for taking a dip at the Sangam. Devotees believe the ritual purifies the soul and washes away sins. For many, the festival represents hope, renewal, and a deep connection with the divine. As preparations near completion, Prayagraj stands ready to welcome the world to this monumental celebration of faith and culture. With its meticulous planning and unwavering devotion, the Mauni Amavasya Amrit Snan promises to be an unforgettable chapter in the legacy of the Maha Kumbh.

# Yogi: Islamic nation Indonesia honours its Indian heritage

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Tuesday, asked whether India's largest minority would accept that their ancestors were Ram's devotees like Indonesia. Speaking at a private channel's event held in Lucknow on Tuesday, Chief Minister Yogi highlighted Indonesia's strong cultural ties to India, noting that despite being a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia honours its Indian heritage, with traditions like Ramlila, a national airline named Garuda and Ganpati featured on its currency. He also noted that the Indonesian President's name is inspired by Sanskrit and posed a thought-provoking question: "Would a significant portion of India's population, often viewed as a 'vote bank', accept Lord Ram as their ancestor, despite benefiting from the land and its resources?" He further shared his views on several pressing issues, including the rights of minorities, electricity theft, the Waqf Act, appeasement politics and preparations for Maha Kumbh 2025. The chief minister urged India's minorities to take pride in their ancestors, citing Indonesia as an example.

On the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Chief Minister Yogi firmly addressed opposition warnings, saying, "The amendments to the Waqf Act are a necessity of the times. I am glad the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) has worked on this, and I hope it will be implemented in the next session." He emphasised that the goal of such changes is to ensure transparency and justice in society. "Just as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was implemented to benefit minorities from neighbouring countries, the amended Waqf Bill will also be enforced," he remarked. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath pointed out discrepancies in Waqf land claims in Uttar Pradesh. "Waqf has no land of its own; it's revenue land. Waqf had claimed 1.27 lakh properties in the state, but upon investigation, only 7,000 were found to be valid." He stressed that public property belongs to the Revenue Department and should serve public or administrative purposes. Referring to Sambhal, he added that even there, no objections were raised. Addressing the ongoing dispute surrounding the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, he asserted the importance of

historical evidence and ancient scriptures. He referred to mentions of Sambhal in the Puranas and Ain-i-Akbari, stating that the latter records show how Mir Baqi demolished a temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu to construct the mosque. "We are not looking for temples everywhere, but where historical evidence exists, it is important to bring the truth to light," Chief Minister Yogi said. Responding to remarks by All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) leader Asaduddin Owaisi, the chief minister pointed out that Indian scriptures offer clear evidence of the significance of Sambhal. "The Puranas, written over 3,500 to 5,000 years ago, detail the place of Lord Vishnu's 10th incarnation. Islam came into existence only 1,400 years ago, and we have no issue with it. However, the historical facts cannot be ignored," he said. Chief Minister Yogi urged sceptics to refer to Ain-i-Akbari and consider the findings from archaeological excavations in Sambhal. "The excavations reveal evidence of an ancient city mentioned in the Puranas. These findings align with the traditional beliefs of the people. If such truths are

emerging, I believe everyone should have the courage to accept them," he remarked. Taking a strong stance on electricity theft in Sambhal, the chief minister highlighted its adverse impact on the state's power sector. He said that Sambhal, with a population of just three lakhs, incurred electricity theft worth Rs 200 crore monthly. Temporary substations were even set up atop mosques to facilitate the theft, he added. "We conducted raids on four mosques and disconnected illegal connections. This was an injustice to consumers who pay their bills on time," Chief Minister Yogi stated. He further emphasised the financial burden on the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation, which is currently facing an annual loss of Rs 46,000 crore, was projected to rise to Rs 60,000 crore next year. "In Sambhal alone, 90 per cent of electricity was being stolen. Such inefficiencies had to be addressed," he added. The chief minister also criticised the Delhi government, comparing the electricity rates and power supply conditions in both states. "In Delhi, electricity costs Rs 9-10 per unit, while in Uttar Pradesh, it is Rs 3.5 per unit. Yet, Delhi faces frequent power cuts," he said.

# 7 killed as wooden platform at 'Nirvana Laddu Parv' collapses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A major accident marred the first Tirthankara in Jainism, Bhagwan Adinath, in Baghpat, on Tuesday, as a wooden platform within the Manastamba complex crumpled, leaving seven dead and trapping over 50 devotees beneath the debris. The unexpected collapse resulted in a chaotic scene filled with panic and confusion as rescue efforts were launched at the site. The absence of readily available ambulances meant that many of the injured were transported to hospitals via e-rickshaws. Emergency responders from the Badaut police team quickly arrived to manage the situation and assist in the ongoing rescue operations, further highlighting the urgency of the situation. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took cognisance of the incident. He directed officials to immediately reach the location, expedite the relief efforts and prioritise the provision of proper medical treatment to the injured. Additionally, the chief minister expressed his wishes for the speedy recovery of all those affected by the unfortunate event. Baghpat District Magistrate Asmita Lal and Superintendent of Police Arpit Vijayvargiya rushed to the district hospital to



A security personnel stands guard at the site after a wooden structure collapsed during a Jain community event, in Baghpat

enquire about the well-being of the injured. Asmita Lal confirmed five deaths while two more deaths were reported from hospital but the identity of the victims could not be ascertained. The others were identified as Taraspal (80), Amit (40), Usha (65), Vineet and Kamlesh, all of Baghpat. It may be mentioned that earlier this month, at least six people were killed and 35 injured in

a stampede near one of India's busiest and richest temples, Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, popularly known as Tirupati, in Andhra Pradesh. The stampede happened after thousands of devout Hindus assembled there to secure free visit passes. Meanwhile, in another tragic accident, four friends died in Deoria on Monday night. The four youths were going home by motorcycle after celebrating their friend's birthday. The

youths were crushed by a truck near Yadav Hotel near Hetampur highway in Mahuadih police station area. On receiving information, the police reached the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem. The deceased were identified as 22-year-old Ankit Gaur, 20-year-old Pintu Gaur, 22-year-old Atul Singh and 22-year-old Nitesh Singh. They had come to Deoria late Monday evening to celebrate their friend's birthday.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**NOTICE**

My name has wrongly been mentioned in Aadhar Card No. 5408 4437 7711 as "Aakash Dixit S/o Abhay Kumar Dixit" my correct name is "Shivam Kumar S/o Abhay Kumar" and D.O.B. 20-10-2002 in my all certificates my name is recorded as "Shivam Kumar" I shall be known & identified by this name.

**NOTICE**

I Himanshu Pandey S/o Kamlesh Kumar pandey R/o 1272/B, Shekhpur Unnau I have lost my last page of chain deed whose Vol. 8539 Page 169-190/1996 at S.R.O Unnau which is executed by Shabana Roshan & Others on 02/02/2014 It should be not misuse & Will be treated as illegal offence.

**NOTICE**

I Have Changed My Name From Mustajab Ali to Mustajab Ali Hashmi. In Future I shall be Known as Mustajab Ali Hashmi s/o Wajahat Ali Hashmi, 1091-B, Awaz Vikas Colony, Unnau.

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Praveen Agarwal to Praveen Kumar Agarwal for all future purposes. Praveen Kumar Agarwal S/o Sri Vinod Kumar R/o Shatrangji Mohal Kanpur.

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The allotment and possession letters of my house no.60 E/5 Dabauli, Kanpur Nagar, have been lost somewhere, the use of which will be illegal. Suneel Singh S/o Bhudraj Singh.

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## CM inaugurates AGREES project

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Tuesday, inaugurated the Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Growth and Rural Enterprise Ecosystem Strengthening (UP-AGREES) project, marking a significant step forward for farmers and the agriculture sector. This project is expected to become a milestone in boosting agricultural productivity, enhancing rural enterprises and empowering farmers in the state. It aims to improve farmers' yield, which is anticipated to rise from 10 quintals to 14-15 quintals per acre, and will provide a much-needed boost to the agricultural economy of UP. It is worth mentioning here that around 45 per cent of the country's land is cultivable, with 75 per cent of this land located in UP, making the state one of the most fertile and productive regions in India. This is why UP leads the nation in the production of wheat, potatoes, mangoes, guavas, peas, mushrooms, watermelons, honey, and more. The state accounts for 15 per cent of India's vegetable production and 11 per cent of its fruit production. Despite housing 16 to 17 per cent of the nation's population, UP contributes over 23 per cent of India's food grain output, earning it the title of the food basket of India.

## UGC recognition to Chandigarh varsity's Lucknow campus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chandigarh University Lucknow has received recognition from University Grants Commission (UGC) to start courses from 2025-26 academic year. Sharing this information, Managing Director of Chandigarh University, Jai Inder Singh Sandhu, said Chandigarh University Lucknow received recognition from the UGC on January 24, 2025 and it had now been included in the list of state public universities under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956. He said with the UGC recognition, Chandigarh University Lucknow was now offering 43 AI-augmented futuristic academic programmes, which include 30 undergraduate (UG) and 13 post-graduate (PG) courses, from 2025-26 academic session. These courses include six streams, including engineering, computer science and technology, business management, health and life sciences, humanities and legal studies and will start from the new academic year in 2025-26. Sandhu disclosed that in engineering, Chandigarh University Lucknow is offering nine undergraduate and three post-graduate courses; in business management, it is

offering four undergraduate and seven post-graduate courses; and in computer applications, three undergraduate and two post-graduate courses. He said in addition to these courses, Chandigarh University Lucknow would offer two UG courses in commerce, three undergraduate courses in science, one UG course in pharmacy, three UG courses in legal studies and three UG courses in humanities which includes journalism and mass communication. Sandhu said founded by visionary leaders from diverse sectors, Chandigarh University Lucknow had incorporated AI across streams, including engineering, management, social sciences, law and humanities, providing 21st-century learners with a comprehensive understanding of global issues and preparing them to become key contributors to the AI-driven workforce. "Chandigarh University Lucknow is offering new age AI-augmented multidisciplinary education through 43 AI-augmented futuristic programs across six streams to leverage the immense potential of AI to ignite a spirit of ground-breaking innovation and facilitate holistic learning," the Chandigarh University MD said.

## Mass murders: Absconding co-accused held, sent to jail

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Badar aka Badarrudin, the Bco-accused in the murder of five female members of the family in a hotel in Lucknow, made confession similar to the confession made by his son Mohammed Ashraf during police interrogation. The police arrested Badar on Monday after a long chase. Badar, along with his son, had killed his wife and his four daughters in a room of Hotel Sharanjit. While Ashraf had surrendered immediately after the mass murders, a reward of Rs 25,000 was announced for Badar's arrest as he absconded. His photographs were widely circulated in the media and pasted at public places, and bus stands and railway stations. During interrogation of Badar, several important facts came to light. Badar had planned the murders with his son in Ajmer. Almost all the disclosures made by Badar during interrogation are similar to what his son had told the police earlier. After a fight with the neighbours, they went to Ajmer where both of them convinced the entire family that everyone should die, as there was a dispute with the neighbours and doing so would implicate them. After that, both of them committed the crime. Alcohol was purchased from a liquor shop next to the hotel. After the mass murders, Ashraf had suggested to his father to commit suicide by jumping in front of a train, but Badar

## Man slits wife's throat

Lucknow (PNS): A man slit her throat with a knife following a verbal dispute in Bijnor police station area on Tuesday. After attacking his wife, the man injured himself by stabbing himself in the neck. According to Bijnor in-charge Inspector Arvind Singh Rana, Rani (40), a native of Kesari Ganj in Laharpur, Sitapur, lives in a rented house in Bijnor. She is involved in a court case with her husband Ramesh Kashyap (42), a native of Jamunia in Kheri, Lakhimpur. Reports said Ramesh Kashyap reached his wife's house in Bijnor in the morning and asked Rani to go along with him. When Rani refused to go with him, they had a verbal argument. After arguing for a long time, Ramesh got furious and attacked Rani with a knife and slit her throat. Seeing Rani soaked in blood, Ramesh panicked and stabbed himself in the neck. The police sent both of them to the SGPJMS trauma centre where both are undergoing treatment. Ramesh and Rani have four children. Rani lives in a rented house in Bijnor with her two children and works as a labourer. The other two children are living with Ramesh. could not muster the courage. He thought of committing suicide several times, but was unable to do so. After the mass murders, he went to Kanpur to withdraw money, then he met a lawyer in Agra, but the lawyer refused to take the case. During his escape, he kept travelling to places like Rajasthan, Delhi etc. and did not stay anywhere permanently. He used to travel by bus at night and roam around during the day. In Delhi, he tried to meet his family, but due to fear, he did not go to their house. He also went to Nepal and stayed there about a week but finally came to Lucknow. Badar said that because of the reward announced on his arrest, people were constantly questioning him and everyone looked at him with suspicion. He had also run out of money, and because of this he was upset and decided to come to Lucknow. Badar was first caught on January 24 but he evaded arrest. "When Badar was caught by the police at Krishnanagar Metro station on January 24, 2025, he told the cops that he had eaten halwa mixed with rat poison. The police admitted him to Balaram Hospital, from where he was discharged after being kept under observation for about two days. Badar was arrested on January 27 and produced before the court on Tuesday from where he was sent to jail, a police spokesman said.

## UP tableau secures first place in People's Choice Award at R-Day parade

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh's tableau, titled 'Maha Kumbh 2025 - Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas', has won first place in the People's Choice Award category with 40 per cent of the votes (25,007). The tableau beautifully showcased the grandeur of the Maha Kumbh, recognised as an 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity', highlighting the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers in Prayagraj as the world's largest gathering of humanity. Centered on spirituality, heritage, development and digital progress, the tableau featured a grand replica of the 'Amrit Kalash', with flowing 'Amritdhara'. Depictions of sages, saints performing 'shankhnaad' and 'sadhna', and devotees taking holy dips in the Sangam brought alive the spiritual essence of Maha Kumbh 2025. Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, the tableau celebrated UP's blend of tradition and progress, mesmerising audiences worldwide.

## Four-lane flyover from Dubagga to IIM Hardoi road shortly soon

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): A four-lane flyover will be constructed from Dubagga to the IIM Hardoi road shortly. Representative of Defence Minister and MP from Lucknow Rajnath Singh, Diwakar Tripathi, while giving the details said that this flyover would ease the traffic snarls which occur in that area. As per the feasibility report, the length of the flyover will be 1800 metre and it will be L shaped and cost over Rs 300 crore. The flyover will be constructed by the Setu Nigam. Explaining the need for the fly-

## Rape accused arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): A rape accused was arrested by police during an encounter in Gazipur police station area on Tuesday. The accused had fled after raping a girl living in the neighbourhood. The police had raided several places in search of him. The police were tipped-off about the presence of the accused on Bandha Road. The police raided the area and found the accused, Kundan, near Lavkush Nagar mazar at

## Four-lane flyover from Dubagga to IIM Hardoi road shortly soon

over Tripathi said, "The IIM Road intersects the Hardoi Road and traffic coming from this road runs on the Hardoi Road and then turns to Awadh Hospital. These two turns disturb the traffic majorly in this area" he said, adding, the traffic has also consistently increased on the road. "Earlier it was a green belt from Kakori onwards and the traffic was less and this was a morbid road. However, this road has been declared as NH 731 which is also witnessing a four-lane widening," he said.

**HDFC BANK** Department for Special Operations : HDFC Bank Ltd, 2nd Floor, Experio Building, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010.

We understand your world

**"APPENDIX-IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]**  
**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES**

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 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of HDFC Bank Ltd. Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **11 March 2025**, for recovery of Rs. 13,89,209.00/- or as on 03-06-2024 along with further interest and charges applicable due to the HDFC Bank Ltd. Secured Creditor from (i) M/s Royal Touch Through its Proprietor Mr. Aman Pal (Borrower), (ii) Mr. Aman Pal S/o Ramanand Pal (Co-borrower) & (iii) Mr. Ramanand Pal S/o Mehi Pal (Co-borrower & Mortgagee) (iv) Mr. Manoj Pal S/o Ramanand Pal (Co-borrower). The reserve price will be Rs.1,58,90,000/- and the earnest money deposit will be Rs.15,89,000/-.

**SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
Residential- Part Of House No. 2/51 Situated At House No. 659/2/51 AI Present House No.659a/2/51, Mauza- Allapur, Pargana & Tehsil Sadar, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, Area 106 Sq. Mtrs. (property Owned By Mr. Ramanand Pal).

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in HDFC Bank Ltd. Secured Creditor's website <https://www.hdfcbank.com/personal/resources/important-notices>.  
Date: - 29.01.2025, Place: - Prayagraj Authorised Officer, HDFC Bank Ltd.

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**verka**  
The Punjab State Cooperative Milk Producers Federation Ltd.  
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66  
Notice Inviting Tender [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop)

e- Tender is hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

| Name of Work/Item                 | Period/Tentative Qty |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh |                      |
| Freezer on Wheel                  | Annual/ 60 Units     |
| 1. 200 Ltr. and above             |                      |

**NOTE:**  
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NTT), please visit our website i.e. [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop) & e Tendering portal i.e. [eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://eproc.punjab.gov.in).  
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

NA/12/27760/2023/41716

# Administration gears up for Amrit Snan; security tightened



Rush of devotees on Tuesday on the eve of Mauni Amavasya during the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

PTI

PNS/PTI ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The Uttar Pradesh government has stepped up security as it gears up for the Amrit Snan on Mauni Amavasya on Wednesday, which is expected to draw around 10 crore pilgrims to the Maha Kumbh in just a day. The Maha Kumbh 2025 has already witnessed over 15 crore pilgrims taking a holy dip in the past 17 days, according to state government. Security measures have reached unprecedented levels for the day with deployment of personnel at every nook and turn along with installation of AI-powered CCTV cameras and drones keeping eye on the Mela area, spread over several hectares along the Triveni Sangam – the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. While the Mela area has already been declared a no-vehicle zone for the next few days, the Prayagraj administration has also made a fervent appeal to local residents to avoid using four wheelers and opt for two-wheelers only if carrying senior citizens to the Sangam. To accommodate the massive crowds, schools for Classes 1 to 8 across all boards in Prayagraj will remain closed on January 28, 29, and 30. The Allahabad High Court has also declared a holiday on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya. The state government said it had planned a flower petals shower from helicopters on

## Over 1,000 medical personnel deployed for devotees' safety

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

For the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya on Wednesday, the Uttar Pradesh government has deployed over 1,000 medical personnel at the Maha Kumbh Mela to ensure safety and health of devotees. Modern medical facilities, including provisions for minor to major surgeries, have been made in every sector of the mela area. In addition, 300 specialist doctors have been stationed at a super-specialty hospital in Mahakumbh Nagar, ready to handle any emergency situations. Over two lakh patients have already benefited from the OPD services at central and other hospitals, and more than 2.5 lakh pathological tests have been conducted so

Wednesday at 6:45 am to mark the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya. The Amrit Snan (formerly called Shahi Snan) is the grandest and most sacred ritual of the Maha Kumbh Mela, attracting millions of pilgrims from around the world to the banks

of the Triveni Sangam. The main attraction of the Amrit Snan is the magnificent procession of saints and ascetics from the various akharas. First of all, Naga sanyasis of Mahanirvani Akhara will take bath. Along with Mahanirvani Akhara, Shri Shambhu Panchayati Atal Akhara will also take bath. Niranjani Akhara and Anand Akhara will take bath at 5:50 am. Juna Akhara, Aawahan Akhara and Panch Agni Akhara will take bath at 6:45 am. Bairagi Akhara will take bath at 9:25 am. Digambar Ani Akhara will take the bath 10:05 am. Nirmohi Ani Akhara will take bath at 11:05 am. Lastly, all the three akharas of Udasi tradition will take bath. Panchayati Naya Udasin Akhara will take bath at 12 noon. Panchayati Akhara will take bath at 1:05 pm. Lastly, Panchayati Nirmal Akhara will take bath at 2:25 pm. Noted astrologer Anant Kumar Mishra said that on the day of Mauni Amavasya, people should donate food, clothes, sesame and rice to the needy people. It is believed that doing so pleases the ancestors. On Mauni Amavasya, light an oil lamp in the south direction outside the house. This direction is considered to be of the ancestors. It is believed that lighting a lamp under a Peepal tree brings blessings of the ancestors. Along with this, happiness and prosperity remains, he added. Over 45 lakh devotees had taken the holy dip by 8 am on Tuesday, it added. The Maha Kumbh, being held after 12 years, kicked off on January 13 and will continue till February 26. The UP government, which is hosting the mega event, expects a footfall between 40 and 45 crore during the period.

far. Maha Kumbh Mela Nodal Medical Officer Dr Gaurav Dubey pointed out that devotees from across the country and abroad are availing health services in Mahakumbh Nagar. The state government, supported by the state-of-the-art medical facilities, has taken all necessary steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those attending the fair, he added. In addition to the official medical setups, saints from various temples, monasteries, and akharas are also assisting the devotees with medicines and health checks. These saints are organising camps offering a variety of health services, including Ayurvedic, homeopathic and other medical consultations and treatments.

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# Mauni Amavasya snan during Triveni Yog most auspicious

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The sacred Amrit Snan of Mauni Amavasya, the most significant festival of Maha Kumbh and a cornerstone of the Sanatan faith, will take place on Wednesday. This year, a rare celestial alignment – the Triveni Yog – occurring after 144 years, amplifies the spiritual significance of the day. According to astrologers, Triveni Yog, akin to the Samudra Manthan Yog, will last from 2:35 pm on Tuesday (January 28) until 7:25 am on February 8. During this period, bathing at the holy Triveni Sangam is believed to bestow virtues equivalent to performing a Sahastra Vajpayee yajna or a hundred Ashvamedha yajnas. The scriptures describe bathing in the Sangam on Mauni Amavasya as 'mokshadayak' (granting liberation). Astrologers suggest that devotees can bathe at any ghat at their convenience, without focusing on specific yogas or nakshatras, and still receive the same spiritual benefits as a Sangam bath. This rare Triveni Yog occurs due to the Sun, Moon and Mercury aligning in Capricorn, with Jupiter casting its ninth aspect. This configuration mirrors the cosmic dynamics of the Samudra Manthan period. Astrologer HK Shukla from Prayagraj highlights that Mauni Amavasya started at 7:32 pm on January 28 and would end at 6:05 pm on January 29, with Brahma muharta (the pre-dawn hours) being the most



'Sadhus' at a camp during the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Tuesday

PTI

auspicious time for bathing. Mauni Amavasya derives its name from observing silence and fasting on this day, symbolising inner purification. Devotees are advised to bathe at any convenient ghat or mix Sangam or Ganga water with regular water for the same spiritual benefits as a Triveni Sangam bath. The day is also

auspicious for ancestors, as well as for peace rituals, charity and worship, especially during Brahma muharta and other favourable times like Amrit and Shubbh Chaughadiya. According to Jyotishacharya PN Dwivedi of Kanpur, Mauni Amavasya marks the birth of Vaivasvat Manu, the progenitor of humanity. Observing

silence, fasting, and bathing in the Sangam on this day are believed to bring immense spiritual rewards and liberation. The combination of Mauni Amavasya tithi, Shrivani Nakshatra, and Triveni Yog makes this year's Mauni Amavasya an unparalleled occasion for spiritual elevation, bathing and charity.

## Safety measures strengthened



Devotees on Tuesday gather to take a holy dip at Sangam on the eve of Mauni Amavasya in Prayagraj

PTI

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

As millions of devotees and tourists gather in Prayagraj for the Mauni Amavasya snan at Maha Kumbh on Wednesday, the meal administration and police have intensified safety measures to ensure a secure and comfortable experience for them. Devotees have also been urged to remain vig-

ilant, steer clear of rumors, and report concerns promptly. A dedicated team comprising the mela police, traffic police and specialised doctors has been deployed around the clock to assist devotees in case of emergencies. Senior Superintendent of Police (Mahakumbhnagar) Rajesh Dwivedi, stated, "Robust arrangements have been made

for the second Amrit Snan of Maha Kumbh, especially for Mauni Amavasya." He urged devotees to cooperate with the police, remain cautious and seek assistance. The police and administration are available 24x7 to support the devotees at Maha Kumbh, he added. The devotees have been advised to take different lanes to reach Sangam ghat; stay in their lanes while going for a holy dip; after bathing and darshan, go straight to the parking; while going for darshan in temples, stay in their lane, and from there, leave for their destination; take the help of the police if needed; in case of any health-related problem, get themselves examined in the hospi-

tal set up in the nearest sector; be patient on the barricading and pontoon bridges, and avoid hurrying and jostling; use only paper, jute or eco-friendly utensils and kulhar. What not to do: Devotees should not stop at one place together; under no circumstances should the devotees coming and going come face to face; ignore rumours; do not believe any confusion spread on social media; do not rush to visit temples; do not stop on roads instead of holding areas, and do not create any obstruction; avoid getting misled by anyone regarding arrangements or facilities; avoid spreading any kind of misleading news, not rush to take a holy bath.

## Those infamous for appeasement politics now taking dip at Triveni Sangam: Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

In an obvious attack on Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, without naming anyone, said on Tuesday that even those infamous for their politics of appeasement are now taking a dip at the Triveni Sangam. He, however, added that it will be a mistake to expect that those who have never respected the faith of India will respect the faith in Sanatan Dharma. Speaking at an event organised in the state capital, Yogi Adityanath said, "I am pleased that those who once disrespected India's faith and were



infamous for their appeasement politics are now eager to take a dip at the holy Sangam of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati to seek

'punya' (virtue)." Responding to a question on whether opposition parties have appreciated his government's organisation of the grand Maha Kumbh, the chief minister said, "Prayagraj belongs to everyone and faith transcends all." He added that the growing participation of people in the Maha Kumbh from diverse political ideologies demonstrates the enduring influence of Sanatan Dharma. Yogi Adityanath expressed optimism that this Maha Kumbh would be remembered as a confluence of faith and modernity, leaving an indelible mark on the state's cultural and spiritual identity.

## Akhilesh criticises VIP movement at Kumbh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Tuesday, criticised the difficulties faced by common devotees due to the VIP movement at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. Sharing a video showing common devotees walking while a convoy passed along the same road, the SP leader stated in a post on X, "On one hand, devotees in the crowd are being pushed and shoved, with some walking 5 to 10 kilometres on foot, while on the other



hand, leaders, officials and their entire families are comfortably seated in cars, honking their horns, teasing the devotees, and heading straight to the Maha Kumbh." Attacking the state government for ignoring common people and making them wait for hours in long lines, the SP chief said, "Yogi Ji, who boasts about the systems and spends crores on promoting them, is only benefiting the VIPs. The common people have to stand in long lines or wait for hours to avail the benefits of these systems." Taking a jibe at political leaders and government officials for using VIP facilities to take

## Over 20 saints from Northeast to take part in Amrit Snan

PTI ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

For the first time in the history of the Maha Kumbh, a special camp dedicated to the Northeast has been set up, attracting a significant number of devotees from the region. Over 20 saints and ascetics from remote parts of the Northeast will join the akharas to take part in the Amrit Snan on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya on Wednesday.

## Maha Kumbh: Seers call for setting up Sanatan Board at Dharm Sansad

PTI ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Seers representing various monastic orders and groups have called for establishing a Sanatan Board at a 'Dharm Sansad' held amid the Maha Kumbh here. Jagadguru Vidya Bhaskar Ji Maharaj urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to abolish the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, stating that the law was imposed without consultation to protect mosques built by demolishing Hindu temples. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi should use his majority in Parliament to dismantle the

Places of Worship Act. The government at that time passed this law without any discussion and imposed it on the nation," he said. He further asserted that the survival of all living beings depends on preserving Sanatan Dharma. "Establishing a Sanatan Board is the need of the hour to protect sanatanis," he added. Nimbark Peethadheeshwar Shyam Sharan Devacharya, who chaired the Sanatan Dharma Sansad (Sanatan religious parliament), said the board would safeguard Sanatan Dharma and ensure the security of future generations. "The board is crucial to prevent outsiders from

infiltrating temples like Tirupati Balaji and corrupting our faith. Once, nations like Iran, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Bhutan were culturally aligned with India. If we don't act, India, too, might slip out of Hindus hands," he said. ISKCON leader Gaurang Das Ji Maharaj highlighted the need for a unified body for sanatanis. "If organisations like CII and FICCI exist for industries and the IMA for medicine, why can't we have a similar body to protect and unite sanatanis?" He emphasised that peace, security and justice require all sanatanis to unite under the banner of a Sanatan Board.

many devotees expressing their ordeal while on the way to take a dip at Triveni, Sangam that have surfaced on social media. Akhilesh Yadav, on Monday, had voiced his discontent over the arrangements made by the state government and urged the administration to prioritise the needs of the pilgrims over VIP arrangements. "The government should ensure smooth transport for pilgrims instead of creating difficulties due to VIP protocols. The Maha Kumbh should be about special arrangements for the devotees, not the dignitaries," Yadav wrote on X.

### SUNDRA NUTRI FEED LLP

(Registered under Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 with limited liability)  
**LLP Identification No. : AAD - 4386**  
 Regd. Off. : Flat No. G-2, Balajee Symphony, 117/H-1/200, Pandu Nagar, Sarvodaya Nagar, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh - 208 005  
 Email : mycnsult.2010@gmail.com; Phone No. : 9839813202

**FORM NO. URC - 2**  
**Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part of Chapter XXI**

[Pursuant to section 374(b) of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 4 (1) of the Companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]

- Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application is proposed to be made after 15 days hereof but before expiry of 30 days hereinafter to the Registrar at KANPUR that Sundra Nutri Feed LLP a LLP firm may be registered under Part 1 of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.
- The principal objects of the company are as follows: to manufacture, produce in deal in all types of animal feed whether poultry, cattle, aqua or any other kind and to run poultry farms, breeding farms, cattle farms, dairy farms, etc.
- A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at Flat No. G-2, Balajee Symphony, 117/H-1/200, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh-208 005.
- Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre (CRC), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6,7,8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, District Gurgaon, Haryana-122050, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.

**Dated : 27/01/2025**  
**Name (s) of Applicants :**  
 1. Sanjeev Agarwal 2. Saransh Agarwal 3. Ruby Agarwal 4. Srishti Jain Agarwal 5. Vibhor Agarwal 6. Shreyansh Chaubey 7. Rohit Tiwari

**STATE BANK OF INDIA**  
 R.B.O. 3, AGRASEN CHAURAHA, JAIL ROAD, FATEHPUR (U.P.) 212601  
 Branch SBI A.D.B. Fatehpur (05396) Fatehpur.

**POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)**  
 Whereas, the undersign being the authorized officer of the State Bank of India, R.B.O.-3, Agrasen Chauraha, Jail Road, Fatehpur, 212601, under the securitisation & Reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest act 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under sub section 13(2) & 13 (12) read with rule 8 & 9 of the security interest (enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices calling up on the borrower / guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest expenses and other charges etc. thereon within 60 days from the date of said notices. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrower/guarantor in particular and public in general and that undersigned has taken possession of property described herein below in exercise of power conferred on him U/S 13 (4) of the said act read with rule 9 of the said rule on the date mentioned and there against the borrower / guarantor in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property any delinks with property will be subject to charge of State Bank of India, R.B.O. 3, AGRASEN CHAURAHA, JAIL ROAD, FATEHPUR, 212601, under for Branch SBI A.D.B. Fatehpur (05396) Fatehpur for an amount and interest and other charges thereon mentioned against each account herein below.

| 1. | Borrower Name, Guarantor & Address   | Account Details  | Details of property  |
|----|--|--|--|
|    | Mr. Sunil Kumar S/o Shri Ram Lal Add.: Vill. Faridabad Tikari Post Suketi Distt. Fatehpur U.P. | State Bank Of India, A.D.B. Fatehpur (05396) Fatehpur A/C No.: 40476118571<br><br>Demand Notice dt: 05.10.2024 Possession Dt: 22.01.2025 Outstanding Amount Rs. 11,05,987.21 (Rupees Eleven Lakh Five Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Seven and twenty one paisa only) + and further Interest from Dated 05.10.2024, Costs etc. | Property : in the name of Mr. Sunil Kumar S/o Shri Ram Lal R/o: Village Qasba Fatehpur South Moh. Kamalpur (Teachers Colony) Garihwa, Tehsil & Distt. Fatehpur U.P. 212601, Arajai No. 3025. Admeasuring 93 sq. mtr. registered in the office of sub registrar Fatehpur Distt. Fatehpur on Book No.01, Zild No. 9902, Page No. 321 to 348, at serial No. 5006 on 07.06.2017 Boundaries: North: House of Chheddi Agrahari. South: House of Manju Verma. East: 06 Meter Wide Road. West: Plot of Mishra Ji |

**Dated: 29.01.2025 Place: Fatehpur Authorised Officer, Fatehpur, State Bank Of India, RBO-3, Fatehpur**

# India's educational development requires participation of every person: Pathak

## ...emphasises importance of UP's Anganwadi model



Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak speaking at QS India Summit 2025 being held in Goa.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

“India’s educational development requires the participation of every individual in society. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that equal opportunities and innovations benefit everyone, especially the last person in society,” said Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak, President of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Vice-Chancellor of

Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU), Kanpur. Prof Pathak was addressing the QS India Summit 2025, being held in Goa from January 27-29 as a distinguished speaker. The summit, centred around the theme — India’s role in promoting equal educational participation, innovation and research amid global uncertainties— saw participation from Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel,

vice-chancellors, academicians and policymakers from leading universities across India and the world. Highlighting India’s deep-rooted tradition of knowledge and innovation, Prof Pathak said, “India’s heritage of education and innovation is exemplified by ancient centres of excellence like Nalanda and Takshashila. Today, with over 40 million students enrolled in higher education, India has the

potential to not only transform its own future but also contribute to global education through innovative approaches, digital platforms and affordable models of learning.” He also emphasised the importance of Uttar Pradesh’s Anganwadi model, promoted by Governor Anandiben Patel, as a remarkable example of community participation. “The Anganwadi model not only strengthens the foundation of our nation but also exemplifies how inclusive development can be achieved through collective efforts. This model must be implemented across India to unlock the true potential of the country,” he said. The key objectives of QS India Summit 2025 include fostering new collaborations between Indian and international academic institutions while strengthening existing partnerships. By promoting deeper cooperation, India aims to expand its role as a global education leader and build bridges to address educational inequalities worldwide.



Devotees visit the Hanuman Garhi Temple after taking a holy dip in Sarayu river in Ayodhya on Tuesday.

PTI

# IFFCO committed to working in interest of farmers: Chairman

## 4 killed in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

IFFCO Chairman Dileepbhai Sanghani said that IFFCO is always committed to working in the interest of farmers and is working in accordance with the Prime Minister’s vision of prosperity through cooperation. He expressed these views after unfurling the flag as the chief guest at IFFCO Phulpur campus on the occasion of 76th Republic Day. Addressing the gathering, he said the Phulpur unit is not only a leader in fertiliser production but is also providing high quality products



and services to farmers by understanding their needs. Sanghani also mentioned the

programme of International Cooperative Union held at Bharat Mandapam.

He said that for the first time in the 145-year history of this organisation, India has hosted it in which representatives of more than 110 countries, leaders and experts of cooperative organisations participated. This organisation is a historic platform to bring cooperative organisations together and find solutions to global challenges. He said the objective of this programme was to empower the cooperative sector, promote cooperation at the global level and underline the role of cooperative organisations in achieving the goal of sustainable development.

opment. He said the aim of these efforts of IFFCO is not only to empower the farmers economically, but also to present the cooperative model as an effective solution. On the occasion Sanghani discussed Maha Kumbh describing it is a symbol of eternal tradition and cultural heritage. This festival not only displays the spiritual power of India, but is also an opportunity to promote the cooperative spirit. IFFCO is running special services and awareness programmes for farmers and devotees through an exhibition near

the Ganga Pandal of Kumbh area. He appreciated the new technology and environment-friendly working system being used in IFFCO Phulpur unit. Prominent among those present on the occasion were Phulpur unit head Sanjay Kudeshiya, Officers’ Association President Anurag Tiwari, General Secretary Swamy Prakash, Employees’ Union President Pankaj Pandey, General Secretary Vijay Yadav and others were present. The vote of thanks was proposed by Sharad Agnihotri.

PTI ■ RAE BARELI

Four people, including two women died while five others were injured on Tuesday in a collision between an SUV and a tractor-trolley, police said. The victims, from Baldu Bihar Durga Mandir area in Lucknow’s Telibagh, were en route to Prayagraj for a holy dip in the Maha Kumbh fair, officials said. The accident occurred near Kanha Dhaba on the Munshiganj bypass in the Badoh area, a police officer said. On receiving information, police went to the spot and took the injured to the district hospital, where doctors

declared — Rajni Devi (70), Ashish Dwivedi (42), Deependra Rawat (40), and Maya Devi (45) — dead, he said. According to police, the injured — Shubham (28), Lalita Negi (47), Kavita Rawat (40), Rajni Devi (50), and Anuj Kumar Tripathi (30) — are undergoing treatment. A critically injured person has been referred to AIIMS, Rae Bareilly for further treatment. Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Siddharth confirmed the deaths and said both the vehicles involved in the accident have been impounded. Further investigation is underway, police added.



A girl student portrayed Bharat Mata during the Republic Day celebrations at Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati Public School, Sahjani. The school also organised a grand rally and students sang patriotic songs and inspired people by raising the slogan of ‘Vande Matram’.

# Leprosy continues to carry heavy social burden: Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

On World Leprosy Day, the focus shifts to the urgent need for creating an inclusive society and improving the quality of care for individuals affected by leprosy. While India has made significant strides in combating this disease, the journey towards eliminating stigma and ensuring equal opportunities for all is far from over. Addressing mediapersons, consultant dermatologist at Regency Healthcare, Dr Pawan Singh, said, “Inclusion is a cornerstone of better care. Leprosy isn’t just a medical condition; it’s a societal issue. To truly make a difference, we must focus on both curing the disease and embracing those affected by it. By spreading awareness, encouraging early diagnosis and eliminating stigma, we can build a society that uplifts and empowers everyone, regardless of their past health challenges.” He said leprosy, though curable, continues to carry a heavy social burden. Many individuals, even after being treated successfully, face rejection from their communities and workplaces. This exclusion stems from age-old myths and misinformation, leaving them marginalised and struggling to reintegrate into society. Experts stress that addressing the

stigma is as important as providing timely medical care. When individuals feel valued and supported, they are more likely to seek early treatment and avoid long-term complications. Medical advancements have made leprosy entirely treatable with Multidrug Therapy (MDT). The currently recommended treatment regimen consists of three drugs: dapsone, rifampicin and clofazimine. This combination, known as MDT, effectively cures the disease and prevents its spread. Early detection and adherence to treatment are critical to preventing severe complications such as nerve damage or disabilities. However, as healthcare systems continue to improve, there is a growing recognition that effective treatment must go hand-in-hand with empathy and social inclusion. It is essential that individuals affected by leprosy not only receive medical care but also feel accepted and supported by their communities, fostering an environment that encourages timely treatment and long-term well-being. He said, “World Leprosy Day is not just a reminder of the work that remains but also a call to action for individuals, communities and institutions to come together. By combining medical progress with compassion and inclusivity, we can create a future where no one is

defined or limited by leprosy.” INAUGURATED: Under the joint aegis of FICCI FLO Kanpur Chapter and VSSD College, a sanitary napkin vending machine was inaugurated by cutting the ribbon in the Girls’ Common Room located in the college campus on Monday. An awareness seminar was also organised for the girl students in which joint secretary of the college and senior social worker Neetu Singh and Professor Rajni Singh of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarathi Memorial Medical College were present as the special guests. In her address Dr Singh said due to lack of necessary information, girl students have to face many serious physical problems. She said that by giving information about hygiene during menstruation at the college level we can save the girl students from many serious physical problems. College Secretary Neetu Singh said that there is a need to make the girl students aware that menstruation is not a disease, it is a natural physical process and they should not hesitate in talking about it. During this programme, mainly FICCI FLO Kanpur Chapter members Anuradha Varshney, Tripti Agarwal, program coordinator Parul Rajoria, Chitranshi Agarwal along with all the teachers of the college and hundreds of girl students were present

# A moment of pride for SHUATS



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

It was a moment of pride for SHUATS as Prof Dr C John Wesley, Additional Registrar and Chairman, Athletics Committee SHUATS and Saumya won the mixed doubles title against Aryan Utvar and Angel with a score of 21-16, 19-21, 21-15 in Late Raj Devi Pandey Memorial Badminton Tournament 2025 held at APS, Prayagraj. Dr Wesley also won 35+ Mens Doubles partnering with Col Nasir against Saurav and Khalid with a score of 21-14, 21-12. Prof Jonathan A Lal, Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs congratulated Dr Wesley for this remarkable achievement. He urged the staff and students of the University to take inspiration from Dr Wesley.

TWO INJURED: Two teachers were seriously injured when their motorcycle collided with a Bolero carrying devotees returning from the Maha Kumbh Mela near Gaura petrol pump under in the Kaundhiara police station area here on Tuesday. Reports said that the devotees were going to Satna. The teachers identified as Ashok Kushwaha and Nirmala Kushwaha were going to college on the bike. The collision was so severe that both the bike and the Bolero were badly damaged. Kaundhiara police station in charge Rajesh Singh said on getting information about the matter, the police reached the spot and the Bolero was brought to the police station. Fortunately, no devotee in the Bolero was hurt. Legal action is being taken in the matter, he added.

# Values enshrined in Constitution highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) celebrated the 76th Republic Day at its premises with great enthusiasm and patriotic spirit. The celebration commenced with the unfurling of the tricolour by Principal Bhawna Gupta, followed by the singing of the national anthem. In her address, she paid tribute to the national leaders who drafted the Constitution of India and laid the foundation of an independent republic. Highlighting the values enshrined in the Constitution, she inspired everyone to take pride in nation’s legacy and work towards building a brighter, more progressive future. She also emphasised the significance of embracing



The SPSEC staff members taking part in Republic Day celebrations.

the Government of India’s Republic Day theme, ‘Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas’. School Captain Nimisha Agarwal extended her greetings on the occasion and called upon her schoolmates to join hands in solidarity and build a cleaner, brighter, healthier and prosperous India. Cultural programmes were also organised on the occasion. Ojas Bajpai (class VII) mesmerised everyone with the age-old classic, ‘Hai Preet Jaha Ki Reet Sada...’. Devansh Pandey (class V) recited the poem, ‘Kesaraya Bana Hai Pehna Hindustani Ke Bachcho Ne...’

and the Singhianians chorused ‘Kadam Kadam Badhae Jaa...’ Group dances were also presented. The students and staff took pride in celebrating the national event. The programme was hosted by Avni Mishra (class IX) and Aavanya Mehrotra (class XI).

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# Army personnel, son killed as car collides with truck

PTI ■ HARDOI

An Army personnel and his two-year-old son were killed, while his wife sustained critical injuries when their car collided with a truck on the Lucknow-Hardoi National Highway, police said on Tuesday. According to Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP/East Hardoi) Nripendra Kumar, the incident occurred on Monday night near the Khajurmat trisection in Baghauli. Raja Singh, 34, a resident of Ambedkar Nagar in Rae Bareilly district, and his son Lakshya Pratap Singh died while his wife Rishu Singh (32) was injured in the accident.

# BOI organises R-Day celebrations



The Bank of Baroda officials at the Republic Day celebrations.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Bank of India (BOI) organised 76th Republic Day celebrations at its regional office. Regional Manager Ranveer Singh unfurled the

national flag. On the occasion Deputy Regional Manager Jugal Kishore explained the importance of Republic Day. Other staff members also delivered speeches and recited patriotic poems. Art and painting

competition was held for children in which prizes were awarded. Dr Ramesh Punia conducted the proceedings while Assistant General Manager (AGM) Amitabh Shukla proposed the vote of thanks.

# Government school enrolment back to pre pandemic levels

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) released on Tuesday has indicated an increase in government school enrolment seen during the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have reversed, with the proportion of children aged 6-14 years enrolled in government schools nearly back to the 2018 levels. The report also noted that not only there has been a full recovery from the pandemic-induced learning loss, the learning levels in the primary grades are higher than past levels in some cases. The crucial report found that more than 82 per cent children in the 14-16 age group know how to use a smartphone but only 57 per cent of them use it for educational purposes. "The increase in government school enrolment seen during the COVID-19 years seems to have reversed. Private school enrolment has been steadily rising since 2006 in rural India. The proportion of 6-14-year-olds enrolled in private schools rose from 18.7 per cent in 2006 to 30.8 per cent in 2014 and stayed at that level in 2018. "During the pandemic years, there was a big jump in gov-



ernment school enrolment with the proportion of 6-14-year-old children enrolled in government schools rising from 65.6 per cent in 2018 to 72.9 per cent in 2022. This number is back to 66.8 per cent in 2024. This almost complete reversal back to 2018 levels is seen across grades as well as gender, and is not particularly surprising given that the economy has recovered in other sectors as well," the report noted. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024

is a nationwide rural household survey that reached 6,49,491 children in 17,997 villages across 605 rural districts in India. Facilitated by an NGO, "Pratham", in each surveyed district, a local organisation or institution conducted the survey. "At the all-India level, the proportion of children in Class 3, who are able to read at Class 2 level, rose slowly from 23.6 per cent in 2014 to 27.3 per cent in 2018 and then fell drastically to 20.5 per cent in 2022. Two

years later, we have a full recovery with the proportion of Class-3 children reading fluently at 27.1 per cent. "We see a similar picture in Class 4, with the proportion of Class-5 children who can read a Class-2 level text rising from 48 per cent in 2014 to 50.5 per cent in 2018, then falling to 42.8 per cent in 2022 and finally recovering to 48.8 per cent in 2024," the report said. Some states have done very well and surpassed their pre-pandemic learning levels, while

others are yet to recover fully. Nevertheless, almost all states have shown improvements as compared to 2022. "In fact, the low-performing states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have made a remarkable recovery," the report noted. For the first time, the nationwide household survey had a section on digital literacy, which applied to older children in the 14-16 age group. It included self-reported questions on access, ownership and use of smartphones, as well as a one-on-one assessment of some basic digital skills.

The report said "82.2 per cent of all children in the 14-16 age group reported knowing how to use a smartphone. Of these, 57 per cent reported using it for an educational activity in the preceding week, while 76 per cent said that they had used it for social media during the same period". The report found that the proportion of "underage" children (aged five years or below) in Class 1 is decreasing over time. "In 2018, this figure was 25.6 per cent, in 2022 it stood at 22.7 per cent and in 2024, nationally, the percentage of underage children in Class-1 was at its lowest ever at 16.7," it said.

# Five Indian fishermen injured by Sri Lankan Navy in firing incident



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Five Indian fishermen sustained injuries, including two seriously, in an incident of firing by the Sri Lankan Navy in the proximity of Delft Island early Tuesday, triggering a strong reaction by India. The acting high commissioner of the island nation in New Delhi was summoned to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and a strong protest was lodged with the top diplomat. In its reaction, India said use of force is not "acceptable" under any circumstances whatsoever. "An incident of firing by the Sri Lankan Navy during the apprehension of 13 Indian fishermen

in the proximity of Delft Island was reported in the early hours of this morning," it said. "Out of the 13 fishermen who were on board the fishing vessel, two have sustained serious injuries and are currently receiving treatment at the Jaffna Teaching hospital," it said. Three other fishermen received minor injuries and have been treated for the same, it added. Indian Consulate officials in Jaffna have visited the injured fishermen at the hospital to seek their welfare and are extending all possible assistance to the fishermen and their families. "The Sri Lankan acting high commissioner in New Delhi was called in today morning to

the Ministry of External Affairs and a strong protest was lodged over the incident," the MEA said. The Indian high commission in Colombo has also raised the matter with the Sri Lankan foreign ministry. "The government of India has always emphasised the need to treat issues pertaining to fishermen in a humane and humanitarian manner, keeping in mind livelihood concerns," the Indian readout noted. "The use of force is not acceptable under any circumstances whatsoever. Existing understandings between the two governments in this regard must be strictly observed," the MEA said.

# SC asks Centre's stand after woman wants to be governed by succession law

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday asked for the Centre's stand on a Muslim woman's plea seeking to be governed by the Indian succession law instead of Shariat. The plea of Safiya P M, general secretary of "Ex-Muslims of Kerala", and hailing from Alappuzha, came up before a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the plea raised an interesting question. "The petitioner lady is a born Muslim. She says she does not believe in Shariat and she thinks it is an regressive law," he said. "This will," observed the bench, "run across faith. You will have to file a counter affidavit." Mehta sought three weeks to take instructions and place on record a counter affidavit. The bench granted four weeks and said the matter would be heard in week beginning May 5. On April 29 last year, the apex court sought responses from the Centre and the Kerala government on the plea. The petitioner said though she has not officially left Islam, she was a non-believer and wanted enforcement of her fundamental right to religion under Article 25, saying it must include "the right not to believe" as well. She also sought a declaration that the persons who didn't wish to be governed by the Muslim personal law must be allowed to be governed by the "secular law of the country" -- the Indian Succession Act, 1925 -- both in the case of intestate and testamentary succession.



Safiya's plea, filed through advocate Prashant Padmnabhan, said Muslim women were entitled to one-third share in the property under the Shariat laws. The lawyer said the declaration that the petitioner was not governed by the Muslim personal law had to come from the court, or else her father would not be able to give more than one-third of the property. The top court had permitted Safiya to amend the petition suitably to challenge the Indian succession law and other provisions for excluding Muslims. "Fundamental right to religion under Article 25 of the Constitution must include the right to believe or not to believe, as per the judgment of this in Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala (Sabarimala case)... To have meaning for that right, the person who leaves her faith should not incur any disability or a disqualification in matters of inheritance or other important civil rights," the plea said. Pointing out wide ramifications across the country, the plea urged the bench for an intervention. It said the pending case in the Supreme Court was for all Muslim women but the present plea was for those who were born Muslim and wanted to

leave the religion. "As per Sharia law, the person who leaves her faith in Islam, will be ousted from her community and thereafter she is not entitled for any inheritance right in her parental property," the plea argued. The petitioner expressed apprehension over the application of the law in the case of her lineal descendant, her only daughter, if she officially left her religion. Seeking a declaration that the Muslim personal law shouldn't govern her for any of the matters listed in Section 2 or 3 of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, she said, "But there is no provision either in the Act or in the rules wherein she can obtain such a certificate." The plea said there was a "clear vacuum" in the statute which could be plugged by judicial interpretation. "As of now, the petitioner will not be governed by the secular laws of the country, viz, the Indian Succession Act even if she officially gets a no-religion, no-caste certificate from any authority," said the plea. The precious fundamental rights under Article 25 to practice or not to practice religion were made meaningless by the absence of such a protection from the state, it added.

# BJP is richest party with ₹7,113.80 crore in funds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP, which claims itself as the biggest political party in the world, has a whopping cash and bank balance of ₹7,113.80 crore against the principal opposition Congress party's ₹857.15 crore as on March 31, 2024. According to figures provided to the Election Commission, the BJP spent as much as ₹1,754.06 crore during 2023-24 when Lok Sabha elections were announced, a whopping 60 per cent rise than ₹1,092 crore spent in 2022-23. In comparison, the Congress spent as much as ₹619.67 crore during 2023-24, against ₹192.56 crore in 2022-23. The Lok Sabha elections were announced on March 16, 2024. According to the figures provided to the EC in their annual



audit reports, the BJP has received voluntary contributions through the now banned electoral bonds of ₹1,685.69 crore during 2023-24, against ₹1294.15 crore in the previous year. The ruling party has also shown having received other contributions to the tune of

₹2,042.75 crore during the year, against ₹648.42 crore in the previous year 2022-23. In its audit report to the EC, the Congress has shown having received total contributions of ₹1,225.11 crore during 2023-24, including ₹1129.67 crore through grants, dona-

tions and contributions. This also includes ₹828.36 crore received through electronic bonds during the year ended March 31, 2024, which have now been banned by the Supreme Court. During the year, the BJP spent ₹591 crore in advertisements, including ₹434.84 crore in the electronic media and ₹115.62 crore in printed material. The ruling party also spent ₹174 crore during 2023-24 on aircraft/helicopters, against ₹78.23 crore in 2022-23 and gave financial assistance of ₹191.06 crore to its candidates during the year in question, against ₹75.05 crore in the previous year. The BJP spent ₹84.32 crore in meeting expenses during 2024 and ₹75.14 crore in organising morchas, rallies, andolan and call centre expenses during

2023-24. The Congress, on the other hand, spent as much as ₹207.94 crore on the electronic media and ₹43.73 crore on printed material during 2023-24. The opposition party also spent ₹62.65 crore on aircraft/helicopters during 2023-24 and gave financial aid of ₹238.55 crore to its candidates. It also spent ₹28.03 crore on publicity expenses and ₹79.78 crore on social media expenses during the year ended March 31, 2024. The party also stated in its audit report that it spent ₹49.63 crore on the Bharat Jodo Yatra 2, led by former party chief Rahul Gandhi during 2023-24, against ₹71.84 crore spent on Bharat Jodo Yatra undertaken by him from Kanyakumari to Kashmir during 2022-23.

# India, Indonesia Coast Guards sign MoU to boost maritime relations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant step towards furthering India-Indonesia comprehensive bilateral relations, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Indonesia Coast Guard (Badan Keamanan Laut Republik Indonesia - BAKAMLA) renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Maritime Safety and Security Cooperation for a period of three years, defence ministry said here on Tuesday. Giving details, officials said the MoU was signed between both the organisation in July 2020 which marked a significant milestone underscoring the vision of Indian government towards a safer, secure and resilient Indo-Pacific region.



Under the umbrella of the MoU provisions, eight member BAKAMLA delegation led by Vice Admiral Irvansyah, S.H, Chief of Indonesia Coast Guard is visiting India from January 24-28 which also included conduct of the second high level meeting between ICG and BAKAMLA on Monday, it said. The high level meeting was led by Director General Paramesh Sivamani from the Indian

Coast Guard side. The meeting focused on augmenting operational level interaction and capacity building in areas of Maritime Search and Rescue, Pollution Response and Maritime Law Enforcement. The meeting was significant in providing added impetus to the existing professional relationship between the two Coast Guards. Relations between the two Coast Guards go back a long way ICG ships first visited Indonesia on December 2002 towards professional interaction and exchanges. This meeting and visit is in continuation of the efforts by the Governments of the two countries to enhance cooperation between the Coast Guards in the field of maritime safety and security.

# Police can't serve accused notice via electronic means: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said police cannot serve notices to accused persons through WhatsApp or other electronic modes under the Criminal Procedure Code or Bhatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal directed all states and union territories (UT) to issue appropriate directions to police for issuing notices under Section 41A of CrPC, 1973 or Section 35 of BNS, 2023 only through the mode of service permitted under the law. "All the States/UTs must issue a standing order to their respective police machinery to issue notices under Section 41-A of

CrPC, 1973/Section 35 of BNS, 2023 only through the mode of service as prescribed under the CrPC, 1973/BNS, 2023," the bench said on January 21. The top court went on, "It is made amply clear that service of notice through WhatsApp or other electronic modes cannot be considered or recognised as an alternative or substitute to the mode of service recognised and prescribed under the CrPC, 1973/BNS, 2023." The direction came when the court accepted a suggestion by senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appointed amicus curiae in the matter. Luthra flagged instances where a notice under Section 41-A of CrPC, 1973 was sent through WhatsApp, but the accused did not appear before the investigating officer.

# Our suggestions accepted by Waqf committee: JD(U)

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Janata Dal (United) said on Tuesday that the changes suggested by it have been accepted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and accused the opposition of politicising the issue. The BJP's allies like the Telugu Desam Party, JD(U) and the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) had come around to endorsing the bill with some amendments in the committee's meeting on Monday. All the three parties had refrained from wholeheartedly endorsing the bill when it was introduced in Parliament during the Monsoon Session last year and had pushed for a wider consultation to allay concerns of the Muslim community. JD(U) spokesperson Rajeev Ranjan Prasad said, "Whatever the JD(U) suggested in the bill, it was all accepted. The amendments will have our suggestions. We don't have any complaints regarding the



functioning of the JPC. The opposition has a habit to politicise every issue." JD(U) MP Dileshwar Kamait had moved the amendment to the bill's clause which had made it mandatory for Waqf properties to be listed with details on the portal within six months of the new law coming into force.

Kamait's proposal that 'mutawalli' (caretaker) of the property be allowed to seek an extension if the reasons cited by him satisfies the Waqf tribunal. He had co-sponsored the amendment with BJP's Aparajita Sarangi, and it was endorsed by the panel with a majority vote, sources said. Four amendments moved by

TDP MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu along BJP's Brij Lal were also accepted. These amendments do away with vesting any inquiry into disputes over a government property with the district collector concerned as mentioned in the bill, the sources said. These amendments allow the state government to des-

ignate an officer above the rank of collector to carry out an inquiry. Several Muslim bodies had objected to the authority given to the collector, noting that he was also the head of revenue records, and any inquiry by him might not be impartial as he would go by his own office's claim. The sources said the BJP had been nudging its allies to put up a united face over the proposed law, which has been decry by opposition parties as "unconstitutional" due to its alleged interference into the religious affairs of Muslims. The ruling BJP has insisted that the proposed law will make the functioning of Waqf boards more transparent and efficient, arguing that an elite group running the boards had benefitted at the expense of the community's interests under the existing framework. The committee headed by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, is set to meet on Wednesday to adopt its draft report, which is expected to be tabled in Parliament in the Budget Session beginning Friday.

# Kejriwal writes to PM highlighting disparity in allocation of public funds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A head of the Delhi Assembly polls, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal launched an attack on the BJP-led Central government on Tuesday for waiving loans of its "billionaire friends" and demanded a halt to the practice, adding that such a move could transform the country's economic landscape. Instead, he has urged the government to redirect these resources toward easing the financial burden on common citizens, farmers and middle-class families. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, AAP chief highlights a stark disparity in the allocation of public funds, cornering the BJP led Central government of prioritising the financial interests of a select few billionaires over the needs of ordinary taxpayers. Showing a letter at a press conference, Kejriwal said, "Today I wrote a letter to the prime minister on a very important issue. In the letter, I have told the prime minister that the BJP-led



Central government is spending money from the government treasury on the country's billionaires. Whichever billionaire friend they want to be kind to, they give him money from the government and waive off that loan in two or three years. In the last five years, the central government has waived loans of 400-500 such billionaires worth ₹10 lakh crore." Presenting an alternative vision, the AAP chief outlined how stopping these corporate loan waivers could transform the country's economic landscape. He proposed halving income tax and GST rates, doubling the taxable income limit, and abol-

ishing GST on essential food items—steps that would directly benefit millions of households. "Common people are paying half their salaries in taxes, while the loans of the rich are being waived. Why doesn't the Central government waive home loans, car loans, or other financial burdens of ordinary citizens?" Kejriwal asked. Having earlier served as a joint commissioner in the Income Tax Department, Kejriwal went to closely examine the tax burden on the common man. He said, "A middle-class individual who earns ₹12 lakh annually is burdened with so many taxes imposed by the central government. They pay income tax, GST, service tax, property tax, education cess, capital gains tax, road tax, and more. When all these taxes are combined, a person earning ₹12 lakh ends up paying at least ₹6 lakh in taxes—half of their income—to the government. And what do they get in return? Nothing. Absolutely nothing."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Recalibrating US-India ties

India-US relations face a shift as India tackles trade, immigration, amid Trump's 'America First' policy

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump engage in dialogue to strengthen bilateral relations, the future of US-India ties appears poised at a critical juncture. Modi's commitment to global peace, prosperity and security, paired with Trump's vision of 'America First,' highlights a partnership that must balance shared strategic goals with diverging domestic priorities. India and the US have cultivated a robust Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership over the years, encompassing key areas like defence, technology, energy and counterterrorism. President Trump's emphasis on India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment underscores Washington's aim to deepen defence collaboration. With Modi's planned visit to the White House and continued diplomatic exchanges, both nations are set to expand their cooperation in these critical domains. However, this partnership extends beyond bilateral gains. Modi and Trump's discussions on global challenges, including tensions in West Asia and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, highlight their shared interest in playing pivotal roles on the global stage.



Trade remains a contentious issue, with Trump's protectionist policies, including potential tariff hikes, posing a challenge to India. The US President's focus on achieving a 'fair bilateral trading relationship' reflects his administration's concerns about trade imbalances. India, on the other hand, seeks to protect its economic interests while fostering a mutually beneficial partnership. Negotiating these trade tensions will require careful diplomacy, as both nations aim to preserve the benefits of their economic ties. The potential for

increased investment, innovation and job creation through collaboration in sectors like renewable energy and space exploration offers a promising path forward. Immigration has emerged as yet another critical point of discussion. Trump's crackdown on illegal migrants and emphasis on tighter border controls have direct implications for India, one of the largest sources of irregular immigration outside Latin America. The US has identified approximately 18,000 Indian nationals for deportation, a figure India has cautiously addressed while advocating for a systematic verification process. Moreover, visa delays for Indian nationals have raised concerns, particularly as India is a significant contributor to the US tech workforce. Balancing Trump's domestic priorities with the need for a skilled global workforce will be essential to sustaining the mutually beneficial flow of talent and innovation. The relationship between India and the US is at once ripe with potential and fraught with challenges. While Trump's 'Make America Great Again' agenda and Modi's vision for a self-reliant India may occasionally clash, their shared goals of security, economic growth, and technological advancement offer ample ground for collaboration. As the world's largest democracies, India and the U.S. have a unique opportunity to lead by example in addressing global challenges.

### PICTALK



Folk artists take part in a procession on the eve of the unveiling of 'Bhuvaneshwari Devi' statue, in Bengaluru PTI

## Simulation-based learning: Transforming emergency medical training

By replicating real-world medical emergencies, this innovative training method bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical expertise

Simulation refers to the imitation of real-world processes or systems for training, education, or evaluation purposes. In emergency medical learning, simulation creates realistic scenarios that replicate medical emergencies, allowing healthcare providers to practice and refine their skills in a safe, controlled environment. The implementation of Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) by the National Medical Council (NMC) has shown that simulation significantly enhances clinical competence for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical students. One of the most significant advantages of simulation is that it enables learners to practice handling critical and high-stakes situations without risking patient safety. This is particularly important in emergencies, where errors can have severe consequences. By engaging in simulated scenarios, participants can repeatedly practice emergency protocols, improve technical skills such as intubation and defibrillation, and gain confidence in their abilities.



Simulations replicate the high-pressure environment of real emergencies, helping individuals develop the ability to make rapid, informed decisions under stress. They also provide a risk-free setting to identify and correct mistakes, enabling participants to learn how to prevent such errors in real-life situations. Additionally, exposure to diverse scenarios prepares learners to adapt to unexpected complications effectively. Teamwork plays a critical role in emergency medical training, and simulation emphasises the importance of collaboration and communication. Learners develop skills in articulating observations, providing updates, and conveying instructions clearly, which are essential in high-pressure situations. Simulation allows team members to define roles, such as team leader or airway manager and practice seamless coordination. Through repeated practice, team-based simulations foster trust, cohesion, and an understanding of each member's strengths, weaknesses and working styles. Structured debriefing sessions after simulations promote a culture of continuous learning by encouraging open discussions about successes and areas for improvement. These sessions help build leadership and followership skills, enabling team

## Trump's America: A reality check for the Desis

In Trump's transactional world no group, not even the perceived 'model minority,' is immune from the fallout of his unpredictable policies



BHOPIINDER SINGH

It's not Elon Musk's early frustrations with President Donald Trump handing over the crucial project to build America's AI (Artificial Intelligence) infrastructure to rival Sam Altman-led 'Stargate,' that ought to worry us, but the fate of fellow Trumpeteer, Vivek Ramaswamy, that rings closer home. During the campaign trail, the racist Trump was busy mocking minority ethnicities and religions, the Indian-American Desis, seemed smug in assuming that somehow, they were a cut above the other minorities. The purported personal equation between Trump and the Indian Prime Minister was bandied as proof of the special treatment, that awaited India and Indians.

Names of a few Indian-Americans in the new Trump administration (especially of Vivek Ramaswamy in the Department of Government Efficiency or DOGE) were showcased as proofs of Trump's affection for the world's largest democracy. The lazy and simplistic assumption was that he'd be tough on the likes of China and Pakistan, hence pro-India. But the cold reality of dealing with the unpredictable politics of Trump hit much earlier than even anticipated by commentators who had been warning of Trump's ascendancy, despite many shortcomings of the Democrats under Joe Biden. For starters, Chinese President Xi Jinping got an invite to attend the swearing-in of President Trump, but the Indian Prime Minister didn't.

Soon thereafter Trump kept peppering his Make-America-Great-Again (MAGA) spiel with threats of tariff spikes against traditional allies like Canada, Denmark, Mexico etc., (including naming India) but recently suggested that he'd 'rather not' impose tariffs against China - this after promising up to 60% tariffs against China during the campaign! He flipped. Soon thereafter, the Indian-American community was hit the hardest of all immigrant communities by the direct implications of the executive order ending birthright citizenship.

Chances for many Indians working under H-1B (work), H-4 (dependent), L (intra-company transfer) and F (student) got jeopardized, as amongst the largest and fastest-growing immigrant groups in the US. With all assumed equations besetting Washington DC and Delhi, it seems fait accompli with little scope for Delhi to counter-influence a policy measure, that impacts it, more than anyone else. Such radical disruptions were certainly not the norm in the Biden era. The supposed leverage of a voluble Vivek Ramaswamy with a Trump also seems to have come a cropper, given the mystery surrounding Vivek's sudden decision to leave DOGE. Having invested a lot of personal stake, content, and pride, in supporting the Trump ascendancy to power (clearly prematurely?), Vivek is at pains to deny that his ouster has anything to do with him having defended the immigration position after calling some, 'lazy Americans'. To add insult to injury of being forced into grandstanding, a journalist has just released a video of Vivek's text confirming his departure from Trump, due to the same. The ostensible bid for Ohio Governorship (if true?) is an afterthought and wasn't the intention, even a week earlier. That for a Trump, anyone is completely dispensable once a purpose has been served, be it



IT IS A LESSON THAT VIVEK RAMASWAMY OR EVEN ELON MUSK WILL WAKE UP TO, AS IN THE INDIFFERENT AND TRANSACTIONAL WORLDVIEW OF A TRUMP, TOPICAL RELEVANCE IS ALL THAT MATTERS TO THE AUTHOR OF THE 'ART OF DEAL'

an individual, cause, country, or even a supportive Indian-American like Vivek, seems true. Anyone can be thrown under the bus, irrespective of their ethnicity or personal chemistry. A telling tweet by Vivek on 26th Dec 2024 captures his nuanced position on the contentious immigration issue (as wishfully believed by many Indian-Americans to be the first amongst the equals within minorities, owing to our unique culture and work ethics). He had commented, "The reason top tech companies often hire foreign-born & first-generation engineers over 'native' Americans isn't because of an innate American IQ deficit (a lazy & wrong explanation). A key part of it comes down to the c-word: culture".

The underlying suggestion is that Indians do not suffer from the supposed 'Wokeism' of the Democrats as Indians do not have 'a culture that celebrates the prom queen over the math olympiad champ, or the jock over the valedictorian', hence would escape the prying eyes of a Trump targeting immigrants. While it is true that Trump has spoken about the logic of 'meritocracy' in extending citizenship - it is equally true that in applying his power of potential misuse, he hasn't spared or protected the interests of the Indian-

American community which did tick most of the qualifying boxes defined by Trump. The hard truth is that Trump has no special affinity or even intention of any preferential treatment to Indian Americans or India if his conduct in the initial few days of his Presidency is anything to go by. The fact is, the one-time star of the TV series 'Apprentice' is more famous for his heartless line "You're fired" than for any historical demonstration of empathetic leadership. Ultimately, it is a lesson that Vivek Ramaswamy or even Elon Musk will wake up to, as in the indifferent and transactional worldview of a Trump, topical relevance is all that matters to the author of the 'Art of Deal' (that too, ghostwritten). Those eagerly waiting for a decisive and assertive POTUSA in Trump who would do wonders for India, need to brace for some discomforting reality check. Biden had limitations and undeniable failings, but he wasn't a bull in a China shop or necessarily anti-India, ever. With Trump, you never know, as Indians or India don't seem anything special, at least for now.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### CHINA TAKES ON AI

Madam — Less than a week after his swearing-in ceremony, US President Trump said that the private sector would invest \$500 billion in AI technology, making the US the most advanced country in the world and creating jobs for millions. Just a week after this statement, the US stock market crashed on Monday, January 27. The reason behind this was the DeepSeek app launched by China last week, which became the most downloaded free app in the US, beating rivals including ChatGPT. DeepSeek was reportedly developed at a fraction of the cost of its competitors, raising questions about the future of America's AI dominance and the scale of investment planned by US firms.

AI leader Nvidia's share price sank 17 per cent, and it lost about \$593 billion in stock market value, according to market experts, the biggest one-day loss ever for a company on Wall Street. I was wondering if Mr. Trump, who has just given a 75-day extension to China's app TikTok, will be able to show his displeasure with China and announce a 100 percent import duty on it instead of 60 percent. But it doesn't seem that Trump will be able to deal with China the way he deals with Mexico and Colombia. That's why he has refrained from imposing the previously announced 60 percent import duty. On the contrary, he is advising his American tech companies that 'this is a wake-up call for you guys.' Despite limited access to advanced hardware, DeepSeek's ability to compete with American models shows that software simplicity and data efficiency can compensate for hardware constraints, and underestimating China in any field can be a cause of embarrassment for anyone.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

#### CRACKDOWN ON FRAUD CALLS

Madam — The Indian government's steps to curb fraudulent international calls are a significant and commendable effort in

## India-China border talks



The visit to Beijing by the foreign secretary, Vikram Misri and a series of high-level meetings between the officials of India and China meant to bring some normalcy back to their ties after years of heightened tensions. While these hectic parleys demonstrate intent on both sides to try to build on the momentum from the border pullback, the recent crises in their relationship have deepened mutu-

al distrust that will not go away with a few meetings. The past few months have seen India raise concerns about a new Chinese plan to build the world's largest dam in Tibet on the upstream part of what India calls the Brahmaputra. New Delhi fears that the dam could allow Beijing to weaponise water, either by denying India adequate water or by unleashing floods. The Quad grouping, which met in Washington on the margins of the swearing-in ceremony of Donald Trump, issued a statement that was more overtly critical of China and its territorial ambitions in the Indo-Pacific than has been the norm. No one expects New Delhi and Beijing to be best friends. But they do not need to be enemies either.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

the field of digital security. The Department of Telecommunications has developed an innovative and indigenous system that identifies and blocks the misuse of Indian mobile numbers. The primary aim of this initiative is to free users from cyber fraud and safeguard their financial interests.

This new system has achieved the remarkable feat of reducing fraudulent international calls by 90 per cent within just 24 hours. Additionally, by blocking more than 20 foreign service providers, the government has sent a clear message that there is no place for such activities. This effort is not only a stringent step toward preventing fraudsters but also a symbol of securing the digital lives of Indian citizens. It is a critical move toward realising the vision of Digital India. The initiative not only curbs cybercrimes but also enhances the sense of trust and security among citizens. It brings greater transparency to the telecom sector and helps users feel safer in their digital activities. This initiative truly marks a new chapter in the

realm of digital security.

R K Jain | Barwani

#### SMRITI MANDHANA WINS ICC AWARD

Madam — India's star batter Smriti Mandhana was adjudged as the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year 2024, the global body announcement. Mandhana had a memorable outing with the bat in 2024. She smashed 747 runs this year with the help of four centuries and three fifties in 13 games. She set new batting standards in ODIs, scoring more runs than she ever had before in a calendar year. She also tested herself with the ball in hand and ended up taking a wicket as well. The 28-year-old now has equalled New Zealand batter Suzie Bates' record of winning the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year on multiple occasions. Mandhana won her ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year award in 2018.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

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## FIRST COLUMN

## THE PATH TO BEING TRULY SPECIAL

We all want to feel special, but often our desires and decisions lead us astray

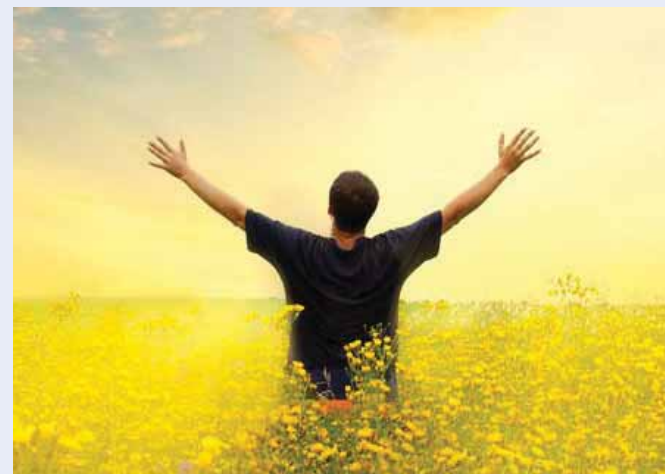


AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We all want to be special. There is nothing wrong with such thinking, but most of us do not desire properly or decide sensibly. In this article, I will shed some light on how to do both of these wisely. What should we desire? This must be in sync with our circumstances and capabilities. Imagine desiring to become very rich while doing a small business. Similarly, desiring to become famous anytime soon while being a club-level sports person is not wise.

We will be disappointed only. Persons not blessed with good looks should accept their limitations and focus on what capabilities they have been blessed with. There was a dark and not-so-good-looking actress in the USA; she only got small roles. But she acted so well that she became a household name. A social worker in India decided to help tribals. He moved in with them. He became very famous and very special. However, something awaits all of us; which is not so difficult either. This is simply to become a devotee of God, and He will make us special.

I will write more about it in this article. The same wisdom should



be used in decision-making. When there is a choice between being good and not so good, what should we choose? The same logic applies to following dharma and staying within 'maryada' (limits). We know what these are, but are very causal about controlling ourselves. Succumbing to negative emotions like anger, lust, greed, hate, etc. is so easy. What it does is to make us very ordinary. We have been taught to be disciplined in eating, sleeping, entertainment and what we do and how much. Are we prepared to do that? If we are keen on becoming special, we have to.

A similar yardstick is required in choosing goals. Are they good in the long term? Or, the short-term is easy? What will you choose? Regarding usefulness to others, we should be very sincere. If we wish to be special in the eyes of others, this is the 'mantra'. Lastly, if we really and truly wish to be special, be dutiful; do all duties as best as possible. This will be the starting point in pleasing God, who is everything. After the efforts of many births, a yogi in the end becomes Lord and he takes My shelter. A great soul, who considers Lord Vasudeva thus as everything is very rare. (The Bhagavad-Geeta verse #7.19) What will happen then? You will be rewarded like you cannot imagine. Because God is the controller of what happens to us. Begin doing some easy spiritual practices, which suit your nature.

I have a large photo of Lord Krishna, which I have hung on the right side of my bed. I spend a lot of time looking at the Lord, while I gently chant Krishna, Krishna, Krishna....What has happened? I have become special. God guides me when I pray for His guidance and help. Isn't God omniscient? He knows what will work. God helps us as only He can, being the controller. I am beginning to feel secure. Fears and anxieties are reducing.

There is more peace. I can tolerate better what I must. Physical health is improving. There is steady progress, which is very satisfying. I feel that I have become special. This is possible for one and all. Nothing mentioned in this article is very difficult. One just has to be determined. Then, one can enjoy the status of being special.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

## Budget 2025: Prioritise health education for a stronger India



RAHUL MEHRA

With over 40 per cent of India's population under 25, empowering youth with physical and mental is a vital investment in the nation's future



As the Union Budget for 2025 approaches, expectations run high across various sectors. Among these, education - specifically health education - deserves special attention. To ensure the holistic development of our youth, the government must consider allocating funds for the integration of health education into school curricula. Such an initiative will not only address immediate concerns but also align with the aspirational vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, where a healthy population becomes the cornerstone of a developed nation. With the Union Budget 2025 at the stage of finalisation, it is time to prioritise health education.

Allocating funds to this cause is not merely an educational reform; it is an investment in India's future. It is stated time and again, including in the National Education Policy, that it is critical to allocate public investment in education from the current over 4.5 per cent to about 6 per cent of total budgetary allocation. Besides this, the Government must consider designing schemes that ensure health education is imparted to children at an early stage to be able to build a healthy society. Development is not merely economic or technological - it is also social, cultural and, above all, human.

A nation's progress depends on the health of its people, and with over 40 per cent of India's population under 25, ensuring the health and wellbeing of its youth is critical. This cannot be achieved without systematically integrating health education into our school curricula. Our goal is to improve student's health knowledge and more importantly, their health behavior. The urgency for such an intervention is rooted in troubling realities. Studies indicate that 30-40 per cent of Indian students face serious mental health challenges. A Global School



A NATION'S PROGRESS DEPENDS ON THE HEALTH OF ITS PEOPLE, AND WITH OVER 40 PER CENT OF INDIA'S POPULATION UNDER 25, ENSURING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ITS YOUTH IS CRITICAL.

Health Survey (GSHS) conducted as far back as 2007 revealed that more than 25 per cent of students aged 13-17 experienced periods of deep sadness or hopelessness, often disrupting their daily activities. These numbers have only worsened in the years since, as highlighted by small-scale studies and the alarming rise in student suicides. Ignoring the mental and physical health of students today will lead to grave consequences for the nation tomorrow.

The contrast between India and nations that give primacy to health education is stark. In the United States, the Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) collects data every two years on the health behaviours of high school students. This data informs evidence-based interventions and policies that address mental health, substance abuse, nutrition, and other critical issues. Many US states mandate health education, covering mental, physical, and social health literacy. Similarly, countries like the United Kingdom and Canada have integrated health education into their school curricula, starting at the primary level.

India, however, lacks a comprehensive approach. While physical education is emphasised in schools, the broader concept of health education, encompassing mental and social wellbeing, is largely absent. The much-lauded National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 only touches upon physical health, failing to address the critical need for a holistic health education framework. Why does this matter? Because healthy individuals contribute to a healthier economy. Poor health not only

reduces productivity but also pushes families into financial crises due to high medical expenses.

India's average life expectancy in 'full health' is a mere 60 years, significantly lower than that of many Asian countries, including Japan (74 years) and China (69 years). A healthy lifestyle, ingrained early, can change this trajectory. Countries like Japan provide valuable lessons. Their emphasis on hygiene, nutrition and physical activity is embedded in their cultural fabric. Children grow up practising these habits, resulting in a population that enjoys a higher quality of life and longer years of productive health.

India, with its rich traditions of yoga and Ayurveda, has the cultural foundations to promote such a shift. However, without institutionalising health education, these remain underutilised. Introducing health education as a mandatory subject in schools can address this gap.

A comprehensive curriculum must include modules on physical fitness, mental health resilience, nutrition, social interaction and technology use. For instance, students could learn the importance of balanced diets, strategies to cope with academic pressure, and the benefits of physical activities and mindfulness practices.

The curriculum should also emphasise practical life skills, such as decision-making, interpersonal communication, and self-advocacy, to prepare students for real-world challenges. A structured approach is essential. First, the government must design a standardised health education curriculum with clear performance

benchmarks. Students' progress should be evaluated at key stages, such as the end of classes 6, 8, and 10. Second, teachers need specialised training to effectively deliver this curriculum. Public-private partnerships can play a crucial role in addressing resource gaps and providing innovative solutions.

Importantly, this initiative aligns seamlessly with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit Bharat 2047. A healthy India is a productive India. By equipping the younger generation with the knowledge and skills to prioritise their wellbeing, we are not only improving individual lives but also strengthening the nation's human capital, driving economic growth, and enhancing societal happiness.

Beyond the classroom, the ripple effects of mandatory health education can be transformative. A population that understands the value of preventive care will reduce the burden on India's healthcare system. Families will adopt healthier lifestyles, and communities will benefit from reduced rates of lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart ailments.

The road to Viksit Bharat 2047 is paved with initiatives that prioritise people over policies, and action over aspirations. Health education is not just a subject; it is a foundation for a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous India.

(The writer is UNESCO Chair for Global Health & Education and Chairman of Tarang Health Alliance. Views expressed are personal)

## How restoring forests can combat climate change and empower communities

## Reforestation stands as both a climate action imperative and a cornerstone for building sustainable future

Amid escalating climate changes, reforestation has come to be one of the most effective, nature-driven methods to combat environmental degradation and enhance climate resilience. Beyond absorbing carbon dioxide, forests support livelihoods, stabilise ecosystems, and foster sustainable communities. Forests have a great role in countering global warming and providing essential resources that not only support communities but also manufacturing and trade.



SHWETA RAWAT

just as a climate action tool but also as a cornerstone for community development. **Reforestation's Dual Role:** Climate Action and Community Resilience Forests have an immense capacity to capture and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus reducing the greenhouse effect.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established in 1988 estimates that reforestation and afforestation could account for up to 30 per cent of the carbon reduction required to limit global warming. Additionally, forests regulate microclimates, mitigating the urban heat island effect and stabilising local weather patterns crucial for agriculture. Reforestation plays a crucial role in combating desertification, which poses a significant threat to food security, water availability and livelihoods. Forests help anchor the soil, replenish organic matter, and improve water retention, thereby enhancing agricultural productivity and water access, particularly in ecologically fragile regions. According to

the India State of Forest Report 2021 (ISFR), tribal and rural communities living in these areas face high vulnerability but also exhibit remarkable climate resilience.

For these communities, reforestation is a game-changer as it can help prevent and even undo desertification by stabilising the soil using tree roots, which reduces wind and water erosion. Furthermore, forests help replenish organic material in the soil, leading to improved water retention and increased fertility which can lead to environmental regeneration and socio-economic stability.

**Community-driven Reforestation:** A Proven Model Even with rapid urbanisation, India's conservation ethos has a rich legacy of pro-



tecting nature. Be it the collective Chipko movement of the 1970s or the inspirational restoration of more than 1300 acres of Brahmaputra's Forest by Jadav Payeng, the Forest Man of India, the success of any reforestation effort hinges on community and local participation.

With the input of individuals and stakeholders from communities, any conservation project remains culturally relevant, ecologically sound and

economically beneficial. Take Aravalli Hills Afforestation Project as an example for instance. By involving Village Forest Protection Committees, the project rejuvenated over 151,390 hectares of degraded land and built nearly 200 water storage dams to support wildlife, boosting biodiversity and tiger populations in Sariska Sanctuary. With an impressive 87 per cent tree survival rate, the initiative balanced environmental restoration with tangible social benefits such as job creation and improved livelihoods. This model demonstrates that sustainable reforestation thrives on collaboration, community empowerment, and measurable impact. Partnerships for a Greener Future To scale reforestation

efforts, collaboration is key. Governments, philanthropies, non-profits and businesses must unite to amplify impact. For instance, non-profits can mobilise grassroots participation and bring cultural insights. Corporations can leverage resources for large-scale projects while fulfilling sustainability commitments. Local governments can ensure policy alignment and provide regulatory support. Together, these stakeholders can create integrated strategies that combine ecological restoration with community upliftment. Initiatives like the National Afforestation Programme and the Green India Mission lay a solid foundation, but partnerships can catalyse progress. Reforestation for Generations to Come

Reforestation offers a rare synergy—mitigating climate change while addressing critical challenges like water scarcity, food insecurity and rural poverty. It is not merely an environmental solution but a pathway to holistic development. By fostering meaningful partnerships with non-profits, businesses, and communities, and aligning efforts with governmental initiatives.

The time to act is now. With a shared vision and commitment, we can restore forests not just as carbon sinks but as vibrant ecosystems that sustain life and empower generations. A greener, more resilient future is within our reach—if we plant the seeds today. (The writer is chairperson and founder, The Hans Foundation; views are personal)

# 5 killed in Burari, rescue teams active



Rescue work underway after a four-storey building collapsed at Burari

Ranjan Dimri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Five people, including two girls, were killed in the four-storey building collapse in north Delhi's Burari area, police said on Tuesday. The newly-constructed building near Oscar Public School collapsed late on Monday. So far, 12 people have been rescued and five bodies retrieved from the debris, they said. The victims have been identified as Saadhna (17) and seven-year-old Radhika. The other three persons -- all men -- are yet to be identified, they added. Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Raja Banthia said a rescue operation was underway and more people could be trapped under the debris. In a statement issued on Monday, the Delhi Police said it received information about the collapse around seven pm. The building was a new construction spread over 200 square yards. Soon after the incident was reported to the Delhi Police

and the Delhi Fire Services, a rescue operation was launched. "The rescue operation is still underway. Personnel from agencies such as police, fire services and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are on the spot. The police have cordoned off the area and are collecting more details from locals to ascertain how many people could still be trapped," Banthia said. "We launched an investigation into the matter and multiple teams have been formed. Legal action is being taken against the building owner," he added. The officer further said the police would be able to comment on the situation only after the rescue operation concluded. "During incidents of this nature, the administration appoints an incident commander who issues directions to officials. The area's subdivisional magistrate is currently acting as incident commander and has ordered the evacuation of nearby buildings for structural safety and fitness checks. The entire

area has been cordoned off and no one is allowed to cross the restricted zone," the senior officer said. He also mentioned that the rescue operation might continue till early on Wednesday to ensure the area was thoroughly checked and those still trapped under the rubble rescued. "Those who were rescued suspect that more people are still trapped inside. The police, Delhi Fire Services, NDRF and other agencies are working round-the-clock to complete the rescue operation as quickly as possible," Banthia said. He also said those rescued were being referred to higher medical facilities based on the severity of their health conditions. "Initially, we shifted some patients to Burari Hospital but they were referred to LNJP Hospital," he added. AAP MLA Sanjeev Jha said this was not the time for political disputes and demanded adequate compensation for the families affected.

He announced compensations of Rs 10 lakh for each adult victim and Rs 5 lakh for the families of minor victims. "We hope that the central government also announces compensation for the families at the earliest," Jha said. At the spot, many people were seen anxiously waiting for news about their family members who were working in the collapsed building as labourers. Md Bariq said his 22-year-old brother Md Sarfaraz was one of the many labourers trapped under the debris. "I also work as a labourer at another site. I received a call about the building collapse around 8:30 pm on Monday. The caller informed me that my brother was trapped in the rubble. When I arrived here, the police directed us to the hospital to check if my brother was among the first five people rescued. He wasn't there," Bariq said. "Later, three or four more people were rescued but he wasn't among them. We have been here since last night, without food or water, waiting

for news about my brother," he added. Md Arif said they were hoping their relatives were safe. "My elder brother Md Quadir was working on the third floor of the building when it collapsed. We are praying he is safe," Arif said. Some locals who were nearby when the incident occurred described the entire episode as "horrible". "We heard a very loud noise and a bubble of dust emanated from the area. It took more than five minutes to realise what had happened. We rushed to the site, informed the police and fire officials," a witness said. Shortly after the incident, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi said in a social media post all possible help would be provided to the people affected. "The incident of building collapse in Burari is extremely sad. I have spoken to the local administration to ensure speedy relief and rescue operations. All possible help will be provided to the affected people," she said in Hindi.



# WAVES 2025 will position India as global media leader: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHUBANESHWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that the forthcoming WAVES (World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit) will provide a new global identity to India's creative prowess. Addressing the audience at Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave in Bhubaneswar, the PM highlighted how major events like WAVES not only generate significant revenue but also build perceptions and push the economy. Modi underscored the immense potential of such initiatives to harness India's vast pool of creative talent and position the nation as a global leader in the media and entertainment sector. Bridging India's timeless traditions with contemporary creativity WAVES 2025 presents a unique confluence

of India's rich cultural legacy and modern creativity, offering platforms for everyone—from creators of classical and semi-classical music to creators of modern music of EDM and innovative advertising professionals, designers and creators for Khadi. This dynamic blend of past and present is exemplified in challenges like Wah Ustad, celebrating India's traditional musical heritage, Resonate: The EDM Challenge, embracing modern global music trends, and Make The World Wear Khadi, which seeks to reimagine India's iconic fabric as a global symbol of sustainable fashion. These three challenges were launched by Union Information Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw along with WAVES Bazaar and WAVES Awards, on Monday where he urged the creators to help India become the global capital of content creation.

Together, these initiatives provide content creators with unparalleled opportunities to showcase their talent, bridge tradition and innovation, and gain recognition while contributing to India's cultural and creative renaissance. These challenges join a diverse lineup of total 31 Create in India Challenges, offering a stage for content creators across various genres to showcase their talent. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Doordarshan, has launched Wah Ustad, an extraordinary classical and semi-classical music talent hunt, under the Create in India Challenges, a flagship initiative of WAVES 2025. It aims to nurture exceptional talent in Hindustani, Carnatic, and soulful Sufi music while preserving and promoting India's rich musical legacy.

# Politics in Delhi goes digital

From page 1

AAP, ranking second in YouTube spending, invested Rs 78,53,000 on 90 advertisements during this period. The party's videos have been focused on promoting key promises, including the 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana' and 'Sanjeevani Yojana', both aimed at garnering public support while criticizing the BJP for allegedly planning to end public welfare schemes. The maximum AAP spent on

YouTube was on December 31, with Rs 4,01,000, followed by Rs 3,90,000 on January 6. The Congress party, though trailing in terms of expenditure, spent Rs 68,25,500 on 41 ads during this period, with peak spending on January 24, when the party spent Rs 10,30,000. Congress's campaign videos include promises such as the 'Yuva Udaan Yojana', which pledges stipends for unemployed youth if elected to power. Meanwhile, Google has

emerged as another key platform for election advertising. The BJP, once again the frontrunner, spent Rs 73,439,750 on 5,764 Google ads between December 1, 2024, and January 27, 2025. Of this total, videos accounted for approximately 60 per cent of the ads, highlighting the growing importance of video content in political advertising. One of the BJP's more creative ads featured a metaphorical breakup with AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal,

encouraging voters to abandon their support for him in the upcoming elections. Congress, while more conservative in its digital advertising budget, spent Rs 10,917,250 on 117 Google ads, with 66 per cent of that expenditure directed towards video content. AAP, though third in Google ad spending, allocated Rs 8,421,250 to 208 ads, with a significant 93.7 per cent of that budget going toward video advertising.

# Police defend arrest in Saif attack case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

Amid news reports raising doubts about the identity of the accused in the Saif Ali Khan attack case, the Mumbai police said on Tuesday that Bangladeshi national Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir, arrested in the case, "is the correct accused". Addressing a news conference, Additional Commissioner of Police (West Region) Paramjit Dahiya said, "The arrested accused is the same person who committed the crime. We have oral, physical and technical evidence against him," Dahiya said.

# Amit Shah paves the road for BJP in Capital

From page 1

On the Congress president's question if taking a dip in the Ganga would eradicate poverty, Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a dip in 2019 and gave cooking gas, five kilogrammes of free foodgrains, toilets, provided free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh and "other facilities" to 60 crore people. "Kharage sahab, you have turned 80. In your entire life, you have never taken a dip. Tell us what you have done for the welfare of the poor," Shah asked the Congress president. "My party BJP, our leader Modi ji, and we all have faith in the country's traditions and faith. That is why the Kartarpur Sahib corridor was built and such a magnificent Kumbh mela is being organised," he added.

Raising the poll pitch, he stated that neither of the parties can develop Delhi. Responding to the allegations levelled by AAP on the Haryana government about mixing "poison in Yamuna", Shah said he has never seen anyone stooping to such low levels to win an election. "Kejriwal ji, victory and defeat are part of every election but you have accused the Haryana government of mixing poison in Yamuna and you have scared the people of Delhi. This is cheap politics," Shah said. He asked Kejriwal to answer three questions and said, "Arvind Kejriwal says he has a report. If so, make that report public, and we will address it. He alleged that Haryana poisoned the water. What is the name of that poison? Reveal its name and provide proof. He claimed to have

stopped the polluted water, saving Delhi's residents. Then show the order you issued to block that water." "Arvind Kejriwal will have to answer these three questions. He is unparalleled when it comes to lying. He did not fulfill promises made to Anna Hazare and even vowed not to seek Congress's support, but broke those promises," he added. Shah began the election campaign by participating in a lengthy roadshow from Mool Chand Metro Station to Garhi Chowk in the Kasturba Nagar constituency, where the party has put Neeraj Basoya in opposition to AAP's Ramesh Pehalwan, who joined the ruling party a month ago with his wife and two-time MCD councillor Kusum Lata. As BJP candidate Neeraj Basoya and New Delhi MP

Bansuri Swaraj stood next to him, Shah, dressed in a saffron shirt and a black sleeveless jacket, waved to his supporters and showered them with rose petals throughout the entire trip. As Shah's car sped through the congested streets of Kasturba Nagar constituency, with a sea of supporters pounding drums and trumpets and people curiously bending over from their balconies to get a glimpse of the BJP's star campaigner, the slogans were loud and clear: Bharat Mata ki Jai, Jai Shri Ram, Vote for BJP. Shah later made it to the Kalkaji constituency, where he spoke to a sizable contingent of BJP supporters and urged them to support Ramesh Bidhuri, whom he described as his "dear friend" and a public-serving politician.

# Rahul Gandhi attacks INDIA bloc ally

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"This is the game and this game is being played by media. They will show face of Modi, Amitabh Bachan, Ambani wedding, cricket match," he added. Gandhi claimed that while there will be 'Mann ki ba', the media will never show the real problems of the country. He also said that only the public suffers from this. "The entire system is to steal from you and distract you," he added. The senior Congress leader also said that there is an ideological fight between his party and the RSS and BJP.

"Our fight is for Ambedkar's constitution. They said they will change the constitution. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said that the true independence didn't happen on 15 August, 1947 but when Modi came. This means they insulted our independence," Gandhi asserted. Over the statement of Bhagwat on Ram mandir consecration ceremony, the Congress MP said, "You wouldn't have seen a poor person in Ram Mandir's inauguration neither was President Murmu seen, who belongs to the tribal community. She wasn't even

invited for the new parliament building inauguration. They want an India of rich people when the constitution says that India is of all. Where is it written that all the ports and airports will be of billionaires?" The Congress leader asserted that while the companies are of Gautam Adani, the control is in PM Modi's hand. "Who profits from Demonetisation and GST? The billionaires. Their policies are for the billionaires. Have you asked that with privatisation that is happening, who is getting benefits? Who do you think the money goes to? They do

not come in your hand. Only 5 to 7 per cent people run this country," he alleged. "They tell you that you should send your kids to colleges. They sell you big dreams. You spend a lot of money and think that your child will get employed if they become something. The truth of this country right now is that despite you doing anything, they will not get employment," he claimed. He also promised to carry out a caste census in Delhi if voted to power. "We will break the wall that does not increase reservation beyond 50 per cent," he added.

# Politics boil over water terrorism

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Accusing Kejriwal of making a dangerous statement with implications for India's federal structure, the Centre urged the Election Commission to bar him from campaigning for his allegation that Haryana was poisoning the water of Yamuna. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini asked the AAP convenor to apologise or face defamation suit on his statement. "We came to protest and submit our petition to the EC on the very unfair, irresponsible, and the violative of the MCC

statement made by the former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. It is a very dangerous statement. This statement was dangerous for everyone except him, who is a self-proclaimed anarchist. The statement that he made has actually brought fear into the minds of people in Delhi. This has very serious implications for the way in which elections are conducted in this country. Is this good for our democracy? We raised these issues before the EC as How could a CM or former CM accuse another

CM of an act which could be somewhere relatable to genocide?... It is an insult to all the people of Haryana who have elected him. We have requested the EC to take action which prevents Arvind Kejriwal from campaigning in Delhi anymore..." Sitharaman said after meeting the officials of poll watchdog. Meanwhile, AAP convenor said he was not afraid of legal action and asserted he would not let people die in Delhi because of the "dirty, poisonous water". Kejriwal

claimed in a press conference that the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) CEO, in a letter on Monday, confirmed that a "poison" called ammonia had been mixed with the water supplied from the neighbouring state. In a fiery social media post, AAP alleged, "Poison is being mixed into the Yamuna to make its water untreatable. If people in Delhi consume this water, many will die. This is nothing short of a mass murder." Hitting back at Saini, Kejriwal

said he should not do politics over the issue. "It's sinful, you will face the curse of the people," Kejriwal said referring to Saini. "They are threatening to file a case against me. I was sent to jail by them, will they now hang me," he stated. Delhi CM Atishi and her Punjab counterpart, Bhagwant Mann, also met EC officials, alleging that the BJP-led Haryana government is deliberately releasing alarming levels of ammonia into the Yamuna river,

endangering Delhi's water supply. Atishi had written two letters to the EC seeking an immediate meeting with the officials of the poll panel — one on Monday and another on Tuesday morning. Earlier, War of words over Yamuna water has escalated with the BJP and Congress attacking AAP over Kejriwal's 'poison in Yamuna' or 'water terrorism' remark. Addressing a press conference, 10 BJP MPs from Haryana said it was a clear case of "criminal conspiracy"

by Kejriwal who was trying to create panic among the residents of Delhi. The BJP MPs challenged the Aam Aadmi Party government to test the quality of water released from Haryana before it is supplied to households in Delhi. The BJP leader asserted that the AAP is going to be ousted from power in the February 5 Delhi Assembly polls. In Haryana-mixed Hindi, Saini took a dig at the former Delhi chief minister, saying that he has been running a 'jhoot ki

dukan" in the national capital for the last 10 years. "He (Kejriwal) told a lie on Monday that surprised me. I had to issue a statement at 12 night. He claimed that poison is being mixed in the (Yamuna) water from Haryana and that (Delhi Jal Board) engineers found out about it and stopped the water," he said. "I want to tell Kejriwal that it is our holy Yamuna, in which Kalia Naag (a mythical serpent) used to spread poison and Lord Krishna finished him off," he said, accusing the AAP national convenor of blemishing Haryana, where he was born.



# Trump signs order paving way for ban on transgender troops

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Monday directing Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth to revise the Pentagon's policy on transgender troops, likely setting in motion a future ban on their military service. He also ordered troops to be reinstated who had left voluntarily or been booted for refusing COVID-19 vaccines, outlined new rollbacks in diversity programmes and provided for the deployment of a space-based missile defence shield for the US — all on Hegseth's first day. Trump and Hegseth had described parts of the anticipated orders throughout the day, but the exact language did not drop until late Monday. A transgender ban had been widely expected, and Trump's order largely sets the stage for a future ban — but directs Hegseth to come up with how that

would be implemented in policy. In his order, Trump claimed that service by troops who identify as a gender other than their biological one "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honourable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life" and is harmful to military readiness, requiring a revised policy to address the matter. Trump had tried to ban transgender troops during his first term, but it was tangled up in the courts for years before being overturned by then-President Joe Biden shortly after he took office. Two groups, Lambda Legal and Human Rights Campaign, which represented transgender troops the first time, vowed to fight again. "We have been here before and seven years ago were able to successfully block the earlier administration's effort," Lambda Legal attorney Sasha Buchert said. "Not only is such a move

cruel, it compromises the safety and security of our country and is particularly dangerous and wrong. As we promised then, so do we now: we will sue." During his first presidency, Trump established US Space Command and the US Space Force, which just marked its fifth birthday. Space continues to be a priority for the president, who has now directed the Pentagon to begin to develop the capability to shoot down missiles from space. For years, the US has cautioned that China, Russia and others were weaponising space. It has at times declassified information about both countries' efforts to create offensive weapons to disable critical US satellites, including the capability to move satellites from orbit, temporarily blind them or potentially even destroy them. The Space Force is building a low-orbit ring of redundant

satellites that can more quickly track and detect potential missile launches. But establishing a way to shoot missiles down from space is something the US has not pursued since President Ronald Reagan announced the Strategic Defence Initiative — "Star Wars" as it was commonly known — in the 1980s. The system was never developed due to cost and technological limitations. In his order called "an Iron Dome for America", Trump called for a multilayer missile defence system capable of countering an array of threats to the US, to include development and deployment of space-based interceptors. At least 8,200 troops were forced out of the military in 2021 for refusing to obey a lawful order when they declined to get the vaccine. Notices advising them they could return were sent out in 2023, but just 113 have re-enlisted.

# Tariff threat sways Colombia, but risks rise with Canada, Mexico

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Having already forced Colombia to accept deportees by threatening a 25 per cent tariff, President Donald Trump is readying the same move against Canada and Mexico as soon as Saturday. But this time, the stakes are higher and many economists surveying the possible damage doubt Trump would be comfortable with what they say would be self-inflicted wounds from the tariffs. "The potential for such sizable economic impacts ought to act as enough of a deterrent that Trump will not end up implementing these higher tariffs," said Matthew Martin, senior US economist at the consultancy Oxford Economics. Trump has repeatedly insisted that tariffs are coming on Canada and Mexico, despite both countries seeking to address his stated concerns about illegal border crossings and the smuggling of fentanyl. But the Republican president is also motivated by the idea that tariffs would force other countries to "respect" the United States. "We're going to immediately install massive tariffs," Trump said in a Monday speech, adding, "Colombia is traditionally a very, very strong-willed country," but it backed down rather than face import taxes. Multiple economic analyses show

that universal tariffs against Canada and Mexico risk more inflation and an economic slowdown. It's a much larger play than Trump's moves against Colombia, which accounts for roughly 0.5 per cent of US imports. By contrast, nearly 30 per cent of all US imports hail from Canada and Mexico, amplifying the risk that tariffs could fuel inflation and undermine Trump's campaign promises to get prices under control. Trump's director of the White House National Economic Council, Kevin Hassett, dismissed these concerns. He said the sceptical analyses of tariffs don't look at the totality of Trump's promises. "When the people who are trying to cause panic over President Trump's trade policy simulate what it's going to do, they don't account for all the other policies," Hassett said in a Monday interview on the Fox Business Network. "So President Trump is drill, baby, drill, and deregulate and tax cuts and reduce spending." After Trump's initial threat of 25 per cent tariffs in November, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum suggested Mexico could retaliate with tariffs of its own. Since then, she has been more measured, choosing to emphasize the strong bilateral relationship and willingness to engage in dialogue as the number of detentions at the US-Mexico border has plunged.

Sheinbaum pointed out in November that drugs were a US problem, but in December the Mexican military seized more than a ton of fentanyl pills in two raids, calling it the biggest catch of synthetic opioids in Mexico's history. On Monday, Sheinbaum applauded the agreement reached by the Trump administration and Colombia. "I believe the important thing, as I said on the first day, is to always act with a cool head, defending each country's sovereignty and the respect among nations and peoples," she said. Top Canadian ministers said last week that Canada was prepared to retaliate if Trump imposed import taxes, even as Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly said they "will continue to work on preventing tariffs". The working theory in Canada appears to involve being ready for anything that the US president might do. On Monday, the economics division of the insurance company Nationwide estimated that Trump's proposed tariffs on Canada and Mexico would increase inflation by as much as 0.5 percentage points and pull down growth by 0.7 percentage points. The analysis noted it did not "account for potential retaliatory tariffs from Canada or Mexico, which could amplify the deleterious impact on inflation and GDP growth".

# Serbia's PM resigns as anti-corruption protests grow

AP ■ BELGRADE

Serbia's populist Prime Minister Milos Vucelic resigned Tuesday in an attempt to calm political tensions and pressure roiled by weeks of massive anti-corruption protests over the deadly collapse of a concrete canopy. The canopy collapse in November, which killed 15 people in the northern city of Novi Sad, has become a flashpoint reflecting wider discontent with the increasingly autocratic rule of Serbia's populist President Aleksandar Vucic. He has faced accusations of curbing democratic freedoms in Serbia despite formally seeking European Union membership for the troubled Balkan nation. "It is my appeal for everyone to calm down the passions and return to dialogue," Vucelic told a news conference announcing his resignation. Novi Sad Mayor Milan Djuric also stepped down on Tuesday. Vucelic's resignation could lead to an early parliamentary election. The resignation must be confirmed by Serbia's parliament, which has 30 days to choose a new government or



call a snap election. Pro-government media said President Vucic will attend a Cabinet session on Tuesday evening to decide whether a new prime minister-designate will be appointed or an early election called. Opposition parties have said they would insist on a transitional government that would create conditions for a free and fair election. Vucic's populists have faced accusations of irregularities during past elections. Vucelic became the prime minister in April 2024, after the Serbian Progressive Party won most votes in an election

marred by tensions. "They (ruling party) have been in a free fall since the Novi Sad tragedy," journalist Slobodan Georgiev said on N1 television, adding that Vucic was seeking a "buffer" with the prime minister's resignation. Vucic in the past had managed to cushion the impact of anti-government street protests, but the current student movement has garnered widespread support from all walks of life, including actors, farmers, lawyers and judges. The students' call for justice has resonated in a country where corruption is widespread and few feel that the state institutions work in the interests of citizens. Branimir Jovancic, professor at the Faculty of Chemistry in Belgrade, expressed hope that Vucelic's resignation is a first step toward further political changes in Serbia, where power is concentrated in the hands of the president although his constitutional role is largely ceremonial. "If the president thinks that by replacing one, essentially, unimportant figure... will solve the problem... he is deeply mistaken," said Jovancic. "This

must lead to total political changes because autocracy and dictatorship in Serbia, in the heart of Europe, must be stopped." On Monday, tens of thousands of people joined striking university students in a 24-hour blockade of a key traffic intersection in the Serbian capital. Serbia's students are demanding accountability for the canopy collapse that critics have blamed on rampant government corruption. Classes at Serbia's universities and dozens of schools have been blocked for two months with students camping inside their faculty buildings. In another attempt to defuse tensions, Vucic, Vucelic and Parliament Speaker Ana Brnabic on Monday evening urged dialogue with the students, who have so far rebuffed such invitations. They say Vucic shouldn't be the one holding talks with them but that government institutions such as police and the judiciary should do their job. Vucelic said the immediate cause for his quitting was an attack on a female student in Novi Sad early Tuesday by assailants allegedly from the

ruling Serbian Progressive Party. Vucelic said that "whenever it seems there is hope to return to social dialogue, to talk... it's like an invisible hand creates a new incident and tensions mount again." But the outgoing prime minister also said that the street protests "undoubtedly" have been organized from abroad "with an aim to directly jeopardize Serbia as a state." Vucelic offered no evidence for his claims that echoed earlier similar statements by Vucic. "I can never justify or understand many of these protests, blockades of lives, of roads and the freedom of movement of other citizens," he said. Students in Novi Sad said they were horrified by the assault they said was carried out by thugs with baseball bats. They attacked two groups of students and chased them in their car, the students said. Prosecutors later said that four people have been detained. "We are horrified over the state of our society where such a situation is possible," the students said in an Instagram post. "We have had enough of blood." The students called a big rally

in Novi Sad later Tuesday in response to the attack. Serbia's prosecutors have filed charges against 13 people, including a government minister and several state officials for the November canopy collapse. But the former Construction Minister Goran Vesic, who had resigned shortly after the canopy crash, has been released from detention, fuelling doubts over the investigation's independence. The main railway station in Novi Sad was renovated and inaugurated twice in recent years as part of a wider infrastructure deal with Chinese state companies and a fast railway link with neighbouring Hungary. Several incidents have marred the street demonstrations in the past weeks, including drivers ramming in to the crowds on two occasions, when two young women were injured. Students and others have been holding daily 15-minute traffic blockades throughout Serbia at 11:52 am, the exact same time the concrete canopy crashed down on Nov 1. The blockades honour the 15 victims, including two children. The blockades were also held on Tuesday,

# Russian govt delegation makes first official visit to Syria since Assad's fall

AP ■ DAMASCUS

A delegation of Russian officials arrived in Damascus on Tuesday, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti reported. It is the first such delegation to visit Syria since the fall of former President Bashar Assad, an ally of Moscow, in December in a lightning rebel offensive. Assad took refuge in Russia after his ouster. The report said the delegation included Russian deputy foreign minister Mikhail Bogdanov and the Russian president's special envoy for Syria, Alexander Lavrentyev. RIA Novosti didn't offer any other details of the visit. There was no official comment from Syria's interim government, but the semi-official Al Watan newspaper reported that the Russian delegation would meet with the country's de facto leader, Ahmad al-Sharaa, and with the its foreign minister.

Moscow's scorched-earth intervention in support of Assad once turned the tide of Syria's civil war. Syria's new authorities have not cut off relations with Moscow or forced a complete exit of Russian military forces from bases in Syria, but earlier this month, Al Watan reported that a contract with a Russian company to manage the port in Tartous had been cancelled. Following Assad's downfall, Russia relocated its troops and assets from all over Syria to its main hub at the Hmeimim air base near Latakia. There has been no indication that Moscow was preparing to evacuate the Hmeimim base or the naval facility in Tartus altogether. The termination of a contract for a Russian company to modernise the Tartus commercial port did not directly impact the Russian naval facility, which was leased under a separate deal.



A boy lights incense inside Dongyue Temple ahead of Lunar New Year in Beijing on Tuesday.

AP/PTI

# Protesters attack embassies in Congo's capital

AP ■ GOMA

Dozens of demonstrators attacked several foreign embassies, including those of Rwanda, France and Belgium, on Tuesday demanding that they oppose the advance of Rwanda-backed M23 rebels into a major city in the country's conflict-battered east. Police fired teargas at the protesters as they marched to the embassies in Kinshasa, looting and setting fires to parts of the buildings. The embassies of Kenya and Uganda were also attacked, according to Associated Press journalists at the scene. Congo's security forces were attempting to slow the rebels, who advanced into Goma, a key eastern city, in a major escalation of the decades-long conflict. The M23 rebels are one of about 100 armed groups vying for a foothold in the mineral-rich region in the conflict, one of Africa's

largest. The protesters demanded that the international community pressure Rwanda over the rebel advance. "We denounce the hypocrisy of the international community," said Timothée Tshishimbi, one of the protesters. "They must tell Rwanda to stop this adventure." Residents reported gunfire overnight in Goma, a city of 2 million people which the rebels claimed to have captured on Monday. Explosions and gunfire were heard near the now-shut Goma airport. Goma is a regional trade and humanitarian hub holding hundreds of thousands of the more than 6 million people displaced by eastern Congo's prolonged conflict over ethnic tensions that have resulted in one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. The M23 rebels temporarily took over Goma in 2012 before being forced to pull out under international pres-

sure, and resurfaced in late 2021 with increasing support from Rwanda, according to Congo's government and United Nations experts. Rwanda has denied such support. It was unclear how much of Goma is controlled by the rebels, who marched into the city early Monday to both fear and cheers among residents. It was the culmination of weeks of fighting during which the rebels captured several towns in a shocking advance. "Since morning we have heard bomb explosions and crackling bullets," said Sam Luwawa, a resident of Goma. "So far we cannot say who really controls the city." Three South African peacekeepers were killed on Monday when the rebels launched a mortar bomb toward the Goma airport which landed on the nearby South African National Defense Force, while a fourth soldier succumbed to injuries

sustained in fighting days ago, the South African Department of Defence said Tuesday. That makes 17 peacekeepers and foreign soldiers who have been killed in the fighting, according to UN and army officials. The humanitarian situation in Goma "is extremely, extremely worrying, with a new threshold of violence and suffering reached today," Bruno Lemarquis, the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Congo, told reporters in a video news conference on Monday. He said hundreds of thousands of people were attempting to flee the violence. There were active combat zones in all areas of the city, with civilians taking cover and heavy artillery fire directed at the city centre on Monday, Lemarquis said. He said several shells struck the Charité Maternelle Hospital in central Goma, "killing and injuring civilians, including newborns

and pregnant women." What is unfolding in Goma is coming on top of what is already one of the most protracted, complex, serious humanitarian crises on Earth, with close to 6.5 million displaced people in the country, including close to 3 million displaced people in North Kivu," Lemarquis said. Aid groups are reporting they are unable to reach displaced people who rely on them for food and other necessities. "Key roads surrounding Goma are blocked, and the city's airport can no longer be used for evacuation and humanitarian efforts. Power and water have reportedly been cut to many areas of the city," said David Munkley, head of operations in eastern Congo for the Christian aid group World Vision. In addition to the UN, several countries including the United States, United Kingdom and France have condemned Rwanda for the rebel advance.

# 1975 was International Women's year; 50 years on, the fight continues

AP ■ SYDNEY

In December 1972, the same month the Whitlam government was first elected, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year (IWY). This set in train a series of world-changing events, in which Australia was to play a significant part. The aim of IWY was to end discrimination against women and enable them to participate fully in economic, social and political life. Fifty years later, such participation has become an indicator of development and good governance. But the full promise of International Women's year has yet to be fulfilled, hampered by pushback

and the scourge of gender-based violence. "The greatest consciousness-raising event in history" Dubbed "the greatest consciousness-raising event in history", the UN's first World Conference on Women took place in Mexico City in June 1975. Consciousness-raising had been part of the repertoire of women's liberation. Now it was taken up by government and intergovernmental bodies. The Mexico City conference was agenda-setting in many ways. The Australian government delegation, led by Elizabeth Reid, helped introduce the world of multilateral diplomacy to the language of the women's movement. As Reid said: "We argued that, whenever the words 'racism',

"colonialism" and "neo-colonialism" occurred in documents of the conference, so too should "sexism", a term that had not to that date appeared in United Nations documents or debates." Reid held the position of women's adviser to the prime minister. In this pioneering role, she had been able to obtain government commitment and funding for Australia's own national consciousness-raising exercise during IWY. A wide range of small grants promoted attitudinal change — "the revolution in our heads" — whether in traditional women's organisations, churches and unions, or through providing help such as Gestetner machines to the new women's centres.

grants explicitly did not include the new women's services, including refuges, women's health centres and rape crisis centres. Their funding was now regarded as an ongoing responsibility for government, rather than suitable for one-off grants. IWY began in Australia with a televised conversation on New Year's Day between Reid and Governor-General John Kerr on hopes and aspirations for the year. On International Women's Day (March 8), Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's speech emphasised the need for attitudinal change: Both men and women must be made aware of our habitual patterns of prejudice which we often do not see as such but whose existence manifests itself

in our language and our behaviour. The Australian postal service celebrated the day by releasing a stamp featuring the IWY symbol, showing the spirit of women breaking free of their traditional bonds. At Reid's suggestion, IWY materials, including the symbol, were printed in the purple, green and white first adopted by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1908 and now known as the suffragette colours. Inside government, Reid had introduced the idea that all Cabinet submissions needed to be analysed for gender impact. After the Mexico City conference, this idea became part of new international norms of governance. Following the adoption at the

conference of the World Plan of Action, the idea that governments needed specialised policy machinery to promote gender equality was disseminated around the world. Given the amount of ground to be covered, IWY was expanded to a UN Decade for Women (1976–85). By the end of it, 127 countries had established some form of government machinery to advance the status of women. Each of the successive UN world conferences (Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, Beijing 1995) generated new plans of action and strengthened systems of reporting by governments. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a high point. Its "platform for action" provided further impe-

tus for what was now called "gender mainstreaming". By 2018, every country recognised by the UN except North Korea had established government machinery for this purpose. The global diffusion of this policy innovation was unprecedented in its rapidity. At the same time, Australia took the lead in another best-practice innovation. In 1984, the Commonwealth government pioneered what became known as "gender budgeting". This required departments to disaggregate the ways particular budgetary decisions affected men and women. As feminist economists pointed out, when the economic and social division of labour was taken into account, no bud-

getary decision could be assumed to be gender-neutral. Governments had emphasised special programs for women, a relatively small part of annual budgets, rather than the more substantial impact on women of macro-economic policy. Standard-setting bodies such as the OECD helped promote gender budgeting as the best way to ensure such decisions did not inadvertently increase rather than reduce gender gaps. By 2022, gender budgeting had been taken up around the world, including in 61 per cent of OECD countries. Now that it had become an international marker of good governance, Australian governments were also reintroducing it after a period of abeyance.

## Banking stocks rises after RBI's liquidity boost

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Banking stocks were in the limelight on Tuesday, with Axis Bank and HDFC Bank climbing three per cent after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced measures to inject liquidity of ₹1.5 lakh crore into the banking system.

According to market experts, these measures are anticipated to ease liquidity conditions and increase the likelihood of an interest rate cut at the upcoming RBI policy meeting in February, offering relief to the banking sector amid concerns over high liquidity deficits.

The scrip of Axis Bank rose 3.20 per cent to trade at ₹978.20 apiece, HDFC Bank shares advanced 3.09 per cent to ₹1,680, ICICI Bank by 2.15 per cent to ₹1,254.40 and IndusInd Bank went up 1.98 per cent to ₹944.25 per piece on the BSE.

Bank of Baroda stock went up by 0.64 per cent to ₹221 apiece, State Bank of India appreciated by 0.28 per cent to ₹751.30 and Kotak Mahindra Bank increased 0.13 per cent to ₹1,883.05 apiece on the bourse.

However, Federal Bank scrip plunged 4.97 per cent to ₹181.70 per piece, Yes Bank fell 1.51 per cent to ₹18.22 and Canara Bank decreased



1.20 per cent to ₹90.75 per piece.

Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and IndusInd Bank were among the top gainers in the 30-share Sensex pack. Led by the gains in these stocks, the BSE

bankex index climbed 905.14 points or 1.65 per cent to 55,608.43. Meanwhile, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 595.57 points or 0.79 per cent to quote at 75,961.74 in the morning trade. On Monday, the Reserve Bank of India

said it will purchase government securities worth ₹60,000 crore in three tranches and announced several other steps to inject liquidity into the banking system. As part of measures to manage liquidity

conditions, the central bank also announced a USD/INR Buy/Sell Swap auction of USD five billion for a tenor of six months to be held on January 31, 2025.

To inject liquidity, RBI said open market operations (OMO) purchase auctions of Government of India securities for an aggregate amount of ₹60,000 crore in three tranches of ₹20,000 crore each will be held on January 30, February 13, and February 20. Besides, a 56-day Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction for a notified amount of ₹50,000 crore will be held on February 7.

"The Reserve Bank will continue to monitor evolving liquidity and market conditions and take measures as appropriate to ensure orderly liquidity conditions," the RBI said on Monday.

According to Geojit Financial Services' Chief Investment Strategist V K Vijayakumar, the RBI's announcement of measures to boost the liquidity in the banking system by around ₹1.5 trillion is positive for the market. This raises the prospects of an interest rate cut by the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in the February policy meeting, Vijayakumar said.

## Hyundai faces 19 per cent plunge in Q3 profits, amid geopolitical factors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India on Tuesday said its consolidated profit after tax declined 19 per cent to ₹1,161 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024, hit by subdued demand and geo-political factors.

The auto major had reported a Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹1,425 crore in the October-December period of last fiscal.

Total revenue from operations declined to ₹16,648 crore in the third quarter as against ₹16,875 crore in the year-ago period. The decline in margins was mainly due to subdued demand and geo-political factors, the company said.

"While the challenges persist in the overall market due to global factors, our business fundamentals remain strong, and we remain confident in our ability to leverage our strengths and actively explore potential opportunities to improve our volumes and profitability," Hyundai Motor India Managing Director Unsoo Kim said.

The company said it sold a total of 1,86,408 units of passenger vehicles during the third quarter, a dip of two per cent as compared with



1,90,979 units in the same period of last fiscal.

The sales in the third quarter of this fiscal include 1,46,022 units in the domestic market with a strong contribution from the SUV segment, it added.

Hyundai said it has achieved its highest-ever CNG penetration during the quarter, reaching 15 per cent which was 12 per cent in the third quarter of the previous year.

During the quarter, the automaker said it has demonstrated robust growth in rural penetration reaching 21.2 per cent compared to 19.7 per cent in the same

period last year. The export volume stood at 40,386 units, it added.

The automaker said it is confident about its growth trajectory and is committed to drive long-term value for its stakeholders.

The company has a positive outlook on growing EV penetration in India and is headed towards electrification with a holistic approach, it added.

Hyundai believes that the newly launched Creta Electric will drive phenomenal success, build strong momentum and will be a game-changer in the EV landscape, it said.

## SEBI cracks down on Front Running: Bans two from securities trading



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Tuesday restrained two persons from the securities market for six months and directed them to disgorge ₹34.26 lakh "wrongful gains" made by them through their involvement in front-running activities.

Additionally, the regulator has imposed a penalty of Rs

five lakh each on the two persons - Mandar Uhas Bhatkar and Vikrant Bhimrao Kadam.

Front-running refers to an illegal practice in the stock market where an entity trades based on advanced information from a broker or analyst before the information has been made available to its clients. The findings came after the SEBI conducted an investigation into the trading activities of Bhatkar and

certain other entities related to him, during the period November 2020 to September 2021.

The investigation was carried out in order to ascertain as to whether there was any possible violation of the provisions of the PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) rules. In its investigation, SEBI found suspected front running of trades of SVI Consolidated Pvt Ltd (Big Client) in the cash market

and equity derivatives segments of NSE by its dealer Kadam (Notice No 2) in the trading account of Bhatkar (Notice No 1) based on the impending order of the Big Client during the period of investigation.

"It has already been brought out that the fraudulent and unfair trade practice in this case is the front running carried out by Noticee No.2, through the account of Noticee No 1," SEBI said in its order. Accordingly, SEBI has restrained the persons from "accessing the securities market and further prohibited from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities (including units of mutual funds), directly or indirectly, or being associated with the securities market in any manner, whatsoever, for a period of six months".

The two persons have been "directed to disgorge, jointly and severally, a sum of ₹34.26 lakh within 45 days. And the same shall be credited into the Investor Protection and Education Fund".

## TVS Credit records 40 per cent rise in Q3 PAT

PTI ■ CHENNAI

TVS Credit Services Ltd, a leading non-banking financial company, has registered a 40 per cent growth in its profit after tax for the October-December 2024 period at ₹240 crore following healthy growth in consumer loans and vehicle financing segments, the company said on Tuesday.

The company registered a profit after tax of ₹172 crore during the corresponding quarter of the last financial year.

For the nine months ending December 31, 2024, the profit after tax grew by 28 per cent to ₹541 crore, from ₹424 crore registered in the same period, a year ago.

"In Q3 FY25, credit demand increased, driven by festive fervour, increased consumption and attractive consumer offers. TVS Credit witnessed healthy growth during this period, particularly in consumer loans and vehicle finance with an improvement in market share," a company statement said here. The total income during the



quarter under review rose by 12 per cent to ₹1,710 crore, from ₹1,527 crore registered in the year-ago period.

For the nine months ending December 31, 2024, the total income went up by 16 per cent to ₹4,956 crore when compared to ₹4,276 crore registered a year ago.

"In Q3 FY25, TVS Credit witnessed its highest ever quarterly growth in customers, disbursing loan

products to a record 16 lakh new customers, taking its total base to nearly 1.8 crore customers," the company said.

The total Assets Under Management (AUM) witnessed a seven per cent growth during the quarter under review to ₹27,190 crore from ₹25,315 crore registered in the same quarter of last year, the company said.

## Bosch reports 12 per cent decline in Q3 net profit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Auto components maker Bosch on Tuesday said its consolidated net profit declined by 12 per cent to ₹458 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024.

The company had reported a net profit of ₹518 crore in the October-December period of the last fiscal. Its revenue from operations rose to ₹4,466 crore for the third quarter compared to ₹4,205 crore in the year-ago period, Bosch said in a regulatory filing.

"This quarter, Bosch generated growth through the development of advanced automotive components and customer-focused solutions.

Increased service income from major OEMs testifies to their continued trust in us and our expertise," Bosch Ltd MD Guruprasad Mudlapur said. The performance further reinstates the company's strategic ability to stay cognizant of market needs and deliver successfully, he added.

As part of the realignment of its Building Technologies division globally, the company said it will be carving out and transferring the Video, Access and Intrusion, and Communication systems business to Keenfinity India, a subsidiary of Bosch Security Systems BV Nederland.

The company's board, based on the recommendations of the audit committee, have approved the transfer of the business at a value of not less than ₹595 crore, it added. Shares of Bosch on Tuesday ended 0.13 per cent up at ₹29,753 apiece on BSE.

## Stock markets snap two-day falling streak

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Snapping the two-day decline, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Tuesday following intense buying in banking and rate-sensitive stocks as the RBI decided to inject liquidity into the financial system.

The 30-share Sensex climbed 535.24 points or 0.71 per cent to settle at 75,901.41. During the day, the benchmark surged 1,146.79 points or 1.52 per cent to hit a high of 76,512.96.

The broader 50-share NSE Nifty appreciated by 128.10 points or 0.56 per cent to close at 22,957.25. In the intraday session, the 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 308.8 points or 1.35 per cent to 23,137.95.

"The national benchmark indices demonstrated optimism today, primarily driven by gains in the banking sector following the RBI's announcement of open market interventions to address liquidity concerns.

"Large-cap stocks outperformed, as their valuations have now reached fair levels and are further supported by expectations that the market correction is nearing its bottom," Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among the Sensex shares, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Zomato, IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki India and Bharti Airtel were the major gainers.

Sun Pharmaceutical, Larsen & Toubro, ITC, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Power Grid, Nestle India, Tata Consultancy Services, and



Asian Paints were among the laggards.

"Markets witnessed a relief rally after the recent weakness, but undertone remained bearish as most of the sectors ended in red which pulled down benchmark indices from the day's high levels," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Investors remain cautious due to growing global uncertainty and disappointing domestic economic indicators. However, optimism in banking, auto and realty aided sentiment even as worries over Trump's trade policies and fading chances of any rate cut in next month's credit policy weighed, Tapse added.

Among the sectoral indices, Bankex climbed the most by 1.49 per cent, Financial Services by 1.45 per cent, Realty by 1.27 per cent, Auto by 1.16 per cent, and Consumer Discretionary rose by 0.23 per cent. Healthcare, Industrials, Utilities, Capital Goods, Power, Oil and Gas, Energy,

IT and Focused IT were among the laggards.

In the broader market, Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC shares declined 4.82 per cent to close at ₹612.30 apiece on BSE after the company's December quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

Shares of Anant Raj depreciated by 20 per cent to close at ₹534.45 apiece -- also its lower circuit level -- on the bourse.

The scrip plunged after China's disruptive low-cost AI-startup DeepSeek threatened the dominance of US artificial intelligence (AI) companies such as Nvidia and triggered a rout among global tech stocks.

Real estate company Anant Raj, last year in July, has diversified into the data center and AI solutions space through its arm, Anant Raj Cloud after partnering with Google. Despite, the markets settled on a positive note, 2,666 shares declined, 1,308 advanced and 110 stocks remain unchanged.

## Cipla Q3 net profit rises 49 per cent to ₹1,571 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Drug major Cipla on Tuesday said its consolidated net profit increased by 48.73 per cent to Rs 1,570.51 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024, riding on the back of growth across markets.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 1,055.9 crore in the October-December period of last fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 7,072.97 crore as against Rs 6,603.81 crore in the year-ago period.

"In Q3FY25, we delivered growth across all our various geographies, despite a supply challenge in the US," Cipla MD and Global CEO Umang Vohra said.

The company recorded a revenue growth of 8 per cent



over last year with a highest-ever EBITDA margin of 28.1 per cent, driven by mix and other operational efficiencies, he added.

"Our One-India business grew at a healthy 10 per cent year on year. Key therapies in

branded prescription business continued to outpace the market growth, trade generics business growth trajectory is back on track and anchor brands of consumer health business maintained leadership

position," Vohra said.

With positive traction in our differentiated assets, the US business posted a revenue of USD 226 million, he stated. In South Africa, the drug maker recorded a solid growth of 21 per cent year on year in local currency terms, Vohra said. Emerging markets and Europe delivered a substantial revenue growth of 20 per cent year on year on the back of deep market focus strategy, he added.

"Going ahead, the focus will be on growing our key markets, further building our flagship brands, investing in future pipeline as well as focusing on resolutions on the regulatory front," Vohra said. Shares of the company closed 2.16 per cent higher at Rs 1,426.10 apiece on BSE.

## Rupee falls 25 paise to close at 86.56 against USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 25 paise to close at 86.56 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as global risk sentiments were dampened amid tariff threats by the US President Donald Trump.

Forex traders said the rupee continued to face pressure due to sustained foreign fund outflows and the strength of the American currency in the overseas market amid unabated dollar demand from oil importers and weak risk appetite. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a weak note at 86.53, and during the day touched a high of 86.50 and a low of 86.57 against the American

currency. The local unit settled for the day at 86.56 (provisional), registering a fall of 25 paise over its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee depreciated nine paise to close at 86.31 against the US dollar.

"The Indian rupee declined as global risk sentiments were dampened amid tariff threats by the US President Donald Trump. This impacted the Chinese Yuan, which also led to strengthening of the US dollar," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

Choudhary further said a surge in US treasury yields and Foreign Institutional Investors (FII) outflows also

pressurised the rupee. However, a decline in crude oil prices cushioned the downside.

"We expect the rupee to trade with negative bias on a strong US dollar and persistent foreign fund outflows. Importer demand for dollars and uncertainty over tariffs by the US administration may further weigh on the rupee," Choudhary said.

The United States will impose tariffs on the countries that "harm" America, President Trump has said, as he named China, India and Brazil as high-tariff countries.

"We're going to put tariffs on outside countries and outside people that really mean harm to us. Well, they mean us harm, but they basically want

to make their country good," Trump told House of Representatives at a Florida retreat on Monday, the first after he became the president for the second term last week.

However, overall weakness in crude oil prices and central bank intervention may support the rupee. Investors may remain cautious ahead of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting outcome this week.

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) announcement of the Open Market Operations (OMO) may also support the rupee at lower levels.

The RBI on Monday said it will purchase government securities worth ₹60,000 crore in three tranches and announced several other

steps to inject liquidity into the banking system.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.52 per cent higher at 107.89.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.52 per cent to USD 77.48 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 535.24 points, or 0.71 per cent, up at 75,901.41 points, while the Nifty rose 128.10 points, or 0.56 per cent, to close at 22,957.25 points.

FII's offloaded equities worth Rs 5,015.46 crore in the capital markets on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

# Saudi Arabia club Al-Hilal terminates contract with Neymar

PTI ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Saudi Arabia club Al-Hilal said it reached an agreement with striker Neymar to terminate his contract by mutual consent. Neither side confirmed details of the termination after the 32-year-old Brazilian, once hailed as one of the world's best players, played only seven matches for the club, with only one goal and two assists. Despite being sidelined since October 2023 due to an ACL injury, former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar was part of the squad that won last season's Saudi league. Their deal was due to expire after Al-Hilal's participation in this year's FIFA Club World Cup, which will be played between June 15 and July 13 in the United States. The club said in a statement published on its social media channels on Monday that it "expresses its thanks and appreciation to Neymar for what he has provided throughout his career with Al-Hilal." The striker joined the Saudi club

from Paris Saint-Germain in August 2023 for 90 million euros (USD 94 million), in one of many transactions that placed the Arab country as one of the new big soccer markets in the world. But Neymar picked up his ACL injury, the most serious of his career, playing for Brazil only months after he joined Al-Hilal. Neymar returned in October and had his most recent appearance for the Saudi club in November. The Brazilian said in different interviews there were doubts on whether coach Jorge Jesus would count on him for the rest of the season. Day Crespo, a spokeswoman for Neymar in Brazil, told The Associated Press that the player will comment on his future at a later date. Local media reported that the footballer was still waiting for documents of the termination before he announces his departure. Brazilian media has also reported that Neymar and his father are interested in a six-month return to his boyhood club Santos, where he achieved national fame and his first caps for Brazil before he joined Barcelona in 2013.



Neymar's comeback is largely expected by Santos fans. Since last week, they featured a video of a man with the voice of legendary three-time World Cup winner Pelé, who died in 2022, asking

Neymar to return and wear his historic No. 10 shirt. Neymar won six titles at Santos, including the Brazilian Cup in 2010 and the prestigious Copa Libertadores in 2011. In June,

during a visit to one of his social projects in Brazil, the striker denied he was eyeing a return to the club. "No (chance to return to Santos). This is a total lie, there's no plans.

I have another year in my contract with Al-Hilal. I hope to play a great season there. I didn't play the last one. We need to live day to day, there's a long time ahead," Neymar told media then. "Obviously Santos is the club in my heart, one day I do want to come back. But there's no plan in my head." On January 17, Neymar said in a different interview he was once again considering playing in Brazil, as he denied he had any intention to play in the United States in the near future. Besides Santos, he also named Flamengo, the country's most popular club. "I always said I want to play for Flamengo because of everything that involves Flamengo. But Santos is my boyhood love, my home," he said. Santos executives have repeatedly said they would like Neymar to return, but denied media reports about he and his father allegedly trying to buy the club's soccer department, as is allowed in Brazilian law. Other big clubs of the South American nation, such as defending Copa Libertadores champion Botafogo, owned by American mogul John Textor,

have bid for titles after such a move. Brazil national team coach Dorival Júnior has said since the end of last year that Neymar is not fully recovered for international soccer either. In March, his team will play against leader Argentina in South American World Cup qualifying, and Neymar is once again unlikely to play. Earlier in January, Neymar made news for his comments about his former Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappé, now at Real Madrid. Speaking in a podcast hosted by World Cup winner Romário, Neymar said the Frenchman became "a little jealous" after superstar Lionel Messi joined the French club in August 2021 in a free transfer. He also added that big egos affected the performances of PSG in big matches. Neymar, Brazil's all-time top goal scorer with 79 goals in 125 matches, also said he is focused on getting more playing time so he can best prepare for the World Cup in North America next year, in what could be his last shot at winning the tournament.

## PM Modi in attendance as 38th National Games kick off

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

A modest but colourful opening ceremony showcasing Uttarakhand's religious heritage and biodiversity kicked off the 38th National Games here on Tuesday with guest of honour Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterating his commitment to bring the 2036 Olympics to India during his address. Around 10,000 athletes are gearing up to compete for podium finishes across 32 disciplines in the Games that will run till February 14. Events will be held across seven cities of the hill state with Dehradun being the main venue. Around 450 gold medals, and a similar number of silver and bronze medals are at stake. Modi declared the Games open after the teams marched in and he was presented the flame at the ceremony. "It is our endeavour to enhance your capabilities and we are focussed on supporting you. We consider sports an



essential aspect in development of country," Modi told the gathered athletes at the ceremony. "It is a beautiful portrait of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat'," Modi said referring to the Games. The Prime Minister also used the opportunity to pass some health tips, urging youngsters to fight the growing menace of obesity by cutting down the flame in their food and adding more walks and exercise to their daily routines. The ceremony started with a performance of 'Tandav', a

classical dance form that is an ode to Lord Shiva. The Games were declared open with blowing of 2025 conches to mark the year. Local favourite and popular Bollywood singer Jubin Nautiyal also performed during the ceremony. Earlier, Modi arrived at the stadium riding on a decked-up golf cart along with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. After taking a round of the stadium, he was presented a traditional cap, shawl and a

memento containing replicas of Games mascot 'Mauli' and the medals. An estimated 25,000 spectators have packed the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium despite the chilly weather to catch the ceremony live. The PM had also opened the last two editions of the Games in 2022 (Gujarat) and 2023 (Goa). Uttarakhand Governor Lieutenant General Gurmit Singh, Union Minister of State for Sports Raksha Khadse, and Uttarakhand Sports Minister Rekha Arya were the dignitaries present on the occasion. Indian Olympic Association President PT Usha and Commonwealth Games Federation chief Chris Jenkins were also in attendance at the ceremony. Uttarakhand's own Lakshya Sen, a world championships medal-winning shuttler, brought the Games torch and handed it over to Modi, who placed it in its designated place.

During the Athletes' Parade, Uttarakhand expectedly received the loudest cheer. Almor's Sen and distance runner Ankita Dhyan were Uttarakhand's flag-bearers in the parade. Sen later took oath on behalf of the participating athletes. Under IOA's objective of inclusivity, the National Games also following established norms of having a male and a female flag bearer leading each team. Hosting the National Game holds a special significance for Uttarakhand as the state is celebrating the 25th year of its creation. 'Mauli', inspired by Uttarakhand's state bird 'Monal', is the Games mascot, symbolising the region's unique natural beauty, diversity and cultural heritage. Most of the established sporting stars of the country such as javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, shuttler PV Sindhu, shooter Manu Bhaker are giving it a miss, leaving the stage for other athletes to make a mark.

## Virat declines captaincy; BCCI set to live stream

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Just like Rishabh Pant did in the last game against Saurashtra, legendary Virat Kohli has politely declined to captain Delhi in their last Ranji Trophy home game against Railways as he wanted Ayush Badoni to continue leading the side. "Virat was asked if he would like to captain but he has also said that he would like Ayush to continue leading the side," a DDCA official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Meanwhile, the BCCI and domestic broadcasters JioCinema have decided to live-stream the match, given the immense fan interest sparked by Kohli's presence. The general norm is BCCI has one premier match which is aired both on TV and streaming app and for this round it is Karnataka versus Haryana as the star attraction of that game is KL



Rahul. The other two games that were supposed to be only live streamed were Punjab vs Bengal at the Eden Gardens and Baroda vs Jammu and Kashmir in Baroda. The roster was decided well in advance and had this match not involved Kohli, there was no chance of any deviation from it.

But there was a furore in social media about the most high profile match being ignored by the broadcasters. "A decision has been taken and JioCinema will live stream the game. So all the Virat Kohli fans who are not in Delhi, need not worry. They can watch their favourite player live," a BCCI official told.

## Mumbai Pickle Power wins 5-0 against Hyderabad Superstars

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Pickle Power continued their unbeaten run with a commanding 5-0 victory over Hyderabad Superstars, while Pune United edged past Bengaluru Jawans in a nail-biting 3-2 thriller to register their first win of the season in the World Pickleball League here. Mumbai's dominance began in the men's singles, where Brandon Lane displayed nerves of steel to overturn a 17-12 deficit and defeat Hyderabad's Max Freeman 19-17, maintaining his flawless record on Monday. The women's doubles saw Glauka Carvajal Lane and Katie Morris edge past Ava Cavataio and Madalina Grigoriu in a tightly fought match, clinching a 9-7 win to extend Mumbai's lead. The men's doubles was a

showcase of resilience as Hyderabad's Max Freeman and Ben Cawston raced to an 8-1 advantage. However, Mumbai's Eung Gwon Kim and Mayur Patil mounted a stunning comeback, displaying impeccable defense to win 15-14, securing the tie for Mumbai at 3-0. Mihae Kwon further asserted Mumbai's dominance in the women's singles with an 11-8 victory over Karolina Owczarek, capitalising on her composure in critical moments. Finally, Brandon Lane and Glauka Carvajal Lane's synergy in the mixed doubles sealed the 5-0 sweep with a decisive 14-8 win over Ava Cavataio and Ross Whittaker. Mumbai's flawless performance cemented their status as title contenders,

while Hyderabad Superstars showed flashes of brilliance and will seek to bounce back in the upcoming ties. In a more closely contested tie, Pune United delivered a gritty 3-2 victory over Bengaluru Jawans. Pune's 17-year-old Mateusz Matysik set the tone in the men's singles, demonstrating maturity beyond his years to overcome Bengaluru's Jack Foster 18-15. However, Bengaluru responded emphatically in the women's doubles as Trang Hyunh-McClain and Alexandra Borobia crushed Mollie Knaggs and Talia Saunders 28-6, levelling the tie at 1-1. Pune regained momentum in the men's doubles, where William Sobek and Vanshik Kapadia combined effectively to win 13-8. Bengaluru struck back in

the women's singles, with Katerina Stewart's precision overpowering Brooke Revuelta in a 22-13 victory, setting up a decisive mixed doubles clash. Pune's Molly O'Donoghue and Louis Laville rose to the occasion, dominating Bengaluru's Trang Hyunh-McClain and Jack Foster 20-8. Pickleball is a racket or paddle sport where two players (singles) or four players (doubles) use a smooth-faced paddle to hit a perforated, hollow plastic ball over a 34-inch-high (0.86 m) net until one side is unable to return the ball or commits a rule infraction. Pickleball is played indoors as well as outdoors. It was invented in 1965 as a children's backyard game in the United States on Bainbridge Island in Washington state.

## Bayern Munich signs goalkeeper Jonas Urbig

PTI ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich is building for the future by snapping up goalkeeper Jonas Urbig from Cologne. The Bavarian powerhouse announced the transfer late Monday, though it had been expected for some time. The 21-year-old Urbig is considered one of Germany's best young goalkeepers, and his move to Bayern suggests the club believes he could one day replace Manuel Neuer, who is still No. 1 but heading toward the end of his career at 38. "We're delighted that we've been able to complete another transfer with a view to the future," Bayern sport director Christoph Freund said, referring to Bayern also signing German youth international Tom Bischof last week. Freund said Urbig is "very ambitious and has huge potential," calling him "a modern goalkeeper who fits in very well with Bayern's style of play in terms of the



way he interprets goalkeeping." That suggests Urbig will be expected to follow Neuer's example of aggressive goalkeeping, emerging from his goal quickly to snuff out danger with clearances, limiting the occasions he'll be called upon to make a save. Neuer, who can be far from his goal with his team in possession, is sometimes caught out, but more often he gives the team security going forward and the opposition

little time to recover from pressure. Kicker magazine reported Bayern was paying up to 10 million euro including bonuses to Cologne for Urbig. He is expected to compete with the 36-year-old Sven Ulreich and injured Israeli goalkeeper Daniel Peretz for the No. 2 position behind Neuer. Neuer, who will be 39 in March, has faced scrutiny already this season after he was sent off for the first time

in a German Cup loss to Bayer Leverkusen. On loan at Stuttgart, the 28-year-old Alexander Nübel is another potential successor for Neuer. Urbig's signing means Stuttgart coach Sebastian Hoeness can likely count on Nübel in goal again next season, too. Nübel extended his Bayern contract last year to 2029. Urbig, who will compete with Freiburg's Noah Atubolu to be Germany goalkeeper at the Under-21 European Championship in June, started this season in the second division for Cologne, but lost his place to Marvin Schwäbe after the first 10 league games of the season. Bayern gave Urbig a contract through June 2029. "I'm proud to be here now and look forward to getting to know my new team as quickly as possible. My goal is to work on myself professionally every day and to keep up my development in our goalkeeper group around Manuel Neuer," Urbig told the club website.

## 15-year-old Kargil girl inspires women ice hockey players in Ladakh

PTI ■ KARGIL

A pair of skiing boots lying idle in her house turned into a catalyst for 15-year-old Kargil girl Samina Khatoon to become the first female from a non-descript village Trespone to pursue ice-hockey. Despite fierce opposition from her mother, Samina could not resist the temptation of putting on the pair, which was originally gifted by her uncle to her elder brother, who had no interest in skiing. The same pair proved to be her glide to glory. On Monday, the youngest player of Ladakh team, she scored in her team's 4-0 in her team's gold medal match against arch-rivals ITBP at the Khelo India Winter Games 2025, which concluded in Leh. Now her parents Mohammad

Younus and Fatima Bano are proud of their little daughter's achievements. "I have a lot to learn and a long way to go," Khatoon said. The event is split into two phases -- one held in Ladakh from January 23 to 27, and the second in Gulmarg from February 22 to 25. The ninth standard student at Mutahary Public School, Baroo (Kargil), did not want to give up the opportunity and so juggled between school and practice, 2020 onwards, and won her parents' approval along the way. Her classmates envied her. However, they helped her catch up with missed class notes, lectures and assignments. Samina's toil paid off as she made it to Ladakh's women's ice-hockey team, making her



the youngest player to participate in this year's edition of the games.

Prior to this, she played for clubs from Kargil and went on to play in tournaments such as

the LG Cup, CEC cup. In the CEC cup of 2024-25, she scored six goals while

representing downhill Kargil adventure sports club and was declared the player of the series. In Kargil, communities have opened their doors to opportunities for the new generation sans any gender bias. Women are now being supported and encouraged by their families and society at large to pursue professions of their choice. District Youth Services and Sports Officer, Kargil Abid Ali said he has witnessed this positive change take over in the recent years, highlighting that this progress is a part of an ongoing initiative to ensure that more girls take up sports, especially male-dominated ones such as ice hockey, which is considered to be physically taxing.

There are six women's ice hockey clubs in Kargil district aloe -- from Kukshov, Chiktan, Bodkharbu, Mulbek, Drass and Kargil. To promote participation, Ali said players are being provided with gears and equipment at subsidized rates. Moreover, the clubs were last year provided with equipment free of cost under the UT administration's special development package, he said. He added that under a similar package, ice-skating rinks are also being developed across Kargil. Ladakh Women's Ice Hockey Foundation, founded in 2016 has been travelling to rural regions of Ladakh and providing coaching to young children. During the visits the foundation realised the

willingness and eagerness amongst the girls to play ice hockey and have, therefore, continued with their endeavour. "We have come a long way in making a mark and we take it upon ourselves to ensure that fresh and competent players are identified for the team," Noor Jahan, goalkeeper of the Ladakh's women team, said. Taking note of the success of such endeavours, a similar coaching programme has also been initiated by the Youth Services and Sports department in Kargil which provides basic ice hockey coaching for children under 14 years in different zones across Kargil. Ali states that out of a registration of approximately 200 children, almost 40 per cent are girls.

# Bumrah named ICC men's Cricketer of the Year

PTI ■ DUBAI

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Tuesday won the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC men's Cricketer of the Year after delivering "a master-class in skill, precision, and relentless consistency" across formats in a record-shattering 2024. The 31-year-old was adjudged the ICC's Test Cricketer of the Year on Monday and was also named in the Test Team of the Year last week. "Jasprit Bumrah has been honoured with the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year at the ICC Awards, recognising his extraordinary 2024, in which he dominated opponents in the longest as well as the shortest format of the game," the ICC said. Bumrah played a key role across formats for India as he became the fifth winner of the award from the country after Rahul Dravid (2004), Sachin Tendulkar (2010), Ravichandran Ashwin (2016) and Virat Kohli (2017, 2018). "The pacer's brilliance was reflected in his ICC Test Bowling Rankings, where he crossed the elusive 900-point mark, ending the year with a record-breaking 907 points — the highest for



any Indian bowler in history," the governing body stated in its tribute. "Across formats, Bumrah's 2024 exploits were a masterclass in skill, precision, and relentless consistency,

as he shattered record after record and cemented his place as the world's premier fast bowler," it added. Bumrah had a stellar year 2024 in which he played a decisive role for

India with 15 wickets in their title-winning campaign in the T20 World Cup in the Americas and also became the fastest Indian pacer to reach 200 Test wickets with a bowling average of

sub-20, which is also the best in history. "I'm very happy with the honour, but I don't let myself get too high. My feet are on the ground and I'm really happy with the accolades that I get," the amiable bowler from Gujarat said in a video statement. At the T20 World Cup, his 15 wickets came at an astonishing average of 8.26 and an economy of just 4.17, making him the Player of the Tournament. He also garnered 900 points in ICC Test bowling rankings and ended the year with 907 points, which is the highest for any Indian bowler in history. In Tests, Bumrah finished the year with 71 wickets in only 13 matches at an average of 14.92, which was also the second best among fast bowlers to former India captain Kapil Dev's 100 wickets in 1983. The right-arm pacer was at the peak of his performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under towards the end of 2024, snaffling 32 wickets in five Tests. Overall, Bumrah claimed 77 wickets in the World Test Championship points table for India but the two-time finalists failed to make a third appearance in the summit clash for the 2023-25 cycle.



## Paarl Royals defeats Durban's Super Giants

PTI ■ PAARL

Paarl Royals registered a thrilling six-wicket victory over Durban's Super Giants to complete a historic five-game 100 per cent home record at Boland Park in the SA20 here. It is the first time any team has gone unbeaten at home throughout the league phase of the competition with the previous best being Joburg Super Kings' four victories and one washout at the Wanderers in the maiden season. Durban's Super Giants have now been eliminated as last season's runners-up can now no longer qualify for the playoffs. The cream of South Africa's young talent Lohan-dre Pretorius and Kwenza Maphaka played a major role in the Royals maintaining their stranglehold on top of the Betway SA20 table. The Royals moved to 28 points. The teenage duo did the double act with Maphaka delivering his best performance of the competition thus far with fine figures of 2/22 to restrict DSG to 143/7 before Pretorius clubbed 43 off 29 balls (5x4s, 1x6) in the successful run-chase. Pretorius reclaimed the top run-scorer position from his opening partner Joe Root, who was trapped LBW off the first ball of the innings on Monday evening, by becoming the first batter to pass the 300-run mark in the ongoing season. Royals have certainly unearthed new young batters this season and Rubin

Hermann also continued his dream debut SA20 season with a superb 59 off 51 balls (4x4s, 2x6s) to set up the chase. Hermann showed great innovation, particularly against the spinners as he swept and reverse-swept with confidence. But it was left to all-rounder Dayyaan Galim to smash the winning six with just two balls remaining to take the Royals over the line. Maphaka delivered his best performance of the competition thus far with the teenager striking upfront and at the death. He sent down a peach that burst through Brandon King's defence upfront before flummoxing Heinrich Klaasen with a slower ball. Super Giants will be ruing a season where luck has deserted them with Keshav Maharaj's team not finding form when they needed it most. Australian T20 World Cup winner Marcus Stoinis tried his best to make an impact with his maiden SA20 half-century off just 35 balls (4x4s, 2x6s). He finished unbeaten on 55 and partnered with Kane Williamson (45 off 36 balls) in a 53-run partnership to lift DSG to 143/7. Stoinis was particularly severe on Root taking 24 runs off 11 deliveries sent down by the off spinner, including two maximums in the 18th over. Royals' only concern will be the fitness of captain David Miller, who left the field during DSG's innings and did not come out to bat in the run chase.



## Trisha scores first ever century in women's U19 T20 World Cup

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Opener Trisha Gongadi etched her name in the record books by scoring the first ever century in women's U-19 T20 World Cup that powered India into the semifinals with a 150-run victory over Scotland here on Tuesday. Trisha, who was deservedly adjudged player of the match, slammed 110 not out off just 59 balls with the help of 13 boundaries and four maximums after India were sent in to bat by Scotland at toss. The Indians will next face England in the first semifinal on January 31. She was ably supported by fellow opener and wicketkeeper Kamalini G (51 off 42 balls) and Sanika Chalke, who remained unbeaten on 29 off 20 balls as India scored 208 for 1 in 20 overs. In reply, Scotland cut a sorry figure as they were bowled out for 58 in 14 overs. For Scotland, openers Pippa Kelly (12) and Emma Walsingham (12) were joint top-scorers. Left-arm orthodox spinner Ayushi Shukla was the star for India with the ball returning with figures of 4 for 8, while left-armer Vaishnavi Sharma (3/5) and Trisha (3/6), after her exploits with the bat, also performed with the ball in hand.

The 19-year-old Trisha, who hails from Telangana, has been in tremendous form in the tournament and notched up two 40-plus scores before the big knock on Tuesday. Meanwhile in other matches of the day, Bangladesh finished their campaign in style with an easy 10-wicket victory over the West Indies. The Asian side performed well with the ball to restrict the West Indies to just 54 for 6 from their 13 overs and cruised past the victory target inside nine overs on the back of an unbeaten 25 not out from opener Juairiya Ferdous. Bangladesh won the toss and elected to bowl at Bayuemas Oval after tireless effort from ground staff in the nation's capital, with spinner Nishita Akter Nishi collecting three wickets. Anisa Akter Soba claimed a pair of wickets as the West Indies struggled in the conditions and Bangladesh eased home to move up to third place on the Group 1 standings. In another Group 2 match, no play was possible in Sarawak, with heavy rain leaving the Super Six contest between South Africa and the USA abandoned without a ball being bowled. South Africa had already qualified for the semi-finals of the event, while USA picked up a point to move to third in Group 2.

## Hobart Hurricanes wins Big Bash

PTI ■ HOBART

Mitchell Owen hit the co-fastest century in Big Bash League history as he rushed the Hobart Hurricanes to their first Australian Twenty20 domestic title. Owen's 39-ball ton on Monday tied Craig Simmons' century on balls from 2014. He had a chance to break it but a boundary fell just short of the rope. After a shift up the order to opener, the 23-year-old Owen has become one of the brightest Australian prospects in short-form cricket. He raised his bat for a half-century in just the fourth over, powering on with 11 sixes — a BBL final record — and six fours. "That was next-level hitting that made it pretty easy for us at the end," teammate Matthew Wade said. The sellout crowd of 15,706 at Bellerive Oval chanted Owen's name as the run-rate required ticked down.



"That was super special," Owen said. "The most special thing is hearing everyone in the crowd enjoying it. And I'm so grateful, I'm so proud that we could bring this trophy to Tassie (Tasmania)."

Midway through his innings, Owen became the BBL's leading run-scorer for the season, overtaking David Warner. Owen was out for 108 off 44 balls in the 11th over at 139-3. Chasing 183 to win against

the Sydney Thunder, Hobart reached 185-3 with 35 balls to spare and won by seven wickets. Hobart's success in the 14th BBL left the Melbourne Stars as the only side yet to win the title.

## French club Lyon to hire Paulo Fonseca as its new coach

PTI ■ LYON (FRANCE)

Lyon will hire Paulo Fonseca as its new coach, a person with direct knowledge of the deal has told The Associated Press. The person requested anonymity because the deal has yet to be announced officially. Fonseca will replace Pierre Sage, who was fired despite leading the French league club out of a crisis last season and having the team within reach of a Champions League place in this campaign. Sage's dismissal on Tuesday followed a 1-1 draw with Nantes in Ligue 1 over the weekend and left many observers baffled. Sage had rapidly become a fans' favorite after guiding Lyon from the bottom of the standings to a sixth-place finish last season. And after 19 matches this season, Lyon is sixth in the



league — just four points off a Champions League spot — and in a good position to qualify for the knockout stage of the Europa League. Lyon, however, said the decision to part ways with Sage was a "sporting choice." Lyon is owned by American businessman John Textor, who visited the club in person this week. Textor, a 59-year-old digital media and entertainment

entrepreneur, owns several teams, including in Belgium (RWD Molenbeek), and Brazil (Botafogo) as part of his multi-club model that is becoming more common in soccer. Textor had been in regular contact with Fonseca in recent years and previously tried to hire him. The former Lille coach has been out of a job since he was fired by AC Milan on December 30.

## Mumbai announce 16-member squad for clash against Meghalaya

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Defending champions Mumbai announced their 16-member squad sans India stars Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shreyas Iyer to take on Meghalaya in their must-win Ranji Trophy Elite Group A clash starting here on Thursday. Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Suryansh Shedge and Atharva Ankelekar have been called back. Mumbai, who are coming off a five-wicket defeat against Jammu and Kashmir last week, will be without the India stars Jaiswal, Iyer and Rohit, who all have joined the Indian team for the upcoming ODI series against England starting on February 6. These three players had featured in the sixth round game here at the BKC Ground, with Rohit and Jaiswal following the BCCI diktat to play domestic cricket regularly.



Iyer, on the other hand, has been a vital cog in Mumbai side for domestic competitions across formats this year. The trio is also a part of the Indian squad for the Champions Trophy next month. Karsh Kothari, who also featured in Mumbai's playing XI against Jammu and Kashmir, was not picked. The defeat against Jammu and Kashmir has dented Mumbai's title defence as the Ajinkya Rahane-led side will now be required to record a big victory

— with a bonus point — against Meghalaya and hope that Baroda beat the table-toppers Jammu and Kashmir in their backyard. Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Ayush Mhatre, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Amogh Bhatkal, Siddhesh Lad, Akash Anand (wk), Hardik Tamore (wk), Suryansh Shedge, Shardul Thakur, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Mohit Avasthi, Sylvester D'Souza, Royston Dias, Shreyas Gurav, Atharva Ankelekar.

# Virat Kohli checks in at Kotla for training with Delhi team

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At exactly 9am when his jet black Porsche zoomed in through the Feroz Shah Kotla ground's "Virender Sehwaag Gate," it was homecoming for Delhi's very own Virat Kohli, who checked in for a training stint with his first-class team after more than 12 years. Save for pacer Navdeep Saini, all other 18 members of Delhi's squad had only seen him on TV and grown up listening to the tales of how "Cheeku," the cherubic talent, became the "King" of Indian cricket. In the last 15 years, Delhi's "Cheeku" became a hazy memory as he turned into the most commercially viable

brand in global cricket, the face that ICC sold in its Olympic bid presentation. On Monday, he was at his home ground for around three hours and had everyone in his vicinity hypnotised. Whether the young impressionable players, or seasoned head coach Sarandeep Singh or batting coach Bantu Singh — all of them evidently wanted to be close to him. Though courteous with all, the former India skipper seemed more comfortable with his former U-19 coach Mahesh Bhati, who is also the administrative manager of this team. "Woh badlaa nahi hain. Usko chhole-poori pasand the aur

humne mangaake rakhha tha. Usne bola chole puri nahi khawoonga (He loves chhole poori, we made arrangements for him but he said he didn't want it)," a senior DDCA (Delhi and Districts Cricket Association) official told PTI. What he did seek out after practice ahead of his first Ranji appearance in 12 years from January 30 was also an old favourite. "Practice ke baad purane time ki tarah kadhi chawal khaya sabke saath (He had kadhi chawal with everyone)," revealed the official. Everyone shadowed the icon like it was an event. Ranji Trophy matches are covered by a select bunch of



domestic cricket faithfuls but on Monday, the numbers trebled. Every move by the 'King' was followed. The two coaches --

Sarandeep and Bantu -- were by his side throughout and it would be difficult for photographers or videographers to edit them

from the frame. "I remember it was Ajit Chaudhary, the erstwhile manager of the Delhi Ranji team, who nicknamed him 'Cheeku' back in 2006-07," DDCA secretary Ashok Sharma, fondly called 'Mama', recollected as if it was yesterday. He has seen Kohli since he first came here for U-15 trials. The Training It was an occasion to remember for the Sanat Sangwans, Arpit Ranans and Siddhant Sharmas but for Kohli it was business as usual. It seemed he had left the star outside the ground and had turned up as their very own 'Virat Bhaiya'. The 35 minute warm-up

before an inconsequential final game against the Railways was the longest that the senior team has spent to loosen up prior to net session. There was a 15-minute game of football and he had some sprints down the wide right, also enjoying a laugh or two. But once the net session started, the game face was on. He quietly walked to the nets where skipper Ayush Badoni was batting. Seeing Kohli walk towards the nets, Badoni was visibly conscious before Kohli told him: 'Ayush tu batting karle, phir dono switch karke karenge (Ayush you keep batting. After sometime, we will take turns to bat.)'

He spent close to an hour at the nets. At first, he took throw-downs where he kept playing the pull shot. Once he had done enough knocking, Kohli entered the spinners' nets where he faced left-arm spinners Harsh Tyagi and Sumit Mathur. A few balls did grip and stop but there wasn't much bite in their bowling. Ditto for pacers Navdeep Saini, Money Grewal, Rahul Gehlot and Siddhant Sharma. Unlike India nets, Kohli hardly looked troubled although he did practice leaving a lot of deliveries. With the Champions Trophy round the corner, Kohli was seen trying to play a lot beside the line of deliveries.

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